Opinions

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do.

—Confucius

Friday, August 20, 2010

Steady, controlled change
New administrators welcome, but continuity needed

We welcome all the new students, staff and faculty members to campus and look forward to a productive and eventful year. However, with change, especially to the upper level administration, comes adjustment. The campus community needs to be patient and understanding as adaptations to campus are made, hopefully for the better.

New faces also bring in new ideas and fresh perspectives, which should enhance the community discussion. A vibrant campus conversation is more important now than ever as the Institute will roll out the new strategic plan on Aug. 31. The members of the campus community who have stayed but recently moved to new positions will hopefully be able to better help Tech at their new posts.

While many of the new members of the upper level administration may not work directly with students on a day-to-day basis, the decisions that they will make will impact students as the campus leadership continues to move Tech forward. Students should also be consulted and input should be sought when major changes to the institution are made. Tech's previous methods to success should not be ignored in this process. The school has come quite far in a small amount of time, and failure to retain the Institute's identity would be tragic and regressive.

The changes made to many positions should also help to foster a new era of efficiency for the Institute. To help ensure that this goal is achieved, the administration needs to clearly articulate the roles these new position entail and inform the campus of these roles.

Now, after beginning the process of transitioning between people in these positions in the administration, an era of continuity would be appreciated. Continuity will allow Tech to build on its solid foundation and continue to make necessary improvements to the Institution for many years to come.

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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Cambridge, Mass — The manufactured controversy over what has ludicrously come to be called the “Ground Zero Mosque” has a lot of depressing aspects. But easily the most surprising and, for me, uplifting development is the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish human rights organization, has sided with Sarah Palin, Newt Gingrich, and the other opportunistic GOP pols who are exploiting this issue.

A couple weeks ago the ADL came out with a statement recommending that “a different location be found” for the Cordoba House, the Muslim community center, similar to the YMCA and JCC, that is being promoted by a Manhattan Imam with a long record of ecumenicism and moderation.

The ADL argued that “ultimately this is not a question of rights, but a question of what is right. In our judgment building an Islamic Center in the shadow of the World Trade Center will cause some victims more pain unnecessarily—and that is not right.” The principle at work here seems to be, “Whatever the victim of Sept. 11th don’t like, isn’t right.” It reminds me of the idea that we should support the death penalty because the families of murder victims tend to want murderers executed.

What I found even more astounding was the ADL’s notion that this is “not a question of rights.” The group calls itself “the nation’s premier civil rights/human rights agency,” and it’s sniffing at the idea that Muslims have a right to build mosques (not to mention swimming pools, restaurants, and the rest of the Cordoba House’s features) wherever they please. The ADL has argued in court against the use of zoning laws to restrict the construction of houses of worship, but apparently “sensitivity” is more important than religious freedom.

Don’t get me wrong, sensitivity is important. But in order to demand that one party be more sensitive, there has to be some rational basis for another party’s feeling offended. If I cursed loudly and deliberately in the vicinity of schoolchildren, you would say, I may have a right to do that, but I should have been more sensitive because there’s a legitimate interest in protecting children from dirty words. Maybe I believe that children don’t need to be protected from curse words, but still, sensitivity to the strong belief of others requires me, morally if not legally, to hold my tongue.

The Cordoba House situation isn’t like that at all. The only reason to take offense at a Muslim community center that blocks the way north of the World Trade Center is the assumption that all Muslims have some connection with, and responsibility for, the actions of the 9/11 terrorists. That’s why

ADI promotes double standard
By Sam Barr
Harvard Crimson

We welcome your letters in response to Technique content as well as issues 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.

The Cordoba House situation has ludicrously come to be called “the Ground Zero Mosque” and has become a matter of national and international concern. However, it is not clear that this is the best location for a mosque to be built. The Cordoba House is located near Ground Zero, and it is important that we consider the impact this would have on the Muslim community. The mosque would provide a much-needed space for Muslims to practice their religion and would help to promote understanding and tolerance.

On the other hand, there are some concerns about the location of the mosque. Some critics argue that building a mosque near Ground Zero would be insensitive and disrespectful to the families of those who lost loved ones on 9/11. They believe that this would remind people of the tragedy of that day and could be seen as a form of trivialization.

However, I believe that the Cordoba House should be allowed to proceed with its plans. The mosque would provide a much-needed space for Muslims to practice their religion and would help to promote understanding and tolerance. It is important that we consider the impact this would have on the Muslim community.

In conclusion, I believe that building a mosque near Ground Zero would be a thoughtful and appropriate decision. It is important that we consider the impact this would have on the Muslim community and that we work to promote understanding and tolerance in the aftermath of 9/11.

We have seen politicians and other commentators blur the difference between moderate and jihadist Muslims and imply that we are at war with Islam per se. Carl Paladino, a Republican running for NY governor, says the Muslim community center would be a “monument to those who attacked our country.” Newt Gingrich has postured that there are “no churches or synagogues in Saudi Arabia,” as if the center were sponsored by the Saudi government, not a moderate Saudi Muslim leader about as far, spiritually speaking, from radical Sunni Islamists as the Pope is from Christ. Pat Buchanan says building a mosque near Ground Zero would be like “building a Shinto shrine” at Pearl Harbor. Because, you see, we are at war with Muslims just as we were at war with the Japa-

nete. It really is that simple for them. But it’s wrong and the ADL should have said so and left it at that.

As Peter Beinart says, “Would the ADL for one second suggest that sensitivity toward people victimized by members of a certain religion or race justifies discriminating against others, completely innocent, members of that religion or race? Of course not. But when it comes to Muslims, the standards are different.” Exactly, because they don’t see Muslims the way they see Feisal Abdul Rauf as “completely innocent.” This is collective guilt, pure and simple.

The whole sad affair with the ADL reminds me of Beinart’s great article a couple months back about how American Jewish organizations have sacrificed their human-rights liberalism on the altar of Zionism, in the process losing the allegiance of many younger American Jews. Beinart wrote, “These groups would never say, as do some in Netanyahu’s coalition, that Israeli Arabs don’t deserve full citizenship and West Bank Palestinians don’t deserve human rights. But in practice, by defending virtually anything an Israeli government does, they make themselves intellectual bystanders for Israeli leaders who have the very real values they profess to adorn.”

Now the threat to liberal values has come to New York, and the ADL has blown a major opportunity to stand up for them.
Oddsities of Tech bring about tolerance

While the new school year marks a new beginning for some of us, for the majority it means the second, third, fourth, fifth or even sixth year beginning. This fall is the beginning of my fifth year as an undergraduate, and I have to admit, as tired as I get just thinking about all of the sleep that I will be missing next semester, I get equally excited to come back to all of the things that I love about campus. I am away during the summer break.

When I did have a great deal more during my internship this summer, I found myself missing the unique and quirky culture that can be found at Tech. It is very rare to find a group of people that do so many interesting and sometimes dorky things. No one at work, besides fellow Techies, caught my jokes about LAN parties and Humans vs. Zombies games. Being away from the campus really made me appreciate what an open campus we have and how receptive students are to things that happen on campus. Many campuses might make fun of because it is not “cool.”

I mean, let’s face it, we can do some strangely unique activities on Tech campus that would be ridiculed at other schools, and we’re quite proud of it, as we should be. Tech has consistently defined its own unique culture and quirky culture that can be found at Tech. It is very rare to describe it. So many events have happened off the field while so little has happened on it. We have taken the facts being involved in legal troubles is just passing news, you know that the summer has been very busy, and maintain sanity.

Around Campus

What is your goal for the coming year?

Sanny Chun
First-year CM

“It’s my first time in the U.S. My goal is to adapt to this place.”

Sagar Govil
First-year ISYE

“To enjoy Tech to the fullest and see what it’s all about.”

Clark Howell
Second-year ISYE

“To stay busy, but not too busy, and maintain sanity.”

Gus Boyd
Second-year AE

“We are out to remind the people that innocents must be accountable to the actions of the other people that are surrounding us, that includes not being judgmental about what other people are doing to fill their free time.

If you do not feel that the anime club is the best fit for you that does not mean that you should not listen to what people have to say about the subject nor does that mean you should make fun of it. In many instances, the best way to become involved in campus is to embrace the sometimes wacky culture that exists here and utilize it to create a better experience while pursuing your college career at Tech. All Tech students owe it to themselves and their Techies to work to help support the unique culture on campus that allows students to freely express themselves through their interests around Tech. Every Tech student should give a club, organization or new hobby that they are pitching around campus in the upcoming week a chance. Even though it may be something that you would never be caught dead doing in high school, the new school year is a great time to give a hobby a chance that you may consider strange.

And who knows, you may genuinely enjoy something that is only available within the unique culture of hobbies that Tech offers.

Summer sports stories masquerade as news

“I don’t envy sports fans today, who have to deal with all of this acting as news in place of recaps of games.”

Hahnning Lee
Editor-in-chief

What happened in sports this summer? When asking this question, actual sporting events were likely not the first things to come to mind. No, it was likely a long list of ridiculous announcements and news only the most hardcore fans could care about. It has been a summer of exciting fake news. There is no other way to describe it. So many events have happened off the field while so little has happened on it. We have taken the facts being involved in legal troubles is just passing news, you know that the summer has been very busy, and maintain sanity.

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New year offers chance to honor past, carve path into the future

Welcome to campus! You have the distinction of being part of a student body that boasts the best-qualified and most diverse freshman class ever. In addition, 2010-2011 will be a banner academic year for Tech from both a historical and a future perspective.

This year marks not only the 125th anniversary of Tech, but also the 50th anniversary of both the matriculation of black students to campus and the Rambled Wreck.

Although we’ll be celebrating these milestones throughout the year, we are also embracing the opportunity for our campus to chart its future course.

I hope you will plan to join me Aug. 31 at 11 a.m. inside the Fert Center when we officially launch our new strategic plan to take Tech to its 150th anniversary. This has been a year-long process that has involved participation by many of you, and I look forward to your involvement in helping us bring the plan to life in the coming year and years to come.

As each of you prepares for the academic challenges that lie ahead, I want to make sure you are aware of a number of changes on our leadership team.

Dr. Rafael Bras joins us in Sept. as our new provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs, coming to Tech from the University of California-Irvine, where he was the Dean of the Henry Samueli School of Engineering.

On May 1, Dr. Steve Cross began as Tech’s executive vice president for Research (EVPR), providing leadership, strategic focus and support for the Institute’s multifaceted research and economic development enterprise.

Dr. Ravi Bellumkonda, a fellow in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, has been named an associate vice president within the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research (EVPR).

Joining us this fall is Dr. Jacqueline Jones-Royster, our new Dean of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts who arrives from the Ohio State University.

While College of Management Dean Steve Sulha is taking off the semester to focus on research, Se- nior Associate Dean Sri Narasimhan will oversee day-to-day operations.

Nina Sawczuk has been named general manager of the Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC) at Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute (EII).

We have a new vice provost for Enrollment Services, Paul Kohn, who has joined us from the University of Arizona.

Gregory R. Moore has been named senior director of Stamps Health Services, joining Tech from the University of Kentucky, where he held a similar position.

Corye Boone, a fourth-year College of Management student, is your new SGA Undergraduate Student Body President.

Anthony Baldrige, who is a Ph.D candidate in Chemistry, has been named a SGA Graduate Student Body President.

Many more changes are taking place. We are in the process of hiring a new vice president for In- stritute Diversity, an associate vice president for Communications & Marketing and new leadership for the Office of Information Tech- nology and Office of Human Re- sources.

While you may or may not come into contact with these new faces, you can be confident in knowing that we have a team of dedicated professionals who are focused on making Tech one of the most highly respected, tech- nology-focused learning institu- tions in the world.

Our faculty and staff represent only a part of the overall larger equation here at Tech. Each of you plays a pivotal role in making sure that leadership, innovation, entrepreneurship and public ser- vice continue to be hallmarks of our both our institution and our graduates.

I encourage you to embrace the many opportunities available to you here at Tech. Learn from our leadership, our faculty and your fellow students and join with me as we work together to Design the Future.
**Chances to improve grads’ experiences lie ahead**

Let me welcome everyone to the fall semester and another academic year at Tech! This time of the year always brings a different atmosphere to Tech with orientations, campus events, and a welcoming environment for all new and returning Jackets. This year will prove to be one filled with a myriad of events and activities within and sponsored by the SGA. From the graduate side of SGA, there will be a number of issues and activities that we plan to tackle in this academic year.

Communication amongst graduate students will be a main focus this year in Grad SGA. What is becoming increasingly important and also increasingly difficult is to communicate major campus initiatives focused on grad student constituencies.

I want to invite all graduate students to a time honored tradition at Tech, the graduate student picnic. The picnic gives grad students an opportunity to enjoy an evening of free food and entertainment as a welcoming environment for all new and returning Jackets. This year will prove to be one filled with a myriad of events and activities within and sponsored by the SGA. From the graduate side of SGA, there will be a number of issues and activities that we plan to tackle in this academic year.

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This year your SGA will pursue a strategic approach to enhancing the student experience that focuses on a few key areas. They are as follows: academic excellence, community outreach, and campus support. Through those avenues, we hope to provide sustainable change to this campus that impacts Jackets for years to come. Now, I know that you are thinking to yourself, "What does this mean?" That is why I would like to focus in detail on a few areas that we are hoping to partner with the administration to address.

Academic Excellence: Let’s face it, we all here to learn. That is why we have created a new position within that solely focuses on academics. This position will pursue areas such as establishing a Student Faculty Rights and Expectations, as well as working with our LEAD program to develop a Leadership minor. We also will be focusing in increasing the number of value-added experiences in the classroom. That goes beyond simply increasing faculty/student interaction, but it allows students to tackle real-world problems and develop solutions.

Community Outreach: Tech has a tremendous impact on the surrounding community. This year, we will seek to leverage that impact to bring sustainable, positive change to our surrounding communities. By building relationships with neighborhood associations and government entities, we provide students with an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those who live right next door to us. We also position our students as vehicles of positive change in the Atlanta community.

Campus Support: One of the key areas that we intend on improving with those departments that provide integral support to our students is in communication. We aim to provide real-time feedback on initiatives so that departments are able to understand if their resources are focused in the areas that maximize the value added to students.

While we plan to do these things effectively but need your full participation in order to do so.

When I was a freshman, I recall hearing a very similar call for involvement in the Georgia Tech Student Body. I ran for that position in my junior year, and as well as hundreds of other students, accepted that call and worked to make this campus a better place to live.

Now it is your turn to take ownership of your Tech experience and make a difference in this community. If ever I may be of assistance, please don’t hesitate to send me an email at coreyboone@gmail.com or visit my office. I am here to serve you!

As you embark upon your Tech experience, please make it a goal to have the best time of your life. Tech provides with it a rich experience full of traditions (and opportunities to make your own). So, get involved, learn the traditions and write your very own Tech story. With such a phenomenal group of scholars, I know you will make a difference in this bright community.
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