OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Fall forward for break

The roar of the crowds and the chants of fans filling Bobby Dodd Stadium during the much anticipated annual Homecoming football game might be dimmer this fall. At the request of a few student organizers, the date for next semester’s fall break has been pushed back a week from its original placement in the semester. This move makes the Saturday of fall break the day of the Homecoming game as well. Students should not be forced to choose between a well-deserved four-day break to recover from midterms and watching their Yellow Jackets play an exciting football game.

The student planners’ motivation for changing the date was based on the effect the original date would have had on Homecoming activities—the festivities would have been squeezed into a scant three days.

While condensing Homecoming week might at first seem like a horrible idea, considering that less than 30 percent of the student body actually participates in the events, a shorter time frame is not such a bad idea. Changing fall break to conflict with the game, on the other hand, affects all students. Homecoming organizers have been forced to deal with an abridged week of festivities in the recent past and were able to make do—and would be able to again this year; therefore, fall break should be changed back to its originally scheduled date.

In the past when fall break overlapped with the beginning of Homecoming week, there was a decrease in participation for some of the events. Since most members of Greek organizations seem to participate in events solely for the purpose of securing points to help their houses win, instead of because of a true love for the pyramid egg toss or other such field events, shortening Homecoming would not be such a travesty. If anything, it would allow students to be that much more excited about the very popular events like mock rock.

To appease all interests, though, a possible solution that would allow Homecoming to occupy an entire week and prevent the game from conflicting with break would be to make the break the Thursday and Friday after the game. A Thursday-Friday schedule could be run on Monday and Tuesday so that students wouldn’t miss too many of the same classes in one semester.

Essentially, more student input should have been gathered before a decision that affects the entire student community was made, similar to the way the dates of spring break were decided. Only with further changes will students be able to celebrate Homecoming and still enjoy a travel-worthy long weekend.
Culture of cash fades as plastic pervades

By Jennifer Schur
Opinions Editor

The little subject of plastic has enthralled me the past few days. More specifically, the way plastic has taken over my life, my friends’ lives and the lives of most college students.

Lest you think me a Polymer, Textile and Fibers major about to deliver a dissertation worthy of a DuPont commercial, I’m referring to the way credit and debit cards have killed the culture of cash. The final straw that is proof of a broken camel’s back somewhere is that Junior’s, the venerable restaurant that is a Tech institution, now accepts credit and debit cards for payment.

Only the rare teenager in my day regularly made purchases with a credit card, but coming to college, most students are forced to form a relationship with APR, “rewards points” and monthly statements. Although I’m a big proponent of plastic money, it takes something away from the idea of the power of money. To think that the ability to purchase a big-ticket item like a car (or, say, five textbooks a semester) is closer than it should be-reach into the purse, pull out the wallet and whip out the card-is reason for concern.

The ease with which large amounts of my financial means can be transferred from my account in one swipe is staggering. What’s even more disturbing is the ease with which I, and most people I know, can rapidly spend large amounts of money in many small increments over a short period of time without realizing it. A lunch here, a snack there, a little grocery shopping and-bam!-the week is over and I’m fifty dollars poorer.

While credit cards may provide convenience in some respects, like not having to stop by the ATM all the time and not having to worry about carrying wads of cash around, plastic also makes it easier to spend larger amounts of money in a shorter period of time. The act of pulling cash out of your wallet, counting out each bill and physically handing away a given amount of your hard-earned money causes you to take note of the amount being spent. That’s a good thing, especially for college students.

While credit cards offer some conveniences, when used in certain settings they can be more of a pain than anything else; waiting in line at Juniors can already take a long time, and since there is only one credit card machine for the two registers, when people use plastic the lines become even longer.

I am heavily dependant on my debit card, just because I always forget to stop by the ATM. So while I am grateful for the widespread acceptance of such cards, I, and other card users, should have to wait in a separate line to pay at a fast food restaurants like Junior’s.

The ability to pay with plastic has caused society to lose touch with the culture of the dollar. What with most students who are employed by the Institute and other companies opting for direct deposit of their paychecks,
people can go for weeks without touching a five spot.

Technology has overwhelmed the individual’s power of the purse—now we have the power of the buy now, pay later. I remember way back when, when I would reverently place my earmarked bills into a Ziploc bag hidden in my underwear drawer. Those were the days of using coins, too.

Nowadays, change is looked down upon. Our currency should be based on integer values since it’s nearly impossible to spend coins in a respectable setting. Try to leave change instead of bills for a tip, regardless of the value the change adds up to, and you’re berated. Just ask Susan B. Anthony. Her coin can be found in the bank or post office, and if you try to use her, heavy sighs are sure to follow. Vending machines, the one place where coin usage is still acceptable, won’t even take her!

I happen to like the coin, a solid representation of financial possession. Today’s American citizen wants everything quick, easy and light, and the coin just doesn’t fulfill these requirements. When did nickels and dimes become more of a hassle than a denomination of money?

Maybe around the same time that America became the world’s largest debtor nation. The proliferation of credit card use and the decreasing use of coins and cash are signs that individuals are following in the country’s footsteps and reveling in debt. For a time in our lives when fiscal responsibility is paramount—who wants to be paying off debt for the next 60 years?—credit cards may be easy, but they also don’t teach monetary consciousness.

To preserve the culture of money, the history of the faces centered on our bills and the traditions of our nation embodied in the greenback, we should make the move back to filling our wallets with cash, not plastic. Do your neighbor in line a favor—just use a Washington.
Take the time to find your green, earthy side

By Jennifer Lee

Focus Editor

As a kid, one of the magazines I subscribed to was Ranger Rick. It was probably where I first learned about environmental responsibility—kid-friendly ways that I could reduce, reuse and recycle by taking shorter showers, turning off the lights whenever I left a room and bringing a lunchbox to school instead of using paper bags. My parents helped out, too: we would make monthly trips to the local recycling center with the family station wagon filled with plastics, cardboard and newspaper.

So maybe I’m more sensitive than most people to examples of wastefulness on campus. Here in the dorms, we keep our computers running 24/7; most of the academic buildings keep their lights on all night. During football season, the bright stadium lights that can illuminate the entire night sky stay on, even when there are no games. When I go to the dining hall, I see students get platefuls of food, only to eat half. When I’m at the computer lab, I watch students print out pages and pages of notes and try to do the math: with an 800-page allowance per student, how many reams of paper does OIT go through every semester? I wonder about these things all the time.

Unfortunately, most students don’t. At college, more so than other places, it’s easy to forget about being green. Taking shorter showers and turning off the lights whenever you leave the room isn’t such a big deal when you’re not the one footing the water and electricity bill.

Limited on-campus recycling options also make it harder. Though recycling newspaper, office paper, aluminum cans and plastic containers isn’t a problem (kudos to Facilities for those green receptacles around campus, as well as to RHA for starting an in-dorm recycling program this year), would it be possible to expand the kinds of materials that we can recycle? If the success of current programs is any indication, students would definitely make use of additional options.

For example, what about glass recycling, for all the empty beer bottles from parties? What about recycling for ferrous iron (what canned food tins are made out of), for all the Campbell’s soup and other instant food that college students live off of? What about cardboard, especially at the beginning and end of the semester, when there are boxes and boxes of things being packed and unpacked? And plastic bags? I take my plastic bags from grocery shopping to Publix, but of course, most people don’t have the patience or resources to do the same.

I would also love to see more activism on campus. Earth Day doesn’t seem to be a big deal at Tech, and I’m not sure if we even have an Environmental Club or similar organization. At the same time, though, we don’t necessarily have to create a new organization in order to promote a greener student body. Campus-wide service days like Tech Beautification Day and TeamBuzz
could incorporate more environmentally-friendly projects. Maybe senior
design projects could even examine Tech’s energy consumption, propose
ways to reduce water use or implement a more efficient heating/cooling
system in our aging dorms. The administration also needs to get involved,
making an effort to educate students about what they can do on an individual
basis, in the same way that the Women’s Resource Center plans Women’s
Awareness Month.

But in most cases, especially for busy Tech students, the difference between
being green and being wasteful is just a matter of remembering. So here are
some reminders: hold onto your Coke can until you pass a recycling bin. Use
the blue bin that Housing provides for recycling instead of as just another
trashcan. If you share a kitchen or lounge, turn off the light if no one’s there.
If you use disposable eatingware, invest in some washable plastic or glass
bowls and utensils. At the computer lab, learn how to print your notes double-
sided or two pages per sheet.

Some people may say that these little things won’t really make a difference in
the larger scheme of things. But at Tech, especially, where we’re always
looking into the future in terms of new technologies and ideas, we have as
good a reason as any to look at the future in terms of the impact we’re
making on the environment, as well.

So when you’re done reading this Technique, you know what to do.
OUR VIEWS Hot or Not

HOT: Substitute this!

The latest proposal about grade substitution circulating around Tech’s various committees calls for the policy to apply to all classes taken during freshman year. This amendment to the proposal is a welcome change, not only because it was suggested in the ‘Nique, but also because it more adequately provides a means for students having trouble adjusting to college to do so, without killing their GPA.

NOT: Cutting classes

Due to budget cuts the School of Mechanical Engineering has been forced to cut its class offerings this summer. Although class cuts are always “not hot,” the ME administrators’ responses to problems that the cuts have caused are hot. The department is setting an excellent example of caring for its students and their ability to finish the curriculum, rather than just leaving students out in the cold without solutions.

HOT: Sunny baseball

Wednesday’s weather provided the perfect background for the baseball team’s home opener at Russ Chandler Memorial stadium. Bright sunshine warmed the fans who filled the stands as the No. 5 Yellow Jackets began their march to another ACC Championship by beating Savannah State 13-4.

NOT: Where’s the whistle?

In recent days, the whistle that blows at five ‘til the hour to signal the change of classes has become increasingly faint. The characteristic “toooot toooot” can no longer be heard from west campus and sometimes isn’t even audible on east! Sadly, without its reminder, professors lose track of time and classes run over.

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YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

Step up and serve Tech

In a little less than a month, students will begin campaigning for Student Government Association (SGA) elections. In addition to the widely publicized races for president and vice-president, over 100 students will vie for seats in the Undergraduate House of Representatives, the legislative branch of SGA. Although the top two races receive the most attention, it’s the dozens of students running for Representative who will make next year’s SGA successful.

Tech needs good students to fill these positions and represent the different academic departments and classes. With new internal changes taking effect next year, the House will be a dynamic force for change on campus. But this will only happen if students step up and take the challenge. If you really want to make sure that SGA represents you, what better way is there than by running for a position yourself? Applications for Representative are available now, and I encourage everyone to run for a position.

Every year there are people who consider running but don’t, and after the election they regret not putting themselves on the ballot. No one should make that mistake this year. Running for office can be very rewarding and everyone should relish their opportunity to participate in this process.

Representatives serve different constituencies. The class representatives will speak on behalf of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. The academic representatives will voice the concerns of the students in each major. These are important roles that need to be filled by students who can serve these constituencies. Co-op students and Varsity athletes will also elect representatives to speak on their behalf.

The Technique has done a good job this year covering what happens in SGA. But even the best newspaper coverage can’t cover all of the important work performed by the members of the Undergraduate House.

They serve on committees, work with administration officials, help organizations get funding and serve their constituents in too many ways to count. Georgia Tech needs its best leaders from all across campus to get involved and make a difference. After all, democracy is not a spectator sport.
YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

“Frat boy” jokes in comics ignorant

What’s with all of the recent “frat boy” related comic jokes? I am referring to both the not-at-all funny Brian Lewis “Fraternity House Plant” series, as well as the recent Matt Norris “Vagina Monologues” comic in which “Frat Boy Rick” makes a lame pass at a woman advertising the play.

Don’t get me wrong—I can take a joke. But the frequency of these jokes seems to have increased lately, and the more often they have been coming out, the less funny they are. After all, the stereotype of the beer swilling, misogynist frat boy is just that—a stereotype.

One can imagine the outrage that would occur if other groups on campus were portrayed simply by their stereotypes in a poor attempt at comic humor in the Technique.

Maybe the comic strip artists of the Technique should go back to making jokes about squirrels and stop using incorrect stereotypes for the sake of humor.

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Readers Respond GT Dance Team

Dance Team wardrobe choices trouble crowd

I hope you were at the GT-UNC game and witnessed the display of RED and BLACK during the halftime performance of your Dance Team.

I was embarrassed and dumbfounded. I have tried to email Charity Johnson, one of the dance team’s coaches, but her email inbox was full.

I would like to comment on the team’s poor choice of colors.

They are obviously quite talented and work very hard, but for the collection of 10 plus team members and a coach to decide that red and black was appropriate attire for a GT halftime performance has me baffled.

Perhaps there was some underlying theme between the music and costume. If so, then the distraction of the colors was too great and the theme was not evident.

From the students reaction, I don’t think I’m in the minority on this opinion.
Readers Respond GT Dance Team

Colors explained

By Christopher Gooley / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

The Dance Team made quite an impact with their choice of colors for one of their outfits used during last week’s GT-UNC basketball game.

The choice of colors for our halftime performance at the GT-UNC game was solely related to a Valentine’s Day theme. Unfortunately this theme was overshadowed by the crowd response. It was by no means meant to offend anyone, and we apologize to those whom it did offend. It will certainly not happen again. Thank you.
Readers Respond GT Dance Team

*Red and black causes uproar and boos in stands*

I feel bad writing to you the first time to complain about something at Tech, but I was enjoying the GT-UNC basketball game from the Swarm when something disturbing happened. You have to understand, I like the basketball dance team. They provide entertainment in between Ish’s dunks and B.J.’s threes.

Now I know that Valentine’s day was last Saturday. Maybe that was the reason. Maybe they just weren’t thinking. But their motivation doesn’t really matter. They should not come out onto our basketball court wearing red and black. Ever.

They were booed a fair amount. They need to understand that we were booing their choice of outfits, not their dancing. So continue dancing, but change the clothes.

They change four times a game anyway, so I’m sure they can do better for the halftime show than red and black. I’ll repeat, they should not come out onto our basketball court wearing red and black. Ever.