

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Disappointing design

Lackluster plans for new Clough building are a letdown

A look at the latest design sketches for the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons yields an unpleasant surprise. Rather than inspire, the designs are reminiscent of an outdated, industrial style that is not worthy of occupying the heart of campus and honoring Clough's legacy.

Fortunately, there is still time to change the architectural design of a building that stands to become a major landmark. As it stands, plans for the new edifice misuse the already limited parking and green space in the center of campus. Other structures like the Klaus, Ford and Management buildings serve as prime examples of the kind of style that fits well with Tech's modern feel, demonstrating that environmental sustainability does not have to come at the price of aesthetics.

But not all looks grim. Plans to construct new walkways leading to and from Klaus and the library are a definite improvement from the existing paths (including the muddy detours that students

are currently forced to take).

The surrounding landscape designs look inviting, large-scale projector screens across the building could become a focal point of campus and a new 500-seat auditorium is a welcome addition that could help the Institute attract and host top speakers. However, the roof design—which appears to be openly accessible—could pose a real safety threat for adventurous students looking for a new hangout spot with a nice view.

Ultimately, the new Clough building will become a second home to future classes of first and second-year students. Plans for the structure's purpose are on the right track, offering to create not only a hub of academic rooms and labs, but also a social community environment. A more modern design and innovative ideas (like an underground parking deck) could ensure that this new building will become the crown jewel—and not the eyesore—of Tech's campus.

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

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YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tech keeps its budget priorities straight

I came to Tech because this school had its priorities in order: to be one of, if not *the* best public university (particularly in the field of engineering), to graduate well-rounded individuals capable of performing well in an adverse and ever-changing market and provide services to students to make the collegiate experience more tolerable. The new Clough Undergraduate Learning Center is another way that Tech can project its image of educational leadership to prospective investors and students (who are also technically investors).

Seniors, think how much Tech has changed since you've been here. Could you have imagined such a transformation when you first arrived as a RAT; East Library renovation, a nanotechnology building, BME being nationally ranked after a few years in existence, the super CoC, the marching band going to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or even Paul Johnson and the triple? Whether it was an advanced research lab, newer lecture halls or a new home for the ladies' softball team, that kind of growth is attractive to people that could choose to invest their money elsewhere.

Of course that means Tech gets better students, investors, professors and more potential employers. While I understand economic concerns, education is consistently one of the best investments an individual person or organization can make (look up earning potential for individuals with and without degrees and the success of the G.I. Bill following World War II). In all honesty, it makes more sense to invest in Tech than [in] other government agencies that have already failed. And I hope Tech never loses that edge.

John Ball
Fifth-year AE

More to the debate on Israel and Palestine

As I read ["Your views: Perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," Jan. 30], each [letter] contains not only factually incorrect information and twisted logic, but most importantly, fails to recognize the true cause of the conflict.

To isolate the current conflict from the broader historical context misses the focal point of the current state of affairs. The question that would help to reach a resolution is, "What right does Israel have on the Holy Land?" A simple answer is that the United Nations created the state of Israel in 1948, though the Arab nations rejected the creation of such a state. A follow-up question would then be, "What right did the UN have to create Israel?" Again, the simple answer is that the British

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letters@nique.net

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

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

had conquered and colonized Palestine and therefore had the rights to the land.

In 1937, Winston Churchill commented the following about the Palestinians: "I do not agree that the dog in a manger has the final right to the manger even though he may have lain there for a very long time[...]." This is the ideal behind colonization, which is the foundation of this conflict. This is the reason that the Arab countries rejected the 1948 UN resolution. This is the reason that certain countries reject the creation of Israel still today.

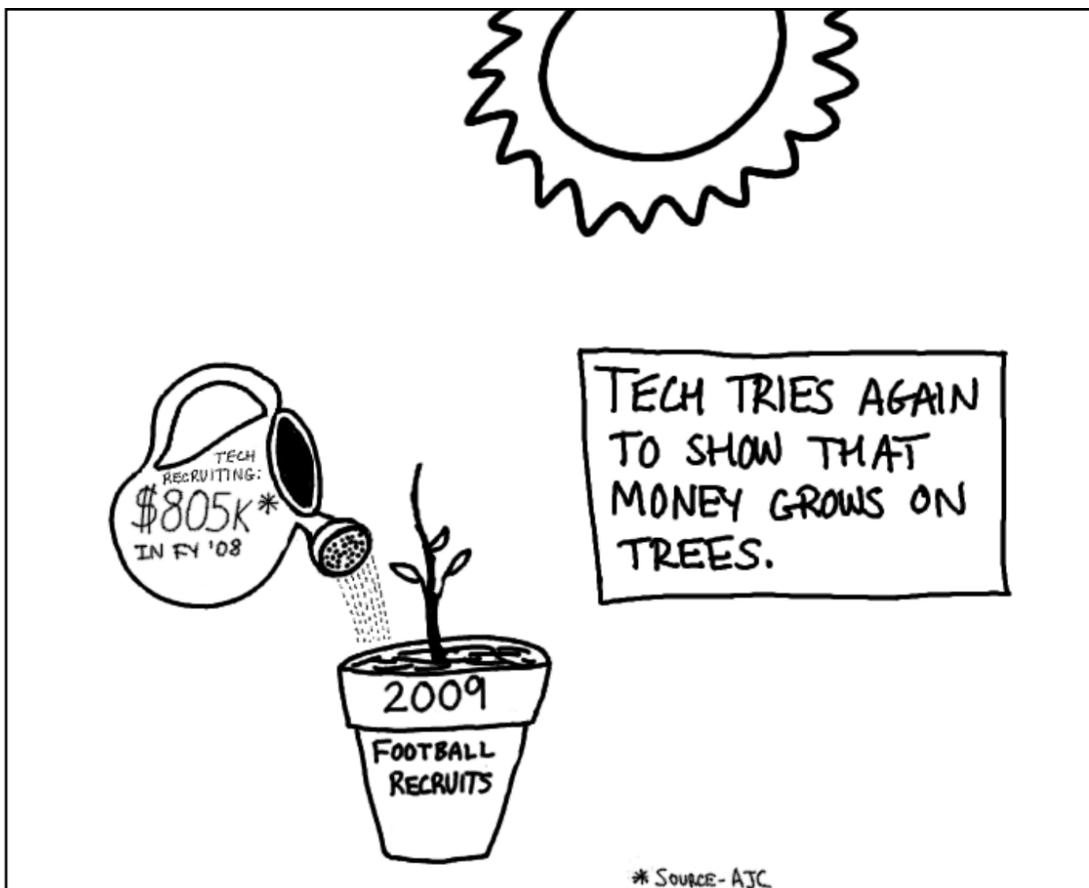
Why are those who had nothing to do with the Jewish persecution during World War II being the ones that are mistreated and driven from their homes? The other [letters] speak of Jewish refugees from Arab lands coming to Israel. However, historical fact does much to reject this assertion. Jews and Muslims have lived in peace for centuries. There has never been large scale Jewish persecution in Muslim countries. There isn't anti-Semitic invective spews from schools, mosques, or the mass media, although there might be anti-Israeli sentiment. Anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are very different sentiments, though many choose to ignore this fact and lump anti-Zionism with anti-Semites.

Whatever the sins of this tragic recent war, it is another round in a conflict that cannot be solved by one-sided Israeli concessions. Ideally, there should be a Palestinian state alongside an Israeli one. That outcome won't be advanced by blaming Palestinians for fighting back against a group who wants to expel the Palestinians and colonize the Holy Land. Whatever Palestinian mistakes and sins, most have been forced on it in wars of survival.

I do not support Hamas and I do not support the Zionists. I am not anti-Semitic and I am not anti-Islam. I only aim to present the basis of the conflict. I encourage everyone to research for himself, and not just blindly buy whatever sensationalist media tries to sell.

Arash Majidi
Graduate IE

EDITORIAL CARTOON BY CRAIG TABITA



Tech's future rests on presidential pick

Did you know we're on the verge of a frenzy breaking out at Tech? I am, of course, referring to the upcoming announcement of the three nominees to succeed Wayne Clough as president of our Institute. Board of Regents chairman Richard Tucker told the *A/C* in January that the finalists would be announced by the end of that month, so we can assume the announcement may be on its way any day now.

Maybe "frenzy" isn't the right word to describe how campus will be affected. I'm sure most students won't care one way or the other until the Regents make their final choice. But personally I've been eagerly looking forward to this for months, and I'm much more excited by this presidential transition than I was by another one that's been in the news lately.

The last time we went through this process in 1994, we emerged with Clough. A student from the early nineties would scarcely recognize what Tech has evolved to since then (though they may have noticed that their Tech degree gets them further than they thought it would). We have new academic buildings and facilities all over campus, with many of them on entirely new areas (Tech Square, Bio-technology Complex). Students wishing to be involved



"Will [Tech's] new president lead us to even greater heights, or will we stagnate or even deteriorate?"

Craig Tabita
Editor-in-Chief

in research or study abroad have more opportunities at their disposal than ever before. Enrollment and research expenditures have ballooned. Over Clough's presidency the Institute and its faculty and students have truly become a force to be reckoned with.

This selection has enormous ramifications, and Clough was an example of a best-case scenario. Will the new president lead us to even greater heights, or will we stagnate or even deteriorate? This is what is at stake. With over 20,000 students and faculty, thousands more staff, and countless alumni, it will be hard to satisfy everyone. As for me, I have a few things I think ought to be priorities for Tech in the coming years.

The first is the need for this campus to eliminate waste and unnecessary redundancy. I've noticed plenty of both all over campus. There are so many aspects of this Institute's operation that are not optimized because the people with the

capability to lead such change are too stuck in their old ways. The new president will have to lead such change from the top, not only to allow us to weather the current economic hardships, but to thrive in the future. Money will always be tight for a public university with great ambitions like ours, and it will be even tighter as long as there is money being wasted.

The second is for Tech to improve its ability to succeed at its most core function: undergraduate education. In my five years as an undergraduate I had way too many courses with way too high student-instructor ratios and too few classes with professors who seemed interested in whether or not their students gained an understanding of the material. A fresh outside perspective from another top-notch educational institution can help us improve in this regard.

The third is to restore the collegiate atmosphere and student unity that seems to be

lacking at Tech. My sense is that many students here only care about the school insofar as it is their vehicle to a high-paying career. If "Tech" means nothing more than classes, drinking on weekends and the shaft one gets every once in a while from Parking or OIT (and none of the holistic development), that's an awfully large component of the collegiate experience that one misses out on.

Finally, the president needs to maintain Clough's approachability and connectedness to the student body. He was well known for being easy to reach, quick to respond to e-mails and frequently out meeting students. The new president will have to do this and more. Our interim president, Gary Schuster, has taken a great step in this direction by maintaining a blog (www.gatech.edu/blogs/president/). The new president should keep this blog and consider using sites like Facebook and Twitter to open up a daily dialog with students.

Those are the things I am looking for as someone who will be a student under the new president for one semester and an alumnus trading on the value of my degree and education for many more after that.

But that's just my perspective. What are you looking for in the new president? Write in and let us know.

Time to bust Ticketmaster's monopoly

I recently purchased concert tickets through Ticketmaster, and not only did they charge a stupidly abstract convenience fee (valued at about a third of the price of the ticket itself), but they then charged me a few dollars for the luxury of printing my own ticket.

How do they get away with charging me for saving on labor and resources? Because there's no other way to get the ticket. If I want to go, I have to pay up. Ticketmaster and Live Nation own the concert industry, and we, the music fans, have had to suffer through the increasingly ridiculous prices.

Last year, Ticketmaster and Live Nation seemed to be parting ways after their contract expired. Concert-goers were hopeful that the divorce would result in the introduction of a little competition and efficiency, and maybe even some innovation, resulting in a lowering of Ticketmaster's notorious convenience fees and ticket prices in general.

However, victory for the consumer was not to be. Live Nation's attempt at ticketing turned out to be shoddily handled and has not improved much since its inception. Ticketmaster's shares fell shortly after Live Nation announced the split, smaller ticketers and concert promoters did not find the market easier to enter and survive, consumers did not feel a decline in concert prices and overall, nothing changed. And



"How could a merger between Live Nation and Ticketmaster not be viewed as a blatant infringement of antitrust laws?"

Siwan Liu
Design Editor

then the economy hit reverse.

Amidst the current state of economic affairs, it's no wonder both of these industry giants are suffering. Ticketmaster and Live Nation shares have plunged in the last three months. If the people that want to go to concerts no longer have income to afford rising concert prices, what's Ticketmaster going to do? Raise prices even more? Sure—enter plans for a merger.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, as of late Tuesday night a possible merger was on the table for Ticketmaster and Live Nation, respectively the largest ticketing company and the largest concert promoter in the industry. Such a merger could almost be seen as a pseudo-bailout plan at consumers' expense. The new company would be called Live Nation Ticketmaster. Barf.

Regardless, this is a monstrosity of a merger that should be nixed immediately. What if Apple and Microsoft decided to merge? We'd consider it ridiculous. How could a merg-

er between Live Nation and Ticketmaster not be viewed as a blatant infringement of antitrust laws? And even more importantly, how could this possibly be acceptable to the consumer who would then have to face an even larger company owning most of the concert industry?

Once approved, the merger would have to go through a board of antitrust authorities. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), however, has been fairly lenient in the past. We can only hope the Obama FTC's antitrust ruling won't be as lenient as would be plausible of the Bush administration. If it goes through, I expect ticket prices will skyrocket.

There's already little to no competition or consumer choice in matters pertaining to live concerts, even though shopping for everything else has gotten easier lately. If I can shop around online for the best price in health insurance, automobiles and books, why can't I pick and choose the best price for tickets? What's wrong

with buying the ticket through the artist or the venue? I've used Paypal for ticket purchasing before. It was hassle-free and much cheaper.

Of course it can be argued that convenience fees are necessary because concerts require staffing, technology, etc., but I don't understand how a \$100 ticket comes with a \$30 convenience fee while a \$30 ticket has a \$9 fee. Does it really take more to offer a \$100 ticket than a \$30 ticket? Is the technology dramatically different, more cutting-edge and all-out better? My guess is that Ticketmaster and Live Nation are just enjoying an absurdly large cut of the profits.

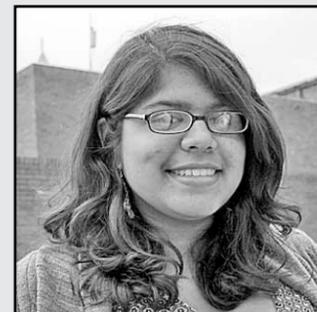
It is also unpleasant when tickets for multiple events go on sale at the same time on Ticketmaster's website. And of course, good tickets are always listed as sold out (when they aren't) or blocked off during initial sales so that consumers can then be charged even more for a resale/scalped ticket. The only seats that are ever available online are the nosebleed seats. Whatever happened to the good ol' American way of first come, first serve?

In an industry that hasn't been able to keep up with technological advances (bootlegging, piracy, etc.), high ticket prices are hurting them even more. There can be nothing worse than an even larger and stupider version of the already much-loathed Ticketmaster.

BUZZ

Around the Campus

What would you like to hear on WREK radio?



Rachael Jacob
Second-year ID

"More techno pop...some symphonic metal and political debates!"



Caitlin Classen
Third-year IE

"Student favorites and campus news."



Daniel Chaney
Second-year IE

"I would like to direct WREK radio to the monthly Paste Magazine music sampler."



Torian Paker
Third-year STAC

"Soul or R&B."

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT-or-NOT



Spring reading

The list of assigned reading for Tech's future president just got longer. The students tasked by SGA to write a white paper will be able to add their two cents to the debate on Tech's new direction, offering student-specific suggestions that will add a new, more balanced voice. Now all we need to know is who will be charged with reading—and enacting—these great ideas.



Recruiting excess

Maybe it's because the country is in a recession or because the athletic fee is likely to increase next year, but the Athletic Association's decision to spend \$800,000 on recruitment activities for football—about \$300,000 more than Georgia and Florida—sounds a little absurd. With more than \$50,000 spent on stationary alone, the proof better be in next season's pudding.



Happy upset

Men's basketball took everyone by surprise by beating number four ranked Wake Forest last week. The upset ended the Yellow Jackets' long losing streak, sending a jolt of hope through fans. This week's home game against Maryland sold out of student tickets. Let's hope the wins—and the fan loyalty—aren't a fluke.



Megamod mystery

Students have been complaining about campus-wide e-mails overflowing inboxes for some time, so the Graduate Student Senate's decision to trash a bill that would allow everyone to opt in (or out) of these list serves seems like a total mystery. Why would they pass up the chance to quickly fix this nuisance to students?

Are Obama's political standards attainable? Not in the real world

Amazingly, although Obama has served over two whole weeks without any horrific scandals or crimes surfacing, the ever-vigilant political machine that is Washington, D.C. has found a new way to keep all eyes on scandal.

If Obama won't commit the scandal that we all crave, then everyone else in Washington will. This week's headlines all seem to have followed the same theme: someone new in Obama's potential cabinet has stepped down due to scandal. Sadly, it's not good scandal like we all got used to in the 90s. No cheap-looking hairdressers or illegitimate children grace the pages of the national news right now. Instead, we have all been treated to rather boring headlines of tax evasion and unemployment filings.

The obvious ridiculousness of public figures who don't pay their taxes hardly needs to be noted. For someone like Tom Daschle to "accidentally" forget to pay \$128,000 in taxes is like saying that a Tech student "forgot" that classes come with finals. It's impossible to believe and should only get you a slap across the face for lack of creativity in coming up with excuses.

However, for Obama to argue that by stepping down from his appointment, Daschle was proving that "there aren't two sets of rules" is just as insulting. There are clearly two sets of rules being applied here, but the categories are not prominent people and ordinary folks, as Obama would have us believe.

The categories are as follows: ordinary people who are allowed to make mistakes, and Obama associates who have to remember to kiss three babies and donate to



"In no other profession would tax fraud cause you to lose your job; it would just result in the IRS making your life miserable..."

Emily Chambers
Outreach Editor

charity before their morning coffee so that they can move on to their perfect performances at work and then drive home in their electric cars to happily eat with their argument and affair-free families.

Of course, Daschle's tax fraud (yes, that is what I will be calling it) was not a mistake. But consider other potential cabinet potentates that have already stepped down. Most recently there was Timothy Keithner, who paid \$34,000 in income tax late, and Nancy Killefer, who didn't pay exactly \$946.69 dollars in unemployment tax on household help. Even before this tax-fraud step-down frenzy started, the Obama team was cutting its losses when potential allies became political risks.

There was the case of Samantha Powers, a Harvard professor and foreign policy specialist who was initially under consideration for a position in the State department and was a high-level advisor in Obama's initial campaign. Powers made a derogatory comment about a one Mrs. Clinton during an interview in London, and almost immediately stepped down from the campaign and disassociated with Obama almost entirely.

The standards of perfection levied against the politicians in Washington are attainable, and

in a theoretical world we would hold all politicians to them. In the real world, however, certain sins need to be ignored, or at least have punishments that suit the crime. In no other profession would tax fraud cause you to lose your job; it would just result in the IRS making your life miserable for the next decade or so.

In no other place than Washington would your personal life dictate your professional outcomes. It would be called discrimination or sexual harassment, and you would smack your employer with a lawsuit. The era of responsibility espoused by Obama is starting to look like it could deserve a second title: the era of the second-best leader. No, our leaders should not be given free reign to flaunt the law, but at the same time, when the offense has nothing to do with their field of expertise, are we not sacrificing competency for a clean record?

Would it not be better to have the most skilled health policy official managing that sector of the economy, to have the most talented budget personnel managing our budget, and not that other guy, the one who remembered to save all his lunch receipts and mail them to his accountant but who may or may not have any idea what he is doing?

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