OPINIONS

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OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Necessary increase

The Athletic Association (AA)'s recent request to increase the mandatory athletic fee may upset students, who often resent every dime the Institute requires them to pay, but it is important that we keep the proposed change in perspective. Though the change would be a 75 percent increase of $96 per year, it is not an unreasonable amount.

Still, any increase will be frustrating to students, especially since the HOPE scholarship has a fee cap. However, the fee increase is necessary; Dan Radakovich inherited an athletic program that is unstable and losing money rapidly—approximately $3 million a year.

Many students, particularly graduate students, who do not attend athletic events may be especially upset with this development, but good alternatives seem nonexistent. For instance, the choice to raise the fee by a flat rate is far superior to charging students for tickets, which would inevitably hurt event attendance. If the extra cost is incorporated in a mandatory fee, the AA can be certain of the revenue, and students will not be in the position of choosing whether to go to a game or not based on the extra out-of-pocket expense. Also, if our athletic programs are going to have room to grow in order to make more money in the future, they need to have financial stability now.

Nor are the students the only ones taking on the extra expense as season ticket holders will also see an increase in their ticket prices. It is commendable that the AA is raising prices across the board and not putting the sole responsibility on the students. Alienating the students would amount to alienating future season ticket holders.

Perhaps most worrisome about Radakovich's plans is his admission that he is looking into eliminating Swarm, which he says does not make that much money for the AA. If the AA expects the student body to take on the cost of a higher Student Activity Fee, they should not disband the most cohesive group of student supporters. Not only does Swarm build a sense of community and allow dedicated fans to support their team together, it also gets students in the habit of donating money to the AA, which should continue to be a source of revenue when they become young alumni.

The proposed fee increase may be frustrating, but the AA has used its best judgment in the matter. They have to have money to continue running a Division I-A athletic program, and as athletic fans, we cannot expect to attend sporting events free of charge; we should remember that we will still be paying less than non-students even though we will pay more next year.

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

EDITORIAL BOARD

Amanda Dugan, *Editor-in-Chief*

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DAN RADAKOVICH COLLECTS THE STUDENT ATHLETIC FEE

By Tristan Daniels / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Lawmakers need science translated

"I'm a technology policy analyst....Pretty much, I serve as a Technobabble-to-Political BS translator."

Hillary Lipko
Advertising Manager

In the past year, I've had the opportunity to work in the area of technology policy analysis through a couple of internships, and in those jobs I've worked with several lawmakers charged with the responsibility of making primary policy decisions regarding science and technology. To the credit of some, especially regarding their ages, there are legislators who will not only admit to not knowing much about the issues about which they are making decisions but are willing to learn about them.

Unfortunately, these people are the exception rather than the rule in our lawmaking bodies. More often than not, legislators and politicians know nothing about these issues and have no desire to learn. When it comes to the vote, they, at best, abstain; or, at worst, make their decision based on what their friends or party is voting—a decision that is also often made in ignorance. I will never forget the time when, during one of my internships, I overheard one lawmaker say to another, "I don't know anything about this stuff, and I'm too old to learn, so I don't really care," in regard to technology issues.

Google CEO Eric Schmidt was spot-on when he referred to the generation gap that exists regarding technology. "The average person in government is not of the age of people who are using all this stuff," he said at a National Academies' Computer Science and Telecommunications Board symposium.

As a result, we get legislators like Sen. Ted Stevens making misinformed statements like the now-infamous "The internet is made up of tubes," declaration he made regarding the issue of network neutrality. This man is the chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation! Sen. Stevens isn't the only offender but he is one of the most high-profile examples.

This unfortunate phenomenon isn't just limited to U.S. lawmakers. Former Hong Kong governor Chris Patten relates similar issues and attitudes in the E.U., particularly relating to the issue of identification. The issue of identification is becoming increasingly fraught with technological issues as many nations, including the U.S., are moving toward RFID standards in passports, driving permits and other forms of identification—standards which have been shown to be insecure and vulnerable to tampering. "The NHS [National Health Service] program for IT and the ID cards scheme both stand as a testament to the government's complete failure at forward planning [in technology schemes] and its inability to understand technology in the real world," said Simon Davies, chairman of No2ID, a non-partisan campaign opposed to the national ID and identity register in the UK.

This real-world understanding is where technology policy analysts like me come in. "The challenge is to develop a language politicians can understand, as well as politicians taking the time and trouble to understand it. What often happens is you get somebody speaking technical jargon to someone who doesn't understand the basics," said Richard Allan, head of government affairs for Cisco Systems U.K.

And that is precisely what my colleagues and I do. When I tell people that I'm a technology policy analyst, they always wonder what that really means. Pretty much, I serve as a Technobabble-to-Political BS translator. My colleagues and I take complex, technical subjects such as cryptography and cellulosic ethanol (two that we've worked with recently) and break them down into simple terms that (hopefully) even my kid brother could understand.

These days, I'd like to think that it's an important job. In my current internship at the Office of Policy Analysis and Research (OPAR) at GTRI, we just held a roundtable discussion on the science and technology policy agenda for the upcoming state legislative session. Five state representatives served as panelists, and a broad range of issues, including nanotechnology, identity management and internet safety, were discussed. The panelists had some very interesting, and sometimes surprising, insights into these issues.

As someone whose job it is to foster an understanding of technology issues and to trigger dialogues about them, however, the open question-and-answer portion of the roundtable session really proved fruitful. An actual conversation about some related issues that I hadn't considered developed between the technologists and the legislators present. And that's as much, if not more, than any technology policy analyst could hope for.

Cooperative learning receives mixed reviews

This past week I completed one of my group presentations that was due this semester. The project was done well and all group members were very productive, but my reaction to cooperative learning is still rather mixed.

In my entire academic career, I have done around 10 to 15 group projects or some other cooperative learning assignments.

Research shows that cooperative learning has many advantages over competitive and individualized learning in a vast array of tasks.

I agree with research that cooperative and group learning does offer a different style of learning, but is that style any better than individual learning?

Group projects and all other assignments dealing with cooperative learning do have pros. For one, it encourages social interaction among your classmates and offers a chance to meet a diverse group of people. At a school where social interaction is not a top priority, a little forced social interaction is not such a bad idea.

From here on out, our lives will be determined by the way we handle people. And being personable takes a little bit of practice, so group projects give individuals an opportunity to enhance their interpersonal

> "Most of us learn...on our own. But group projects offer a different style of learning."
>
> **Matthew Winkler**
> Managing Editor

development that is necessary for success.

Another pro is that it teaches the teamwork that will be necessary in probably any job you get after leaving here. You may not have to give an oral report with your team in your future career, but you will have to do work based on someone else's previous work.

Communication is essential in ensuring that what data you have is correct and reliable.

Studies also show cooperative learning leads to higher achievement, newer ideas and solutions to problems and better reasoning strategies.

Individuals also show better understanding of a topic after working in a group. With all the opportunities for personal feedback, the student actively engages in learning.

Most of us learn through lecture and reading material on our own. But group projects

offer a different style of learning. With group projects, you have the opportunity to learn from students who are experiencing the same thing as you are, in an environment other than the classroom.

There are also many negative aspects of cooperative learning. The first con is all individuals put forth less individual work in a group project than they would if the project had been conducted by only one individual. In social psychology, this is known as social loafing.

Another difficult aspect of working in groups is learning other people's habits. Not everyone works like the next person. Some people like to get work done early, while others tend to wait until the last minute. Some want the project to be perfect, while others want to turn in something just so they get the grade.

Most projects are designed so that one stage of the project

requires completion of the previous stage. So if one team member is late with all their work, then it not only holds them back, but holds the team back as well.

These clashes of personality make working in groups a little difficult sometimes.

Also not all projects are designed where a team can efficiently work together to arrive at a solution. One team member usually takes charge as the leader and they sometimes get stuck with a majority of the work, all for the sake of the team.

One of the biggest cons of group projects is how grades are assigned. Professors only see the final project; they don't see individual names showing how much work was done by that individual.

Some professors do ask for critiques of your other team members, but how many of us have really given someone a failing mark for a project? Also these critiques sometimes don't weigh as heavily on the grade as they should. So what is the fair way to grade a group project?

I am still mixed on the concept, but I understand why professors as well as professionals see group projects as a plus to your learning experience. It teaches many valuable tools but also provides obstacles for students to overcome.

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT – or – NOT

Florida in the fall

The weather may not be getting cold, but that doesn't mean we don't look forward to a fall semester trip to Florida. The ACC Championship game in Jacksonville should be a great addition to a relatively strong football season. We're ready to cheer the Jackets on against Wake Forest to our first outright ACC title since 1990 and first Orange Bowl since 1966. Then we'll have another Florida trip to plan!

Football fiasco

It seems obvious to point this out, but the Jackets just lost to UGA for the sixth year in a row. AE majors have been known to graduate in a shorter amount of time. Not only that, but the game was hard to watch without feeling sorry for the defensive line, which spent more time on the field than off and was showing signs of exhaustion. We'll just hope for a win to be thankful for next Thanksgiving weekend.

Daily news

The Collegiate Readership Program is back! While the *Technique* staff hopes you continue to read our paper, we're happy when students do any reading at all—and it's good to know what's going on outside our little bubble. Besides, we don't publish daily. We hope that the program will be here to stay this time.

Dead week?

It seems like just yesterday we were complaining about how much our books cost this semester, and now it's nearly time to sell them back again. We'd love to go back to that carefree first week with no deadlines on the horizon. Unfortunately, we may get our wish soon—spring semester is little over a month away.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Redefining tolerance

I would like to respond to Britton Alexander whose letter appeared in the Nov. 10 issue condemning the "modern liberal." First, group generalizations are a major problem in modern politics. Generalizations reduce people to compacted views of "left" or "right" where truly the distinctions are never that easy. Mr. Alexander finds it "ironic that they [liberals] would have the moral standing to label anyone as 'intolerant.'" I find it disheartening that Mr. Alexander sees conservatism as having a monopoly on values or "morals" and liberalism devoid of them.

To me, there is nothing ironic about people on the left being motivated by what they believe deeply.

I'm not condoning the actions of the "campus leftists" who claim the campus "rightists" are intolerant. I'm merely decrying the precepts on which Mr. Alexander bases his thinking.

Second, I don't think I could find many people on the streets to define tolerance as "the ability to have their actions and beliefs shielded from criticism while they trample on dissenting ideas" as Mr. Alexander claims of the left. Tolerance to me is, well, tolerance.

If we tolerate each other, we do it without selection or preference. My idea of tolerance is having open honest debate in a way that doesn't marginalize either group or their views. Increased understanding, not necessarily acceptance, of other's ideas is the only way we can move forward. I'll give a story that characterizes this view a little more clearly.

I started going to a new church recently that tends to be on the left politically. After a few weeks there, we had a Bishop visit from Africa who was extremely conservative. After being with our church for three weeks, he started to come to great friendship with our parish. We didn't

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BUZZ
Around the Campus

What's on your Christmas wish list?

Akbar Khader
First-year BIO
"Girlfriend."

Lisa Shah
Third-year MGT
"What's not on my wish list?"

Stephen Lapierre
First-year BIO
"Thrashers to win the Stanley Cup."

Danny Miller
First-year CM
"Not fail my classes."

Photos by Ariel Bravy

Letters

change his mind, nor did he change our minds, but a new understanding came between us. What grew was an attitude of respect and forbearance that will resonate in our parish for many years to come.

My hope is that we can move closer to understanding and avoid some of the divisive parlance that has occurred up to now. I hope we can shed the labels of "left" and "right" and come to one another as examples of the human condition. My hope may seem lofty, but what are goals worth if they aren't worth achieving?

Allen Hoffmeyer
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MATH grad student

Learn to value diversity

Parody sometimes offers teachable moments. In the recent issue of *To Hell With Georgia*, an article was published parodying transgender students and individuals at UGA. While realizing the nature and intent of this article to parody and make fun of our beloved UGA colleagues, the article also touched on an important issue on campuses around the country.

There is a growing recognition of how best to meet the needs of transgender students and individuals on many college campuses. As perhaps one of the most stigmatized of social groups, transgender students often face a number of difficulties living on campus. Among these difficulties include appropriate housing facilities, appropriate health care services and other sufficient campus services that support transgender students' academic and personal success.

The article published in *To Hell With Georgia* illustrates some common misperceptions our society holds regarding the transgender community. It is important that the Tech community continues to maintain its dedication to respecting the broad range of diversity and the multifaceted nature of individuals and their communities.

As part of this dedication, education and dialogue are important steps to take in understanding, accepting and valuing not only transgender students, but all students, faculty and staff at Tech. Finding Common Ground was an innovative stepping-stone to creating dialogues and education on campus regarding issues of diversity. While there are some who may not view diversity in this light or who may be hesitant to take steps towards understanding, it is our hope that everyone will realize the importance of valuing diversity as a part of the Tech community and as members of a global community.

Scott McKee
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GLBTQ Advisory Board

Be aware of campus birds

The media focuses a lot on environmental "hot button" issues such as global warming and ANWR drilling. Perhaps more sinister are the all-pervasive everyday aspects of the human world that contribute to the deaths of millions of animals.

In 2000 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wrote: "building window collisions are estimated to take [kill] from 97 to 970 million birds per year," a figure derived from an estimate of between one and 10 birds killed per building per year. Dr. Daniel Klem, an ornithologist at Mulhenberg College in Allentown, Penn. who helped furnish that estimate, favors the high end of one billion.

In spring 2006 I began to notice that dead birds regularly littered the sidewalks around Tech's College of Management building. As spring turned to summer the number of casualties declined, but fall has brought another bevy of migrants, and with it new victims scattered around the College of Management's sidewalks. I began to record these deaths and to take photographs of the victims in order to document the situation.

At least 10 birds have died over the course of two and a half months, greatly outpacing the high end of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's estimate. It's highly unlikely that I have seen every casualty (the bodies always disappear within a day or two; also, I was also on holiday during part of the fall). At least as many birds were likely killed during the spring migration.

Grim as the situation is for our birds, solutions may be quite affordable. Window stickers would be a good place to start. And if the traditional black bird silhouette stickers are considered too much of an eyesore for the humans in the building, there are transparent versions that are visible only to animals that see within the ultraviolet spectrum (such as birds, of course).

It would be unconscionable for Tech not to look into these, and for consideration of the natural world not to be factored into all the many building projects going on on our campus today. In this sense, it's literally true that with growth comes responsibility.

Andrew Kerr
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WREK seeks input

While I appreciated the coverage of the WREK proposals in the Nov. 17 issue, I am afraid that the story and editorial are a bit ahead of the facts and schedule.

As the story indicates, I have been asked by President Clough to lead the process that will examine the various proposals related to WREK radio and provide him a fact-based analysis and recommendation.

It is important to note that change to the status quo is not preordained. Moreover, there always will be a student-controlled WREK signal in an independent HD format and on the Internet.

The station's staff and the physical integrity of the station facility would also be unaffected. The crux of the matter centers on how the FM analog signal might be used, whether partnered with National Public Radio in some form, in a student-run commercial format, or by maintaining the status quo.

After talking to a range of student and administrative leaders, I believe the most effective way to move forward is to ask the Radio Communications Board (RCB), WREK's governing body, to analyze the proposals and possibilities.

The RCB membership is composed of four faculty and staff members, and includes six students constituting a student majority. I believe the Board is positioned to best represent the interests of the station, the student body and the Institute as a whole.

The analysis will take place over several weeks and should involve a thorough fact-gathering process and a complete examination of WREK's mission and all proposed options. It should include a survey of the student body to determine the station's actual listening audience in terms of demographics, size, listening habits and desires.

The process also should be open, and additional comments should be invited through open fora and the Web. In addition, each party with a proposal related to WREK should be invited to campus to present their ideas in person.

Before any recommendation can be reached, many questions must be asked and a great deal of data must be collected. It is my hope that every interested student will follow the process closely and provide valuable input along the way.

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