



### OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

## Lawsuit lessons

Late last month a judge put an end to the long dispute that two students began over two years ago over Tech's speech code and guidelines for using the Student Activity Fee to fund organizations. We are glad that the lawsuit and all of the negative publicity and distress that it brought have ended. While we believe that every single Tech student should have the right to openly voice his or her opinion, this lawsuit was the wrong channel for the plaintiffs to do so.

Before these students decided to file a lawsuit against Tech, they should have explored open discourse with administrators and other students to pursue dialogue rather than involve a long list of administrative employees as defendants on the case, cast a negative light on Tech, and burden the Institute with a hefty legal bill. This wasted time and money could have been directed to more productive pursuits to benefit Tech's students.

Only two students were able to come together in favor of this lawsuit, suggesting that few students were being affected by their claims and that there was little support for them. Nonetheless, there was merit to parts of the lawsuit. While we do not believe the Institute was responsible of "religious indoctrination," as the plaintiffs claimed, we agree that using Student Activity Fees to fund the Safe Space program, whose aim is to provide a supportive environment for the gay community on campus, posed some problems. The program's materials and meetings were found to contain religious content. As mandated by law, Tech should not fund or otherwise endorse any one religion or ideology. It is important that the Institute maintain neutrality.

Therefore, one positive outcome of the lawsuit was that the Institute learned from the complaints brought forth and acted to remedy some gray areas in its policy. Tech reached a settlement in which it agreed to remove religious material from Safe Space's website and training manual, modify the speech code, and make other changes to controversial provisions in policy, thus strengthening the Institute's neutrality and integrity.

The danger of some tax dollars being used for the ultimate purpose of making GLBT students feel comfortable and safe in our campus environment is much lesser than that of the intolerance and anxiety that could be borne from trying too hard to appease two student's interpretations of Tech's actions. Supporting this opinion, the court ruling awarded the plaintiffs no damages and did not require Tech to change its Student Activity Fees guidelines.

We hope that the judge's warning that another case could challenge the Institute's use of Student Activity Fees in the future does not come true in the form of another case in which resources are misused and attention is misdirected.

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

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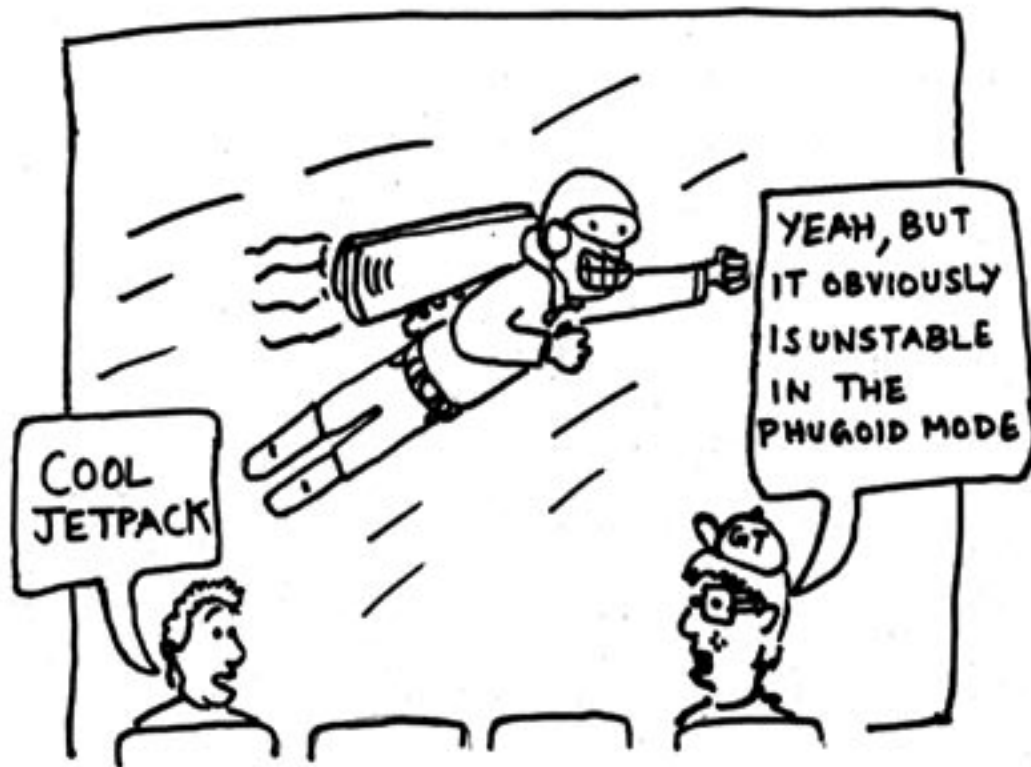
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By Abhishek Jain / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

## Patience scores championships

There are no quick fixes in sports. That is evident in the way many teams have tried to gather as much talent as possible and aim to win a championship with just one regular season under their belts.

A prime example is the 2007-08 Boston Celtics. There is no denying that Kevin Garnett is still one of the top three players in the NBA, Ray Allen is one of the best sharpshooters in the game, and Paul Pierce can take over a game at any time. In today's NBA, though, it is not enough to have two guys like it was just a few years ago. Tony Parker, Manu Ginobili and Tim Duncan have been playing together for the San Antonio Spurs for several years. This is their second championship together.

But while the Spurs have been struggling in the playoffs, much of that is due to a tough schedule that included the Suns and up-start Hornets. The Celtics have been struggling due to their inexperience in road playoff games. Against Atlanta, the Celtics could not handle the Hawks' emotional play, and dropped three close games on the road. The Celtics playoff run is by no means over, but in the Finals they are facing a team that has played together for at least the last four seasons. Of the Pistons' five starters, only Antonio McDyess has been with this team for less than five straight seasons.

Speaking of the Pistons, this is almost the same Pistons team that manhandled the 2003-04 Los Angeles Lakers with Kobe Bryant, Shaquille O'Neal, Karl Malone and Gary Payton. During the regular season, the Lakers had three players that shattered 1,000 points (Bryant, O'Neal and Payton) and Karl Malone would have if he played the entire season. They did not count on Detroit having already played together for a year and gaining the experience to win as a team.

This trend does not just happen in basketball. Our own Atlanta



"The human element and predictability in sports is much harder to assign values to than in a typical business."

**Akshay Amaraneni**  
 Sports Editor

Braves won their 1995 title with the majority of their players having only played Atlanta uniforms in the majors. Of the nine everyday position players, only Fred McGriff and Marquis Grissom had ever played for another major league team. Of the eight pitchers that threw more than 50 innings in the season, only Greg Maddux pitched for another team in the majors.

There are several other examples: the 2006 Indianapolis Colts that won the Super Bowl had 22 starters, none of which ever started for another NFL team; the 1999 and 2003 Florida Marlins that built their team around prospects and guys they developed through their system; the Spurs of the last decade, a team that builds themselves through excellent scouting and the draft; the 2003-04 Yellow Jackets basketball team that made it to the Final Four, all of whose players had been on campus for at least one season.

One of the reasons perceivably good teams may be going down the drain these days is simple: owners in sports are too hands-on. Some of the more famous owners, Mark Cuban, Jerry Jones, the Steinbrenners and the Atlanta Falcons' Arthur Blank, can often be seen on the sidelines and are prominently involved in the day-to-day operations of the team. What is the point of hiring a general manager to handle day-to-day operations if they are just going to do it themselves? Many of the hand-on owners are very successful business-

men and have the sense of what it takes to run a business, and in a way, a sports team is a business. But it's not the same. The human element and predictability in sports is much harder to assign values to than in a typical business. An owner usually cannot look at his team's roster and say that their team is one that can win 12-14 games in a regular season. And even if it does, how will they fare in the championship game?

So in a roundabout way, what I'm trying to say is that fans (and owners) just need to be patient. If they hire a general manager whom they trust, who hires a coach or manager they trust, things will fall into place eventually. The pieces they put together will be, if not a championship team, a playoff team.

I have been a New Orleans Saints fan all my life and even I was surprised by their 10-win season in 2006. They came back down to earth last year with a 7-9 record but have shored up their defense and should be considered a title contender with many of their skilled players having played together the last two seasons.

In that same span, the hometown Falcons have gone 8-8 and 4-12. But, despite the firing of a player's coach and one leaving in the middle of his first season, the Falcons have finally gotten on the right track. Now if Mr. Blank knows he needs to be patient and let his people do their job, he can build a winner with the right guys on the field.

# Student apathy can be appreciated

This year's recipient of the Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty was a student government president, the first young person to receive the award. His name is Yon Goicochea, and aside from representing the student body at his university, since 2007 he has also led the growing pro-democracy student movement in Venezuela.



"We should be a little thankful (if not fully accepting) for our apathy as young Americans."

**N. Denisse Gonzalez**  
Opinions Editor

Sitting in bed last week watching 23-year-old Goicochea receive the award on TV, I thought of the vast differences between student leadership here in the United States and in other countries like Venezuela. For better or for worse, American students have for a long time been known for our apathy.

Even during presidential election years, our participation is limited. In the 2004 elections, only 41.9 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds voted, as compared to 60.7 percent for the entire electorate (the record for the highest youth participation was in 1964, at 50.9 percent). Presidential hopeful Barack Obama has recently been commended for increasing the involvement of minority and young voters, but let's face it—we're still the most apathetic voting block.

Later on that day, I saw another story about Venezuelan news that made me think of this issue. The biggest university

in the country held elections last week for a new president and other administrative staff. Candidates campaigned on different platforms, promising to meet student and faculty needs ranging from better dining facilities to improvements in the undergraduate curriculum.

Most American universities looking for a new president put together a search committee and hire an expensive executive search firm to help them identify candidates. For those of us at Tech who are anxious to find out who Wayne Clough's replacement will be and how the change will affect us (and have no idea), entrusting this decision to the will of students and faculty may not sound like such a bad idea.

Yet when it comes to involvement in politics, whether at the national level or at the level of our universities, American students are generally out of the loop—

and don't mind staying out of it. We have a student government association that represents us at Tech, but only 2,606 of more than 12,000 undergraduate students bothered to vote in the last SGA presidential election (and an even smaller proportion of graduate students cast a vote). Why don't we care?

The answer may be, after all, that it makes no difference if we do. Compared to our colleagues in other countries, the risk of our lives being affected by one candidate's victory over another is small, as no two mainstream candidates are ever radically different. At the same time, our degree of comfort and prosperity is high. We are probably the most spoiled generation in time, in the world.

This is not to downplay the differences between Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and John McCain, nor the important problems that we face, includ-

ing health care, immigration, the economy and the war in Iraq. But honestly—if we had to choose between democracy and dictatorship, as Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez proposed in a December referendum, I guarantee we would have an opinion and we would want to voice it, no matter which side of the fence we sit on.

Of course, the United States and Venezuela are very different countries, and comparisons should be made carefully. What's at stake for students in countries like Venezuela that are deeply divided and that have to deal with poverty, high crime rates, food shortages and high inflation is much greater than what is at stake for us. The students who elected their next university president had to choose between candidates representing vastly different ideologies and political parties. While Goicochea was accepting the \$500,000 prize that came with the award, opposing students held angry protests.

At the end of the day on Jan. 20, 2009 when the next U.S. president is inaugurated, or whenever Tech's new president is announced, nothing much will have changed in our everyday lives. Most of us will still be juggling TV, Facebook and

See **Apathy**, page 6

## OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

# HOT- or -NOT



### Summer flicks

With blockbusters *Iron Man* and *Indiana Jones* already released, summer movies are one more thing to look forward to this summer. Even for those students who can't pay \$9 to watch a movie in theatres, the promise of free outdoor showings such as Flicks on Fifth and Screen on the Green showing everything from classics like *E.T.* to new favorites like *Hairspray* and *Superbad* looks good.



### Sports disappoints

Tech sports doesn't seem to be faring well in tournaments this year. For the first time ever, men's golf lost in the first round, women's tennis lost in the Elite Eight, and men's tennis didn't even make it to the tournament. Softball lost in the first round of the NCAA championship and was rained out of the ACC. This disappointing performance across the board leaves Tech fans with little to cheer for.



### Relay rules

Despite the rain and the move into the CRC, Relay for Life was a big success. There was still a turnout of over 800 people from a wide range of 55 organizations. Not only did the group raise much-needed awareness for cancer in the Tech community, but also raised \$65,000 for the American Cancer Society.



### Crecine passes

Tech mourns the loss of influential ninth president John Patrick "Pat" Crecine, who died April 28. As the founder of the Colleges of Sciences and Computing and the Ivan Allen Liberal Arts College, as well as the man who thought up GT1000, he will have a long legacy to be remembered by.

## Gas tax holiday dangers

Staff Editorial  
*Michigan Daily*

Drivers across the country may be pumped at the prospect of actually seeing the price of gas fall for the first time in months, a miracle that may happen if gas tax breaks proposed by some politicians actually come to fruition. While these breaks may ease the immediate strain on driver's wallets, Americans should question the motives of those who propose these breaks.

Summer tax breaks need to be seen for what they really are: short-term sucking up in an election year. Gas tax breaks offer little long-term relief to the fuel crisis and endanger an already-precarious economy.

Last month, presidential hopefuls Hillary Clinton and John McCain both proposed plans that would relieve voters of paying the national per-gallon tax of 18.4 cents. Accusations that Clinton and McCain are lobbying for this break as a means of

grabbing more votes have been widespread.

If decidedly sketchy motives aren't reason enough to question such tax breaks, the short-sighted economics involved should be. Supply and demand economics shows us that making it cheaper to purchase oil, which is already in short supply, will only push the price further up in the future. So while this summer might be a blissful vacation, tax-adjusted prices after November could be a brutal wake-up call.

Making gas more affordable diminishes the only advantages coming from roughly \$4-per-gallon gas prices: Interest in alternative automotive technology has flourished. Faced with soaring prices, the public has been forced to make real efforts to reduce consumption through things like carpooling and choosing more fuel-efficient vehicles, practices which are initial pragmatic measures in a move toward long-term

See **Gas Tax**, page 6

### Letter Submission Policy

The *Technique* welcomes all letters to the editor and will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Letters may be mailed to Georgia Tech Campus Mail Code 0290, emailed to [editor@technique.gatech.edu](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu) or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Craig Tabita, 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 7 p.m. Tuesday in order to be printed in the following Friday's issue. Any letters not meeting these criteria or not considered by the Editorial Board of the *Technique* to be of valid intent will not be printed. Editors reserves the right to edit for style, content and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

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

# BUZZ

## Around the Campus

### What do you like about summer at Tech?



**Colleen Jordan**  
Third-year ID

"I have nothing to do!"



**Erin Adams**  
Assistant to Chair, CEE

"The ease of mobility around campus; there's a lot less going on."



**Sarah Petrella**  
Graduate MBA/CEE

"Sitting outside and studying is better than sitting inside."



**Katie O'Connor**  
Third-year MGT

"Easier classes."

Photos by Ben Keyserling

# Absence of failure may be the key to real happiness

One of the defining features of a life at Tech is that there is a surplus of activities we can use to occupy our time. Some of these are more or less mandatory (homework, projects), and others are voluntary (clubs, part-time jobs), and yet others are purely social (spending time with friends, going to parties). Finally, let's not forget those critical pursuits of sleeping and maybe even exercising.

The famous comment about the Tech lifestyle is that you can only choose any two pursuits among sleeping, studying and a social life. But in reality most people need to somehow strike a balance between all three extremes, because all are required to be satisfied, or perhaps even happy, with life at Tech.

This is already difficult in itself. But I wonder: is simply balancing the three enough for happiness, or are there other factors involved? The question of happiness is one I've contemplated quite a lot of late, because during my current stint in Kazakhstan I've found myself feeling substantially more pleased with my life than I generally do in the hustle and bustle of Tech life.

While I tend to like Kazakhstan



"Perhaps what is making me happier in Kazakhstan is...the absence of the crushing force of failure back home."

**Arcadiy Kantor**  
Columnist

in general, I can pretty safely discount the possibility that the chief contributing factors to this level of satisfaction are my "wonderful" apartment or the incredibly high local standard of living. After all, I still desperately miss having a dryer in my house. Likewise, while I have been fortunate enough to meet lots of fantastic, interesting people here, my social interaction with friends back home was no less fulfilling.

So for me, the question still remains: what is responsible for my happiness here, and what can I do in order to maintain that level of happiness when my time in Kazakhstan comes to its inevitable end? Human happiness in general is a remarkably tricky subject: countless books have been written about it, and many of the conclusions defy

expectations.

Arthur C. Brooks shatters many happiness stereotypes in his recent book, *Gross National Happiness*. Among these, he claims that work makes most people happier (and that most Americans like their jobs) and that having more money does not make a person happier unless their chief use of that money is donating it to charity. Perhaps most strikingly for me personally, he points out that marriage tends to make people substantially happier, while the birth of children has the opposite effect on most couples.

While Brooks is a notable conservative pundit and some aspects of his book seem to be politically motivated, many of his thoughts and conclusions are worth paying attention to.

In an article he wrote for *The American* magazine, Brooks notes that while money indeed cannot buy happiness, there is a notable correlation between wealth and happiness. His hypothesis for the reason? The cause of richer people's happiness is not the money they have earned but the success they have experienced on the way to those earnings.

At the same time, a recent article in *The Guardian* highlighted Iceland as one of the happiest nations on earth, despite its geographic isolation, harsh climate, and the fact that it has the highest divorce rate in the world and the highest percentage of women working outside the home.

In that case as well, success seems to be the overriding factor. Iceland's economy has been growing rapidly and relatively steadily since World War II, but that growth has particularly ramped up in the past decade. People have greater opportunities, excellent, accessible education and healthcare, and perhaps most importantly, a widespread can-do attitude. On the whole, at least by recent standards, Iceland is one of the most successful nations in the world. If Brooks is to be believed,

and I'm inclined to accept his hypothesis, it's not surprising that its people are so happy.

But what happens if we apply that hypothesis to our life at Tech? If we follow the same logic, is it really surprising that those of us who are at Tech often find ourselves feeling less than chipper? After all, our Institute is well-known for its 36 percent test averages and its rather low 3.0 requirement for Dean's List status—aspects of the Tech experience that speak volumes about the ease of succeeding here.

If that is the case, perhaps what is making me happier in Kazakhstan is not something special I have here, but the absence of the crushing force of failure back home.

That said, I'm not suggesting that we as an Institute need to succumb to the sort of grade inflation that plagues many other universities just to make our students feel happier.

Rather, I think that we, the students, need to keep in mind the fact that success and failure at Tech are not measured by the same scale as usual, and to look at our achievements more positively—even when that success is scoring a 50 on a test with an average of 36.

## Apathy from page 5

homework that evening, and the next. And for this reason, I suggest that we should be a little thankful (if not fully accepting) for our apathy as

young Americans. We are apathetic, and can continue to get away with this, because we live in a stable and wealthy democratic country with strong laws and institutions.

However, there are some dangers to our apathy. With no lobby group to

promote our interests and a low voter participation rate, students have little say in government decisions, even those that affect us directly. Apply this lesson to politics at Tech, and our voice in administrative decisions is barely audible.

## Gas Tax from page 5

sustainability.

Trolling for votes shouldn't be seen as reason enough for repealing these taxes, which provide crucial

funding to important programs.

Saving a few pennies at the pump might be nice, but in the end, the hidden costs and likely long-term impotence of such programs make it evident that this solution is running on empty.



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