OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, March 23, 2001

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Shaft 1 or shaft 2?

During SGA elections this coming Monday through Wednesday, students will also vote on options concerning graduation for this fall and future semesters. This referendum may be the beginning of an encouraging trend of cooperation between SGA and the President’s Office. Even more incredibly, the President’s Office promises to respect the collective decision of the students; the winning option will be policy for years to come. This year, students have one more reason to vote than in years past, as this policy will directly affect all students graduating after Fall 2001. Regardless of whether or not students like either of the two options, seeking input in a referendum is a good way to resolve the issue.

Don’t forget basics

A recent step in the School of LCC will create a new undergraduate track within the STaC major that focuses on film and media studies. While expanded course offerings can benefit students, the School must carefully ensure that the opportunity to take such classes does not distract from learning strong writing and communication skills that the new courses may not emphasize. Too many students come to the School Publications office to improve their writing skills and learn how to string sentences together; these skills should be learned in English 1001 and 1002. The School must focus on teaching core communication skills while broadening to include classes that may not share a similar emphasis.

As the Graduate Executive, we cannot ignore the false and ignorant charges made by Ms. Melissa Matassa of Women’s Awareness Month about the Graduate Student Government (GSG). First, the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) is organized as a legislature, and we are a deliberative body. We comply with Robert’s Rules, and our meetings follow parliamentary procedure. Every group that comes before us is given time to present their request. The Women’s Awareness Month representatives had ample opportunity to present their case, and also to answer the Senate’s questions. As part of our so-called “inefficiency,” Matassa’s supporters asked for a waiver of our Bylaws to consider their bill out of turn, which seriously inconvenienced other groups that had been waiting long, and she got it. It is surprising she would complain after jumping to the head of the line, but we believe her spurious charges resulted from a failure to convince the Senate that the request was meritorious.

Matassa failed to mention the legislation that generated this controversy, money for Women’s Awareness Month that included $4000 for an obscure speaker. With an optimistic projection of 200 Tech attendees, the GSS was asked to fund $20 a person for an event with limited campus-wide appeal. As a body, the GSG has repeatedly denied excessive speaker’s fees that do not serve a wide audience. Further, the GSG has repeatedly fought to cap outrageous speaker’s fees, and in turn support programming that benefits the entire Tech community, not just an interest body, the GSG has repeatedly denied money for Women’s Awareness Month.

The students, University Board of Regents, and the higher ups in the Tech administration can achieve a new goal: a renowned liberal arts college based at a highly renowned state technical institution that earns funding on its own merits. Until Tech students and the university system realize this, Tech will ultimately be a second-class university, with a great engineering program.

Jessica Heasley
gt1796a@prism.gatech.edu
“Organizational ego” discourages campus involvement

Simpler and more direct application processes, inclusiveness, and diversity could help Tech organizations continue to grow and improve instead of becoming inbred cliques

In the past several years, a grass- root movement began at Georgia Tech, and students—deciding they wanted to encourage students to excel not only in the classroom but also in leadership endeavors. The result of this brain- storm is the Georgia Tech Leader- ship Initiative, a proposal that is partly in place and partly in the planning stages. This plan would develop campuses for Tech students that would allow them to hone their leadership skills.

While this initiative is an im- portant step toward helping our stu- dents, hundreds of student organi- zations already on campus, the doors of opportunity should al- ready be open for students who are willing to step in and do the work. Unfortunately, many campus orga- nizations require application pro- cesses that are so painstaking and convoluted that it requires leader- ship involvement—especially students who are trying to get involved for the first time. After visiting there, I call this student- driven process an identi- cal interview that takes approximately thirty minutes, and a group inter- view that is about an hour in length. Using data from those sources, as well as teacher recommendations and SAT scores, the PEP is able to adequately and fairly allocate thou- sands of dollars to individual stu- dents. If all schools have a four-year group interview, such as the one used by FASE orientation, is not required to earn a four-year schol- arship worth thousands of dollars, then no Tech student group can justify such a requirement. Last time I checked, no student group was awarding stipends for membership. Other signs of organizational ego can include a membership limited to, those groups that require attendance at socials and other similar activities to retain their members. This require- ment is all too familiar to fraternity and sorority rush. Individuals who just want to make friends and socialize with people with whom they get along, and fit in should go through rush; student organizations serve purposes on the Tech campus and the greater community. They should not merely be social organizations that provide more benefits for members than the members provide for the organization itself. Georgia Tech’s President’s Scholar- ship Program requires only one application—the same one every spring. After a quick inter- view that takes approximately thirty minutes, and a group inter- view that is about an hour in length.

While requiring prospective members to attend a social or other similar event may be a good way to observe the manner in which an individual interacts with others, it also provides an opportunity for current members to railroad their friends into membership. Once membership is achieved, a group must be more than just “you know who” than merit, a group compromiss their integrity and even compete within the Tech community. In addition to harming the group standing in the Tech community, organizational ego can also result in a collection of individuals that is hom- ogenous. Tech’s organizations should look like Tech—they should be composed of diverse individuals with a variety of backgrounds, ex- periences, and ideas that they bring to the community. When student organizations be- come exclusive and homogenous, they are slowly killing the social and ad- ditional life of the Tech community. When student organizations fail to serve the greater good, they are re- duced to nothing more than elitist cliques. All of Tech’s organizations have the potential to offer amazing roles on the campus, but the cur- rent trend of artificial exclusivity on campus robs the students.

It is important for leaders to rec-ognize these trends within their or- ganizations. As the name suggests, only my organization, the Technique, comes closer to closing the gap in the Tech community set to elitism. Each week we provide you with news and features of interest to the greater Tech campus community, as well as the column of opinions on major campus issues. At the same time, we sometimes become too eager to live up to our reputation as “The South’s Liveliest College News- paper,” and we must only understand our mission. Some have called our PSAs and silver boxes divestitures in the name of respectable publication. I can’t say I disagree. The organizational ego virus, which has the potential to become a case of full-blown clique, has detri- tual effects for aspiring leaders as well as for Tech society as a whole. Many students leave Tech not because they can’t make it academically, but because they don’t feel like they are part of a community. Some student organizations and their leaders con- tribute to this situation of rot by building barriers to involve- ment even higher.

One of the most important aspects of any major leadership desiring to be- See Orco, page 10

Judy Shaw
Managing Editor

Atlanta must improve to reach true world class status

While requiring prospective members to attend a social or other similar event may be a good way to observe the manner in which an individual interacts with others, it also provides an opportunity for current members to railroad their friends into membership. Once membership is achieved, a group must be more than just “you know who” than merit, a group compromiss their integrity and even compete within the Tech community. In addition to harming the group standing in the Tech community, organizational ego can also result in a collection of individuals that is hom- ogenous. Tech’s organizations should look like Tech—they should be composed of diverse individuals with a variety of backgrounds, ex- periences, and ideas that they bring to the community. When student organizations be- come exclusive and homogenous, they are slowly killing the social and ad- ditional life of the Tech community. When student organizations fail to serve the greater good, they are re- duced to nothing more than elitist cliques. All of Tech’s organizations have the potential to offer amazing roles on the campus, but the cur- rent trend of artificial exclusivity on campus robs the students.

It is important for leaders to rec-ognize these trends within their or- ganizations. As the name suggests, only my organization, the Technique, comes closer to closing the gap in the Tech community set to elitism. Each week we provide you with news and features of interest to the greater Tech campus community, as well as the column of opinions on major campus issues. At the same time, we sometimes become too eager to live up to our reputation as “The South’s Liveliest College News- paper,” and we must only understand our mission. Some have called our PSAs and silver boxes divestitures in the name of respectable publication. I can’t say I disagree. The organizational ego virus, which has the potential to become a case of full-blown clique, has detri- tual effects for aspiring leaders as well as for Tech society as a whole. Many students leave Tech not because they can’t make it academically, but because they don’t feel like they are part of a community. Some student organizations and their leaders con- tribute to this situation of rot by building barriers to involve- ment even higher.

One of the most important aspects of any major leadership desiring to be-
handful of students.

Really, Matassa complains because she lost, not because the Graduate Senate is inefficient or inept. We support women at Georgia Tech, but not outlandish requests for limited resources that serve few. Her program lacked merit, and having no logical arguments to support her, she wrongly has attacked the Graduate Student Government. The process worked exactly as it should, insuring all student organizations that come before the GSG are treated fairly.

Grant Jenman, GSG President
gte078r@prism.gatech.edu
Matt Kaufman, GSG VP
gte316s@prism.gatech.edu
Jennifer Jordan, GSG Secretary
gte0595c@prism.gatech.edu

involved in something he or she cares about will be intimidated by an application with multiple essay questions and an interview process that lasts several rounds. Organizations who really want to encourage involvement and community will simplify their application processes and make them less intimidating for first-time applicants. The President’s Council Governing Board uses an application process that is not only simple, but also extremely fair. The application’s simplicity encourages people to apply, and a brief interview allows the selection committee to narrow its choices.

Other student organizations should follow this example and create simple applications procedures that encourage new students to become involved in leadership endeavors on campus. PCGB’s success proves that it is possible to have an application process that both encourages budding and still allows current members to accurately evaluate candidates.

Retention and leadership are serious issues that many individuals at Tech are devoting time and resources to address. The answers to these problems, however, do not require administrators from the ivory halls of Tech tower to wave their magical administrative wands over the problems. It requires a few current leaders to step up and say that the current trend is bad and call for a change. Until organizations make the changes themselves and encourage new leaders to emerge, Tech will always be run a select few members of the leadership elite.

Got something you’re mad about?

Send letters to the editor to:
editor@technique.gatech.edu or
opinions@technique.gatech.edu.

Please limit your letters to 400 words. Thank you!