So long to summer SAC

This summer’s closure of the Student Athletic Complex seems to be a divine act—or just bad luck; it is no one’s fault that asbestos was found in the buildings, forcing the restriction of student use of the building. At the same time, it seems strange that no one knew of the existence of the dangerous materials in the structure. Perhaps in the future it will be possible to be more prepared about the challenges that different construction sites will present before building begins.

The benefits that the new SAC facility will bring to campus far outweigh any of the difficulties that this construction will cause to campus. The new Health Center, to be located near this facility, will be completed in February. The part of SAC that will be completed this summer will be reopened in the fall with facilities roughly equal to the old space while also including new equipment, including a more accessible indoor track. When the final facility is completed, Tech will have a higher quality and a higher quantity of recreational activities to offer its students.

Although we have found ourselves in a situation with no good solution, it does seem that Tech is attempting to make the best of it. While many alternate plans have been put forward, the administration’s major focus should now be on securing alternate plans that are as convenient as possible, while still offering most of the same options that SAC does. Using the Athletic Association, the O’Keefe Gym, the Barbell Club and the athletic facilities at Georgia State University are the best options. Hopefully, the administration will soon cement plans with all of these facilities.

Accessibility is a major issue, and if the Georgia State recreational facilities are utilized, administrators should either provide an efficient shuttle service or give students MARTA passes. If transportation services are not provided, then the student activity fee that pays for recreational activities should be optional—or at least reduced—as some students would find it too arduous to use the alternate facilities.

SAC Fields will be open for the summer, allowing intramural sports to continue unabated. The planning for continuing recreational facilities are utilized, administrators should either provide an efficient shuttle service or give students MARTA passes. If transportation services are not provided, then the student activity fee that pays for recreational activities should be optional—or at least reduced—as some students would find it too arduous to use the alternate facilities.

Despite this vital and seemingly overlooked piece of information, I don’t believe that it would matter if the United States had declared war or not. No one can deny that the President and military officials had been given a wide berth in the movement of troops and in the control of military actions during war. The connection is not evident to me between that wide berth of action and the right of the military to deprive US citizens of their basic rights. Suddenly courts and our political leaders are finding connections between decreasing our personal freedoms and increasing security. For one would like to see more proof behind that connection before I give up my rights to an attorney and a fair, open hearing.

The weight of the evidence that the government is using to hold this man is also disturbing. The only proof of this man’s “enemy combatant” status that has been offered is a two-page report from an assistant to the undersecretary of defense. The court stated in its opinion, “To inquire ... whether Hamdi actually fired his weapon is to demand a clarity from battle that often is not there.” So, despite the fact that the government is unable to offer compelling evidence that Hamdi acted in a hostile manner, the court believes that he does not even deserve a trial to determine the facts. What is the point of being a US citizen if basic rights are not protected?

Once again, however, I must protest that it wouldn’t matter if the government had reams of evidence showing that Hamdi was planning a massive attack against the United States. Treating foreign terrorists, much less our own citizens, this way is appalling and disgraceful. There are other methods that could be used that would protect this man’s rights while still allowing the government to protect this country. For instance, in what possible way could we ensure our national security by allowing this man access to a lawyer? There is no excuse for this type of flagrant dismissal of our guaranteed rights. Changing someone in this situation with treason also seems like a more reasonable and fair option than treating him as an “enemy combatant.”

Imagine this scenario at Tech: you are in a student organization, and you are accused individually of a major violation of hazing regulations. Without any evidence against you, the Dean of Students Office expels you from Tech while summarily closing off any option you may have at appeal. You cannot talk to anyone at Tech or recruit any witnesses to give evidence on your innocence. Such treatment would be an outrage, and the situation only gets worse as it is moved onto a national stage. The circuit court should reconsider its decision in order to protect the rights of all Americans and to preserve the liberties that set this country apart from the rest of the world.

Our Views
I couldn’t sleep the night after I took my bid freshman year. I made the decision to join a fraternity after only two days of classes. Before I’d read a single page in a textbook. Before I’d taken a single exam. Before I knew what I wanted out of my college experience. After a few weeks, I wanted out of the fraternity, and, ultimately, I got out. I decided that fraternity life was not for me—at least not during the first semester of my Tech experience. I was not ready to rush to a fraternity my first semester, and I believe others should not be made to make such a major commitment so early in their college careers. Since that fateful decision freshman year, I became Greek again, rushing and accepting a bid last spring. Spring is known as a time of renewal. While January is not spring per se, it falls into spring semester—a semester that would be a Tech student’s first opportunity to join the Greek system. With the end of spring rush last week, now seems like a good time to evaluate Tech’s system, and see how an alternative system might work.

At Emory University, and a number of other universities in the country, freshmen cannot join fraternities and sororities during their first semester. Emory uses a delayed rush system; one in which the Greek houses can only recruit new members during the spring.

Throughout the fall, IFC, NPCA, and ISIG (Inter-Sorority Council) Rho Chis educate freshmen men and women about the Greek community— one is assigned to each residence hall. Greek community recruiting events—rather than individual chapter events—are also held. Then in early spring, formal recruitment occurs.

A recruitment system similar to Emory’s might be a good alternative to the current one used by the Greek community here at Tech, as it would benefit both the chapters and their prospective members.

Current Greek student would have a better chance to get to know the prospective rushers. The various houses would also have the entire fall semester to give those students a reason to rush and to display the distinctions and differences that make each unique.

Ultimately this system could increase the number of individual students who rush, which would benefit the entire Greek system.

Some students, who would never have considered Greek life upon arriving at Tech, may give it a shot after having a semester of classes under their belts. A positive academic experience first semester often leads freshmen to want to expand their social activities during the next semester.

Positive experiences with the Greek community during the fall can also affect freshmen and increase the number of spring rushers. They may study with some older sorority girls in one of their classes. They may participate in TEAMBuzz with a group of brothers. Or they may learn about Winter Clearing and the fun and excitement of Homecoming in the Greek community. The fall semester offers numerous opportunities for the Greek community to collectively impress and encourage new freshmen, and more opportunities could be created based on the Emory model.

In addition to benefiting the system as a whole, individual fraternities and sororities would also benefit. With more of an opportunity to get to know each other, the chapter would be able to make better decisions about its membership. The rushers would also be able to make better decisions about where they might want to join. Overall, less dissatisfactions would occur. Ultimately, an environment would emerge where every man or woman who took a bid at a Greek house would be eventually initiated.

Right now freshmen who rush during fall semester must make decisions based on a superficial week of recruitment in which they get to know only a little bit about a fraternity or sorority, and a fraternity or sorority gets to know only a little bit about them. Both take huge risks. Given the nature of the current system, it is surprising that it manages to work at all.

Spring recruitment takes place this month at Emory University. For updates on the process see www.emorywheel.com.
Diversity
more than
skin pigment

In response to Eboni Fenel’s letter in the last issue of the Technique, I would like to ask what did we get so wrapped up in group identities that we forgot that going to school is about learning and growing? Because education is the most important part of the college experience, Tech needs the most qualified candidates to be teaching. We should be colorblind in our approach to education, and all qualified candidates should be encouraged to apply for faculty positions. If the best candidate to impart knowledge and experience is a person with more pigment in his or her skin, then there should be no barrier to bringing the person into the fold. It is a fallacy that students cannot have role models outside of their own race. If this were the case, why has there been such a large increase in Indian, Oriental and Hispanic professors over the past 30 years? And why do I, a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) of Scottish decent, have role models of an Ecuadorian immigrant, a long-haired hippie and an Indian immigrant? Let us as Georgia Tech alumni or students take personal responsibility for our actions and our futures.

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Professors are people, too; talk to them

As another semester begins, many of us are counting down days (or semesters) until our graduations. One column in the Technique is hardly enough space to share all of my acquired wisdom from nine semesters. However, I would like to think that I did one thing well. I wasn’t afraid to talk to my professors. I’m amazed that some students find this concept totally difficult. I agree that in a class of 500 students, finding time to talk to a professor is difficult. Many professors are staving for their students’ attention. Even if they can hold an audience during class time, the illusion dissolves the second the whistle blows.

During Dead Week, the mirage reappears, as students try to get last minute help or negotiate higher grades. Imagine you professors during the rest of the semester, sitting in their offices for hour after hour, waiting for students to arrive when none ever do. Students should almost feel guilty because of the way they go around neglecting their professors. Contrary to beliefs held by the “Tech is the shaft” school of thought, your professors are not out to get you. They actually like it when students pass their classes. But dashing into a prof’s office for a three second conversation won’t get you any benefits. Crying for a grade change after finals when you’ve been The Invisible Student all semester won’t help much, either.

Meeting your professors will enrich your college experience and help you make good choices on the road to graduation.

Jennifer Hinkel
Staff Columnist

The keys to getting to know a professor well are to choose someone who shares your interest and to visit their offices early and often. If office hours aren’t your style, ask a professor to lunch. If you’re lucky, your prof might pick up the tab, being as you are an impoverished college student and can hardly afford a burger basket. Don’t wait until you are trying to put together grad school applications or job references before you realize that you never met anyone who can provide these things. If you don’t know at least one professor in your department who shares your academic interests, make time to meet them before you’re pressed for time and applying for your PhD. Knowing your professors will make you feel smarter. You’ll have more intellectual conversations and gain insight into class material that everyone else won’t be privy to.

Best of all, when your professors know you well, they will act as your advocates in the vast world of academia. If you let your profs know what projects you’re working on, they will point you in the direction of relevant journal articles and pertinent books. When an interesting job opening or scholarship opportunity arises, your name will come to mind. When you mention what classes you plan to take, they will gently advise and offer suggestions on courses and professors to help your academic plans. In other words, you’ll get shafted less.) If you maintain good relationships with your professors after graduation, you will always have a resource to call upon, whether you’re going back to graduate school or switching jobs.

Meet your professors will enrich your college experience and help you make good choices on the road to graduation. Professors are an integral part of the support group students need to reach full collegiate potential. Like academic parents in the often confusing world of Tech, they can guide you through getting into the right department, helping you make good choices on the road to graduation. If you haven’t met any professors yet, the beginning of the semester is a great place to start. Have you talked to a prof today?