Faculty Furloughs.

Furloughs would hurt the quality of education.

It is disappointing that faculty furloughs are to be the new measure taken by the Board of Regents to help with budget shortfall. While understandable that budget saving measures must be taken in the new fiscal year, compromising the quality of education by further taxing the professors is not the most logical course to take.

Our priority at Tech should be to provide the highest quality of instruction to students. If professors feel that their jobs are in jeopardy of furloughs, many professors will focus even more on publishing their research to ensure that they are recognized. While this promotes Tech, extra research by busy professors does not necessarily make our lives easier, it seems as if our society is growing more and more complacent, and less active in change. But is this laziness due to the technology being developed?

We are also concerned with the possible legal issues of changing these professors’ contracts after so many years. We hope that they were informed that their contracts were under review and that there is an appeals process for the changes. These important changes should be discussed.

We are glad that President Peterson has said that he does not plan to furlough any professors and hope that this stays true in the upcoming year. If there are furloughs, we expect the process to be conducted with total transparency and concern for the quality of education above budget concerns.

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

Technological progress may change or improve your life, but it is not necessarily the case. While we understand that technology makes our lives easier, it seems as if our society is growing more and more complacent, and less active in change.

To begin with, according to reliable studies, today most people in the US (and elsewhere in the “developed” world) work harder and longer than, say, fifty years ago. Plus USAs have less (paid) vacation time that many of their W. European counterparts.

Add to that the all time high job stress & alienation, job insecurity (brought about by globalization, which was made possible by some key new technologies), and longer commute time (e.g. daily horrors of rush hour traffic).

You understand why so many people are drained of energy.

National laziness (apathy) has NOT increased, life has gotten a lot harder, in spite of all those high tech gadgets (“time & labor saving devices”) surrounding us, and sometimes because of them, we are so hard pressed for time!

I forgot to even mention the decreasing affordability of college for most American families.

So, while I fully agree with the authors plea for social activism, I think we must realize the steady worsening conditions in the daily life of most of our fellow Americans.

There are a lot of good, decent people around, but the cost of non-trivial activism, such as ending the expanding wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the permanent occupation of Iraq, has gotten a lot higher. The Internet (youtube etc.) is full of mistreated and abused (e.g. tasered) social activists.

Second, technology is not neutral.

As the article correctly states “technology is the fruit of ideas”, but then it adds “ideas are a symbol of progress.”

All ideas! Are technologies ethically or morally or politically neutral?

Are they really “only a tool”?

If so, would you give a loaded gun to a five-year-old? Less Or nuclear weapons to a Hitler? Or keep building SUVs while ignoring and marginalizing public transportation?

And what is progress?

I can cite several areas of modern life where things have measurably gotten worse, with the help of modern technology (intentionally or not with “laws of unintended consequences”).

For example, air travel with bad service, no dignity, no comfort, or loss of privacy to big business and big government. Not to mention, the skyrocketing ratio of civilian to military casualties (“collateral damage”) in modern warfare.

Modern technology (and the politics that go with it) induces passivity, atomization, isolation, alienation, consumption (mental and physical obesity).

Third, a remark on progress etc.

Technological progress may be absolute, but outside of extreme situations, like being hungry or on fire most of what matters in life. This means human happiness or satisfaction or contentedness, are all relative.

In other words, does anyone think that my parents’ generation was unhappy because they didn’t have computers and microwave ovens?

And my generation (post WWII boomers) did not have laptops in college, but we also didn’t worry about ecological or environmental catastrophe (or AIDS).

Of course, let’s not forget overpopulation or all the other issues that affect your generation. They are inextricably connected with certain modern technologies (policies).

These are big issues with no quick answers; I could go on and on, but I must stop here. I’ll keep my fingers crossed for your generation.

This is going to be a perilous century, perhaps more barbaric than the 20th.

John G. Papastavridis
ME Professor

Opinions Editor: Katieh Goodrich
Coffee renders many foolish people temporarily capable of wise action.

—Baron de Montesquieu

Friday, June 12, 2009
Give reading a chance this summer

Though riddled with final exams, final papers and an inability to explain to my mother why I had ten times as much stuff in my room as I did at the beginning of the year, I could only think of one thing as April came to an end: summer vacation.

I was so excited to get away from Tech classes and the ever-growing tumor that is Tech construction. I was ready to sleep late, catch up with old high school friends, take road trips and partake in ordinary summer sins and debauchery.

Unfortunately I only had a week to complete my summer reading list with many others, had decided to take summer classes because I wanted to do the unheard of and “graduate on time.”

While summer is supposed to be a time of fun and relaxation, it seems I will no longer have the pleasure of just sitting around for three entire months doing nothing but reading.

And although I will be studying physics and writing editorials, all summer reading for the class was determined to find something to do that made me happy.

That something came in the form of a friend who started reading “Harry Potter” for the first time.

Now before you decide to put the paper down or skip to another article, let me say that you are not alone: I never saw you that I am not going to go on an excited rant about how much I love Harry Potter, how everyone should read it and how J.K. Rowling is the greatest author in the world.

I’ll leave that for another editorial. Although I will admit I was looking forward to mind night release parties for the last three books. I did not, however, dress up.

But seeing someone read a book that I love made me smile like a goodball and get those butterflies in my stomach. I had forgotten the excitement that I got when I read a good book.

I had forgotten the feeling of staying up late at night to read a book because I couldn’t put it down. I remembered how as a young child I find it exciting to stay up past my curfew with a flashlight in hand because I had to finish just one more chapter.

The infamous summer reading we had to do in middle and high school never meant that much to me, I knew I was just doing schoolwork I had to do over the summer but as a chance to expand my reading horizon. Reading allowed me to “broaden my mind” in the words of Professor Trelawny.

Each year I excitedly awaited the new list of books I would be required to read, and each year I read them all within the first month of summer. Sometimes I would read more books than I had to, just because I couldn’t decide which to choose first. I was ticked off when they took Pride and Prejudice off the summer reading list my junior year, but seeing as how I had already the book I was later content when I instead followed the tale of Tess in Tess of the D’Urbervilles.

Call me crazy, nerd, bookworm or whatever you like, but I absolutely adore reading. I remember thinking. “I’d rather be drinking my tea in bed and reading for leisure than anything else.”

With all the classes and assignments that are currently piled on our workload, who would think to waste their precious free time doing more reading? I know what you’re thinking. “I’d rather be drinking tea.”

But there may be a few lost souls at Tech, as I once was, who need to be reminded of how much they enjoyed curling up with a book in their hands, and I hope this reaches you.

I hope you find that good book with the unpredictable, character-driven plot, filled with the various motifs and literary devices we so pains-takingly searched for in AP Literature.

For those of you who are rolling your eyes at the moment, know that it doesn’t necessarily have to be raining outside, and you don’t need to be next to a warm fire wrapped in a blanket with hot chocolate in your hand to have the right reading atmosphere.

And the benefit of reading for pleasure is that you don’t have to analyze the book once you’re done. You can just pick up another and the cycle continues, this time in a completely different world with new characters and conflicts.

So take advantage of the nicer days of summer in Atlanta and curl up with a book. Find a good tree, if you want to keep out of the sun, or work on your tan while you read. Meet me with a book in your hand. I’ll be wearing my “reading is sexy” shirt.

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National debt needs to be re-evaluated

With the recession in America obstructly digging its heels in, other countries are continuing to buy up U.S. debt. Money is just pouring down Capitol Hill — the Obama administration is planning on spending more than $2 trillion in the next couple of years, $787 billion in the economic stimulus package. $643 billion for the new health care reform plan, $5 billion to turn around failing schools, and that is just the first move.

Secretary Geithner intends to push for another stimulus package, $634 billion. How is the government going to finance its large spending program, with the government’s policy of investing more into infrastructure and more borrowing, which translates to more spending to stimulate the economy (because economics professors taught me that theory behind the high-flown rhetoric), I am very skeptical.

They claim that our system is international financing of U.S. deficit spending. However, first of all, the national debt is at over $11 trillion and there is no indication that it won’t continue to grow at roughly the same pace as during the Bush administration.

Who is financing the bulk of this debt? China and Japan, who together hold a quarter of outstanding U.S. government debt. But in these two countries, opinion is now sharply divided over whether governments that are dealing with the effects of global recession on their own soil should continue to bail out a not-so-remote country across the Pacific.

I have had an opportunity to see this debate firsthand in a recent visit to China. People of all ages and from all walks of life are discussing the prudent of buying more U.S. government bonds; with the shaky consensus being that although alternatives look worse, something has to be done, there has to be some reassurance that it comes to international long-term financing of U.S. assets are secure.

Last week, Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner traveled to Beijing expressly to provide this reassurance, saying that the U.S. government is committed to maintaining a strong dollar and that future spending by Washington will be heavily regulated and disciplined.

But in light of China’s (with regard to more than $750 billion in Treasury securities) very natural; no creditor wants to see its debtor borrow enough money to climb out of the crisis and then denude its currency so that the true value of the debt is minimized. Not to say that Washington would do this deliberately, but if inflation takes off or the dollar weakens even more as a result of the floating currency market, the value of the bonds will be cut dramatically.

This in turn helps Washington finance its large spending programs, which then (theoretically) provide income for American consumers to spend on Chinese goods. It is a win-win situation for both sides.

China’s exporters will lose the value of the yuan rise so that Chinese exporters will lose their advantage in foreign markets. U.S. policy makers must realize, however, that it is illogical to ask a country to buy more U.S. debt while pressuring that same country to let its currency’s value fall — the net result would be a huge depreciation of the debt that the U.S. owes, with no benefits for the creditor nation.

Though Secretary Geithner’s remarks in As I see it, the general financial relationship between the U.S. and China is this: Chinese exporters provide an enormous number of cheap consumer goods to the wealthy U.S., which boosts China’s economy and helps the government shore up huge amounts of national debt. Thirty years later, China invests these trade surpluses into U.S. Treasury bonds and other U.S. assets, without the hassle of having to convert currencies.

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Now that the worst recession in decades has put this carefully balanced relationship in danger, it is more important than ever to have clear communication from both sides.

There have been issues in the past, such as demands that China let the value of the yuan rise so that Chinese exporters will lose their advantage in foreign markets. U.S. policy makers must realize, however, that it is illogical to ask a country to buy more U.S. debt while pressuring that same country to let its currency’s value fall — the net result would be a huge depreciation of the debt that the U.S. owes, with no benefits for the creditor nation.

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OUR VIEWS

**HOT or NOT**

**Flicks on Fifth**

The yearly showings of Flicks on Fifth have started for the summer. Even though a free movie outside is always fun, this year’s selection looks to be better than ever. With showings of Quantum of Solace and Slumdog Millionaire, Flicks on Fifth is sure to draw a crowd. As an extra plus, there is going to be free popcorn and specials from surrounding restaurants.

**Terrorism Trial**

Former Tech student Syed Haris Ahmed was found guilty of conspiring to provide material to support terrorism. Not only is it unfortunate to hear about someone found guilty of supporting terrorism here in Atlanta, it is even worse to hear Tech’s name constantly dragged in the mud in association with it. We wish that the media would stop associating his actions with our university.

**Baseball Loses**

A poor showing in the regionals was disappointing for all fans who were watching baseball this season. In particular, the five errors against Southern Mississippi that caused us to lose 10 to 7 and the final loss 12 to 8 that clinched the season’s disappointments. We hope that next season will have a brighter showing so that Tech fans will have better games to watch.

**Good communication is an art**

Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, SecondLife, YouTube, Skype, iPhone, Kindle, TSqure, BuzzPort, Laptops, Remote Controls, blogs, texting, email... In today’s age of technological advancements our generation has grown accustomed to instant information. You can instantly talk to family halfway around the world for free through Skype.

You can instantly see baby pictures of your best friend’s 3 year-old on Facebook. You can follow the stock market and check tomorrow’s weather, while making a call on your iPhone. With all of this access to information at the tip of our fingers, have we lost the art of communication?

These tools are so alluring and popular because they provide immediate gratification and access to information about anything you can imagine. However, they are only tools and unless treated with care can be problematic and even dangerous.

For example, the person who was twittering while someone was breaking into their house instead of calling the police may have lost a sense of what communication should be for. A little common sense will keep you out of this extreme situation, but do not be lulled into believing that you can share everything with the world and then expect to be safe.

With all of this technology at our disposal, why then is it still necessary to go into a classroom and listen to a professor lecture? This form of communication is vital to learning as it involves all of the senses. You hear the information, see the solutions, write down the notes and even smell the marker as the professor solves the differential equation on the white board.

Your senses help you to form memories and impressions of events that last longer than what can be screened in a steady flow of information to you over the Internet. Personal interaction is crucial to forming relationships and good communication skills.

When was the last time you had supper with your family without the television on? When was the last time you were in a meeting and there wasn’t someone with a laptop checking email? When was the last time you had the complete attention of a friend that had all the time in the world to sit and listen to you?

Have we grown so immune to hearing that we have forgotten what it means to listen? Talking with your friends and listening to what they have to say can never be replaced by technology, as one of the deepest desires that we all share is the need for someone to care enough to stop and honestly listen what we have to say.

As kids we would always hear “think before you speak” or “you should listen twice as much as you speak.”

Good communication comes with practice. You need to learn how to listen and that you need time to understand the heart of the matter before drawing conclusions and speaking. This is not an instant process nor is there a formula you can apply to optimize the outcome.

No, it comes from stumbling over your lips, sticking your foot in your mouth, taking a deep breath, apologizing and starting over in the hopes to do better. This is something that technology cannot teach you.

As students we can get so wrapped up in running laboratory experiments, reading textbooks, solving problems, writing papers and research that we do not take our noses out of the computer long enough to smell the roses. Tech has so much more to offer than just an amazing education.

Go sailing with your friends, join the bowling team, play flag football with your roommates, help with a community service project, cheer at the football game against Georgia, try out the food at Culture Fest and get out there and enjoy what the activity Fee that you pay every semester goes towards making these events possible, and therefore it is up to you to get the most out of it. Funding is available to you through the SGA.

My challenge to you is to join at least one organization on campus and participate in the amazing events that are offered, so that next time someone checks your facebook, they will see photos of you having a fantastic time with your friends.

Communication is an art that is mastered over time, so be patient and take every opportunity to learn.

**Join the Technique!**

We are always looking for new writers, photographers, and artists.

General staff meetings are held every Tuesday at 7 p.m. in room 137 of the Flag building.

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**Terrorism Trial**

Linda Harley
Graduate Student Body President

**Baseball Loses**

Four Tech ME graduate students recently placed first in the 2009 Design for Direct Digital Manufacturing Student Competition. Their customized golf clubs with integrated sensors not only grabbed the attention of the judges, but business people. The award-winning four hope to commercially manufacture this award-winning four hope and participate in the annual design for manufacturing competition.

**Flicks on Fifth**

As an extra plus, there is going to be free popcorn and specials from surrounding restaurants.

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