The selection of Rafael L. Bras to serve as Tech’s next Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs appears to be a significant step in improving the gap between students and faculty, and hopefully rings in a new era of transparency and openness within the upper levels of the administration.

During his on-campus presentation, Bras was extremely open and forthcoming about his plans and ideas for Tech. With his experience in both public and private universities, he is acutely aware of the challenges Tech faces as a state college as well as a flagship research institution. This will be especially important as the relationships between states and their public universities are rapidly devolving. There will be a need to find new funding models and, he understands this necessity coming from budget-crisis-riddled California.

With his selection should come greater accessibility to his office and the vast array of work that it does. His arrival also adds an outsider’s perspective to the discussion of Tech’s current affairs, something that is always welcome in these more uncertain times. Students will enjoy his student-friendly disposition on the relationship between researching and teaching. According to him, professors or other faculty only willing or wanting to research should be doing so in a national laboratory, and not at a school like Tech.

While Bras comes from a engineering and science background, he also provides valuable insight on how to have other fields work together, like the humanities and social sciences, to create better curricula that will help prepare the students at Tech to face modern problems.

For all that he has accomplished so far in his career and all of the promise that his views hold for the university’s future, Bras is a more-than-worthy successor to a strong line of Provosts and leadership at Tech.

The Consensus Opinion reflects the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.
Media, merchandising send bad message

To be skinny or to be over-weight? To wear Uggs or work out shorts or maybe even both at the same time? Can lights be worn as a simple substitute for pants? Media and merchandising reduce the broad range of choices that are ultimately useless and detract from the pursuance of dreams. In reality, women are confronted with the goal of becoming smart, successful and compassionate individuals, but the numerous channels of television and the long pages of advertisements in magazines tell a different story.

I’ll admit that I pore over these magazines and get sucked into the maze of television, waiting on the tips of my toes for a magical solution to all my fashion-appropriate problems (and I have since concluded that rights are not partially ascribed). However, I am subsets, but look to how the conflict between the expectations of the media and myself changes over the years.

The marketing starts early on too, while girls are still reasonably impressionable. I spent most of my youth playing with plastic dogs and teddy bears; I hated dolls because they were too high-maintenance, since picking out my own clothes was never a waste.

There is an invisible force at work at Tech. This force makes our campus beautiful through small actions, we can participating in a multi-million dollar industry and marketing affordable clothing, we add value to our life on the other side of every door she walks through. These small acts of kindness, whether meeting the cashier who helped you? Do you stop to thank the staff member on your day. However, did you remember the day I introduced myself to Ruth, the Tech housekeeper assigned to help keep my lab space clean. Ruth was walking through my shared office space emptying the wastepaper baskets into her cart. I walked up to her, said, “My name is Eric. What’s yours?” I extended my hand. Her face broke into a smile, eyes brightened and she said, “I’m Ruth, pleased to meet you.” Over the months I have been in my lab, I have gotten to know Ruth better, and I’m glad for it. She smiles and pleasant and chat always brighten my day and her’s.

Tech support far too underappreciated

“Sadly, we take this [support] staff for granted and as largely invisible, almost like a lamp fixture on the wall.”

“Unfortunately, the ultimate goal of the media should be to market to smart, self-sufficient girls and women.”

Kamma Bohra
Focus Editor

“The way he went about it was bad but not complaining.”

“Amazing, I’m from Miami. The way he went about it was bad, but not bad not complaining.”

Alex Bailey
Fourth-year ECE

“It would have been good if he had stayed in Cleveland, because it is his city.”

“IT really cares, but I think he made the right decision.”

Bryson Rajendran
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“I don’t really care, but I think he made the right decision.”

Thomas Devine
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“IT really cares, but I think he made the right decision.”

David Spain
Second-year ME

Media, merchandising send bad message

There is an invisible force at work at Tech. This force makes our campus beautiful through its actions: our floors clean, our lawns trim, our bellies full, our meetings organized and our paperwork processed. I speak not of Google, nor the administration in the Tech Tower but of any supreme being but of a gentle, numerous, and largely underappreciated part of the Tech community: our support staff. Everyday, they work tirelessly to make Tech beautiful.

Sadly, we take this staff for granted and as largely invisible, almost like a lamp fixture on the wall; it’s there, but not worth noticing until it burns out. However, it is this very staff that serves as the heart and backbone of the institution. Their actions are the most poignant representation of the institution’s ethos. These actions, however seemingly minor, improve our days and remind us that Tech cares about its students and the beauty of its campus. It is easy to remember countless instances of Tech’s support staff went out of their way to help you. Remember the time the cashier who helped you fresh off the grill? How about the case shown by the library staff in helping locate a missing book? Or remember the time a secretary was willing to look over her job and her contact with the student for the lack of makeovers in production and not for the lack of makeovers in production and not for the lack of malevolence on his part. Did he not think of the slubby wet paper cutter dripping its sticky mess on the floor, necessitating further work with a mop? No, none of these things went through this student’s head.

A few moments later, while en queue for lunch, I observed how many students did not thank the cashier for taking their order. They grumbled their orders, didn’t make eye contact and in general did not look thrilled to be there. In time you waited, the cashier had a radiant smile, a twinkle in her eyes and enthusiasm in her voice waiting to make your day. Imagine trying to radiate positive energy all day in the face of indifference. This seemingly Sisyphean task slowly grinds down even the most resilient of personalities.

So, the next time you see a member of Tech’s support staff, take a moment to introduce yourself. Spend a few minutes to learn where they come from and thank them for their help. It’s the least you can do to express your gratitude for their unwavering attention to detail and service.

I remember the day I introduced myself to Ruth, the Tech housekeeper assigned to help keep my lab space clean. Ruth was walking through my shared office space emptying the wastepaper baskets into her cart. I walked up to her, said, “My name is Eric. What’s yours?” I extended my hand. Her face broke into a smile, eyes brightened and she said, “I’m Ruth, pleased to meet you.” Over the months I have been in my lab, I have gotten to know Ruth better, and I’m glad for it. She smiles and pleasant and chat always brighten my day and her’s.

It never fails to impress me the smiles I elicit when I offer my hand in friendship towards Tech’s support staff, whether it is in the library, Student Center or Campus Recreation Center. Please don’t be a stranger towards these wonderful staff and pretend you don’t see them. Say “Hi”, or “How are you today?” or “Can you help me out?” Together, through small actions, we can forge a more unified and positive Tech community. Thank you.

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I took the road/train/bus less traveled, but not always by choice

We have finally made it to Oxford, England. And what a journey it has been. Plane rides, bus trips, metros, taxis and the general transportation system have all been obvious obstacles for American students traveling from country to country.

But what you may not think about is how to get around the cities once you’ve arrived. We have had very different adventures on several of the different transportation systems in the various cities that we have trekked. It was even more interesting when the directions and stops were in different languages.

In Berlin, after a long day of sightseeing and walking tours, followed by an amazing meal, getting back to our hotel was our first priority. Our bellies were full and our feet were tired.

Of course this is the perfect recipe for having things go awry. We found the right platform as well as the correct route and direction of the train we needed. But since everything was in German, we did not realize that there were A, B, C trains, with C being the express train.

You can guess where this is going... aboard the wrong train. We passed our stop; the C train kept moving for another twenty minutes. No one around us spoke any English.

Our train finally stopped on the outskirts of Berlin. It was already nearing 11 o’clock at night. Luckily, we were able to catch the next train heading back into the city. Thankfully, the train operator saw that we were just lost students and only charged us for buying another ticket rather than fining us the ridiculous amount of money that he could have. We eventually made it back to the hotel safe and sound, having lost only a few Euros and an hour’s time on another train ticket odyssey.

Rome. The city is an amazing historical archive. The traffic really is as crazy as you have seen in any movie and worse than anything in Atlanta. The gelato is better than what you’ve heard. There are an infinite number of possibilities for pizza toppings and pasta combinations. The smorgasbord of Italian food is amazing.

While their food options were plentiful, it seemed as if there were even more ways to get around the city. You could take a train, a taxi, dozens of different subway and bus routes or even a horse drawn carriage. Rome, the city is an amazing historical archive. The traffic really is as crazy as you have seen in any movie and worse than anything in Atlanta. The gelato is better than what you’ve heard. There are an infinite number of possibilities for pizza toppings and pasta combinations. The smorgasbord of Italian food is amazing.

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