Our Views Consensus Opinion

Guns not welcome
Firearms pose greater danger than advantage

The recent violent on-campus sword attack underscores the fact that the legislation currently going through the Georgia General Assembly to repeal the ban of firearms on campus endangers the Tech community. Allowing guns on campus will not fix the crime problems that plague the surrounding areas of Tech, rather it will only exacerbate the current problems, and potentially create new dangerous situations on campus.

This recipe for disaster could lead to a heightened level of severity in the crimes occurring. While the muggings are deplorable, they would seem trivial in comparison of a student being killed as result of the people of ill-intentions escalating their actions. Also, even if criminals “learned” that Tech students were armed, the lessons would be violent, criminals “learned” that Tech students would armed, the lessons would be violent, criminals would likely get worse before it got better. An arms race between students and criminals will not fix the crime problems occurring.

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Creation of intellectual community vital

As the Institute continues its drive to develop a strategic plan for the next 25 years, the discussion should focus on how to develop an intellectual community with an atmosphere that encourages debate and embraces the ideas of individuals across all disciplines.

Much of the conversation that takes place in the town halls and during the "Days of Engagement" has been focused on creating smaller classes, incorporating more technological aspects, and expanding the students' exposure to the global community. Incorporating more technology in the classroom and standardizing course requirements and grading schemes. While these improvements would be a step in the right direction, initiatives alone will not make Tech a global leader for education in the 21st century.

When compared with peer institutions, Tech students lack opportunities to expand their knowledge beyond their major and engage in a debate of ideas across all disciplines. In order to provide such opportunities to students, the plan should focus on creating an "intellectual community," where students are able to explore topics outside their major and engage in a debate of ideas across all disciplines.

One of the ways to create such a community is to develop a lecture series whereby the Institute hosts influential speakers from a variety of fields, including politics and world affairs. This will mark a huge shift in the attitudes of the student body towards challenges and issues facing our generation and create a dialogue as to how to solve those problems.

The most common theme in the discussion following Gov. Perdue's speech two weeks ago was that they wished there were more high-proﬁle speakers on campus. Receiving an update on Afghanistan from the CENTCOM commander was much more illuminating than hearing about it during class. Several weeks ago the Provost's Task Force for Intellectual Community (PT-FIC) submitted a bill of $60,000 to SGA to host a high proﬁle speaker on campus. Despite my belief, and that of many others, that such an event is exactly what the Institute needs in order to garner a reputation for intellectual diversity, SGA representatives failed the bill. While I strongly disagree with the decision, I understand why SGA was apprehensive to fund such a large amount to a committee that had little financial resources from the Institute.

For the long term, the Institute must take sweeping action to develop an intellectual community that can grow and sustain itself. Tech must realize its reputation as a technological university by definition and embrace ﬁelds beyond the liberal arts. Furthermore, the Institute must ﬁnd a way to make these funds available to students from across different majors, and make it easier for students to use them exploring free electives or pursue minors. Furthermore, students must be able to experience personal development, as well as professional development. In my experience, Tech has out-sourced the former to extra-curricular activities, on which most students have limited time to spend. Students should be able to explore courses that they feel are necessary to their personal development, such as public speaking and economics, while also focusing on their professional courses.

Funding imbalance puts Institute at risk

The newly-released budget for FY 2011 contains a seemingly-devastating 12.3 percent cut to the University System of Georgia. As horrible as it sounds though, this cut should have been bigger. The 12.3 percent cut to higher education is a drop in the barrel compared to the 38.3 percent, almost seven billion dollars, pulled out of elementary, middle and high schools across the state.

Georgia already has dubious-quality education at its elementary, middle and high schools across the state. In 2007 Morgan Quin- to's Education State Rankings gave us a rank of 41 out of 50 states, based on statistics like SAT scores, college enrollment and standardized achievement scores in elementary schools. Additionally, we are the only state in 40 years to have an entire county threatened with the loss of its accreditation, and it hasn't happened.

Clayton county also lost its accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, leaving its seventh-grade seniors ineligible for HOPE scholarships and making them less competitive when applying to out-of-state schools. Recently, the 670 students of the body of Warren county were threatened with the same punishment, given until July 30 to act. It is unclear that, on top of dealing with a decimated state budget, the administration of the ethnically Warren County Board of Education get to work to meet the nine recommendations made to the county.

In 2007 Clayton Technical Institute and Tech students come from Warren or Clayton county, and re-evaluating the budget recommendations to take another percentage of our budget could mean increased tuition and fees or decreased services and student-faculty ratios for students. But Tech does not exist to serve only those students who participate in K-12 education in the state of Ga. will come back to haunt us.

Tech is a public school, and while its budget is in many ways independent of state politics due to federal grants, research funds and private donations, its student body is not. As a public school Tech has an obligation to enroll Ga. students, and in the body of Warren county they are serving children of the state that funds them. If Tech does not exist to serve only those students who participate in K-12 education in the state of Ga. will come back to haunt us.

The devastation being wreaked on K-12 education in the state of Ga. will come back to haunt us.

Emily Chambers
Editor-in-Chief

The USG needs more money. Student-faculty ratios will rise in the face of the economic downturn, and there is a chance that tuition and fees will rise. But these cutbacks are nothing compared to the financial nightmare being visited upon Ga.'s already weak and struggling K-12 education system, a nightmare that will come back to life in a few years when those students enroll at USG schools and build classes of under-educated and under-prepared students who will depress our entrance statistics and hurt the overall course load. Regardless of how much money USG receives, it will have to make tough decisions on how to spend it.

Think about it in terms of entrance statistics. In order for Tech to attract the best students it needs to have high SATs and GPAs for very few years when those students enroll at USG schools and build classes of under-educated and under-prepared students who will depress our entrance statistics and hurt the overall course load. Regardless of how much money USG receives, it will have to make tough decisions on how to spend it.

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Darren Pottinger
Fourth-year ISYE

"I don't really follow football, but I would cheer for the Saints because of Reggie Bush."

Isabella Micola
First-year CE

"I have no idea."

Photos by Vania Ho
Exploit opportunities to learn about something new, yourself

Captain Allan Price, a recent speaker at the College of Management’s Impact Speaker Series, spoke about the qualities of leaders during his lecture about “Crisis Leadership.” The former Delta Airlines pilot noted that above everything else, a leader is a life long learner. Someone who never stops seeking to know more about the world around them, to improve themselves and those who are with them.

What an amazing idea to run with.

Here at Tech, we go to get focused on work, busywork to be specific, little things that don’t inspire us, things that in 20 years most of us will forget. What we will remember, the experiences we had, the friends we made and the times we spent outside of class, exploring the world around us, is ignored, relegated to the off-days and side moments of our lives.

Become one of those students with a dream outside of a GPA, a life goal outside of a Dean’s list. There are inspirational planners all over campus. Many students travel abroad, learning new cultures, studying different ways of life, sight seeing, and marveling at the extent of human kinds efforts. Other follow the Jackets to far away cities, watching our football team fight the good fight. And yet even more Techies sprawl out of Atlanta each weekend to find out what’s in that Chattanooga, to wake board on Lake Lainer, to compete in rugby, lacrosse and ultimate frisbee, even jump out of planes with GT sky diving.

These students have realized that Tech, like any job, needs a work-life balance. In order to succeed at this Institute, you need to leave it every now and again and learn things that no 30-person lecture could teach you.

We never stop, and if you have not begun exploring the world outside of your text books: Start. Grab a friend, attend an event, a random lecture, a meeting off campus? Yes, there are groups of people who do thing off campus. If you want a completely random group try Couch Surfing. All they care about is that you are friendly and come to their in-town events.

There is Tree’s Atlanta which helps our city stay green, and Critical Mass which forms a parade of bikes 900+ through the streets of Atlanta.

On campus you can join a dance club, ethnic group, get involved in Campus Movie Fest, involve yourself in your majors professional organization. There are random pursuits, and amazing paths to take. Look at the recent rise of “Only at Tech,” which gave us a venue to vent. Why not go as far as creating your own solution to one of those complaints that comes up so often. The Humans vs. Zombie kids did: I know it looked odd, but I think they were having more fun than I was walking down Skiles.

Explore yourself, explore other people, explore the city, learn from it all, because there is nothing you do which will not teach you something. There is never enough time in this life, so try to get at least some of it.

Here, let’s start now. Write down what do you want to change in the world, what do you want to do in the world. Now take what you’ve written down, and see how Tech can help. There is probably a mentor on campus who can direct you, a friend who has had the experience or an associate who can and will be a valuable resource.

I recently made the goal to be proficient in five new disciplines by the end of the year. I take those awkward hours of the day (Tuesdays and Thursday’s at 11 a.m. for instance) to pursue those goals. I’ve begun to run, swim, and try white water kayaking if the weekend permits. Nothing is stopping you; there is no way that there is no free time in your life, even if you are at Tech.

So learn about the world, explore it, and then keep on learning from your experiences. Tech might as well be a huge play ground, because nowhere else are you allowed to jump from one activity to the next, having it be so enjoyable and so valuable at the same time. Do not let it pass you by while you were held up in your dorm room. Go out there and find something new.