Consensus Opinion

Drop back day drop

Currently drop day, the last day on which classes can be dropped to receive a “W,” occurs at the end of the sixth week of the semester. Midterm grade reports are released when its name implies, during the eighth week, or actual midterm of the 16-week-long semester. The Institute Undergraduate Curriculum Committee has made positive progress in its efforts to switch these two dates, but another solution could be more beneficial.

Drop day should be moved to the Friday of the week after midterm grade reports become available, a solution similar to the proposal that is making its way through the Student Regulations Committee. This would place drop day during the ninth week of the semester.

Since midterm grade reports are currently issued after drop day, they act as either a reassurance or a wake-up call; the only recourse students have is to seek guidance from their academic advisor and professors. If, however, midterm grades were available before drop day as in the committee’s proposal, then students might be more prone to thoughtlessly drop a class instead of working hard and taking the time to meet with the people who could help them. Balancing this potential problem with the positives and the possibility that midterm grades before drop day could increase retention rates—students will drop classes instead of failing out of school—makes this effort one worth quickly pushing through the bureaucratic process.

Therefore, the date of midterm grade reports should remain as is—at the middle of the term, with a delayed drop date.

Campaigns lack creativity

This year’s Student Government Association campaign season has started with a lackluster showing in the creativity department of all the candidates. Past years’ candidates seemed to put more thought into their campaign planning, both in terms of what their flyers and banners were professional looking, humorous and catchy. Anyone who was around during spring 2001 certainly remembers Chris Kavanagh’s publicity stunt, having a person dressed in a cow suit campaign for him on Skiles walkway.

Especially considering the closeness of last year’s presidential contest and the large field this year, slogans should be top of the line.

Luckily, there is still time left for this year’s hopefuls to show off their creative smarts, since elections do not begin until March 29.

Consensus editorial reflects the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.

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OUR VIEWS

March 29.

Consensus Opinion

Dropping hands, or maybe even a kiss goodbye before parting to go to different classes. Some PDAs may even be considered sweet and may make single bystanders envious. But there’s a point when couples can just a tad too far in their outward expression of emotion.

Case Number One, which I will refer to as, “The Couple.” Most of my friends, when I make reference to The Couple, know exactly whom I’m talking about. However, I will not name names—actually, I don’t even know their names. This couple has been around for as long as I can remember, and I’m in a fifth year, so it’s been a while.

They walk from class to class with their arms wrapped around each other. But it’s not your normal “throw your arm over your girlfriend’s shoulder” move. It’s more like a death grip, as if they fear letting go will cause the other partner to be sucked in by whatever construction they’re passing on campus. It actually looks quite an uncomfortable position to walk in.

Once The Couple reaches the point where they must separate, they walk backwards apart from each other so that they can face each other and see each other as long as humanly possible before parting. My friend once saw them walking backwards and waving, and at first he thought they were deaf and doing sign language. Then my friend saw the male back right into a car that was driving through the parking lot, and he almost got hit. I guess there is a reason for their death grip walk.

I witnessed another unusual form of PDA at the gym a month or so ago again, which brings me to Case Number Two.

When I was walking toward the CRC entrance, I saw a couple in front of me with their arms firmly wrapped around each other’s shoulders (really, how is that comfortable? Give it a try, and I promise it isn’t). At first I thought it was just The Couple heading for a workout. But no, it was a different couple! This couple had never seen before, so maybe they’re freshmen who are just so happy they found love at Tech and don’t know any better.

I dismissed the sighting as just a normal PDA moment. Until later. When I was running laps around the track, I caught my second sighting of this couple. They were standing next to a Stairmaster hugging. Just hugging. Not just a quick hug before they went their separate ways to exercise, but a many-second-long hug. They didn’t separate by the time I passed them, so who knows how long they stood there.

But wait, there was yet another incident at the gym that day. This time I was on a bicycle machine, facing the track and watching people walk by. And who walks by but “The Couple,” walking laps around the track with their arms around each other. “I may be wrong, but I don’t think that’s exercise. I think they simply got bored of snuggling in their dorm and decided to try out a new location.”

Maybe these couples have achieved a level of love and devotion that I simply cannot comprehend, but to me it seems just plain silly.

If you become that attached to a single person—to the point where you must walk everywhere together, enveloped in each other’s arms—how do you manage to maintain relationships with other friends? And what happens if (God forbid) you break up? It would be devastating.

With these two cases, I think I’ve proved my point that sometimes couples go over the top. I’m definitely not an old, angry spinster, berating all couples for being happy. I actually have a boyfriend, and we hold hands and the like in public. But we definitely don’t cuddle in the computer lab or anything that extreme.

Remember, there is a time and a place for everything, and while it may seem like a good idea to some people, the CRC is not an appropriate place to snuggle.

“So next time you’re with your significant other, keep the PDAs to a level that will invoke comments of, “Wow, isn’t that sweet?” instead of, “Yuck, get a room.”
It’s that time of the year again: the weather’s getting warmer, those smelly Bradford pear trees are blooming… No, I’m not talking about spring fever. I’m talking about SGA elections.

This week marked the start of the campaigning period for Undergraduate Student Body President and Vice President. For most of the student body, who returned to classes on Monday still wearing winter clothes, the following were typical reactions to the flyers that have popped up everywhere:

1. Huh? What flyers?
2. Who are these people, and what are they running for?
3. Anybody heard of an election time again? Yippee!

(Reaction 3 not typical. Individual results may vary.)

One only needs to be reminded of the anti-SGA flyers that appeared around campus this time last year to know that elections often provoke mixed opinions. To SGA’s credit, voter turnout has been increasing over the past few years, and the fact that there are four (four!) candidates running for each of the positions this year may be a testament to how more students want to get involved.

More candidates means more chances to choose the one you think would be best for the job, but it also means more candidates to consider in the first place.

So though elections have yet to kick into full gear, I’d like to give some campaign advice (as qualified as I am) both for the candidates and for the mostly apathetic student body.

First of all, the flyers. Besides not being very eye-catching and not prominently feature the candidate’s campaign website, on some flyers, I’ve missed the address because of the all-caps address on the web site altogether.

So since I couldn’t remember most of the addresses, I had a bit of good fun by looking up each candidate’s prior page instead. Tip for candidates: if you made a website for your introduction, it should be stuck in there (in all its badly-designed, height-yellow-and-blue, 16-pT Times New-Roman glory), please update it with information about your campaign, provide a link to your real campaign website, or, at the very least, take it down. (I must admit, though, I found some pictures, links and personal statements on those sites that were quite amusing.)

That said, a website really is important, because it helps to associate a face with a candidate. It also allows students to examine each candidate’s platform on his or her own time.

Nevertheless, much like the race for the Democratic nomination after, a while, most of the candidates’ platforms start to blend the same. As a result, in most cases, winning will come down to who you know. The wrong way to view this statement is to just buy into the popularity-contest nature of the elections, by voting complimentarily for the one person whose name you might know from somewhere, without bothering to learn about the others.

A better way to look at it is to use the “other” people you know—your friends—to become more informed about the election. It won’t be the campaign flyers themselves that get a student’s vote; it will be seeing the flyer posted on his roommate’s door, or, more appropriately, the people on his buddy list who have “Voted—for President” on their AIM profiles. More importantly, though, students should take these endorsements as an opportunity to talk about the candidate. Somewhere along your chain of friends of friends, you’ll hopefully find someone who can really vouch for a candidate, who has worked with them or has a personal connection that can make this election about something other than name recognition.

Because truthfully, when the actual voting begins, at worst, students will vote based on someone they’ve heard someone say “I voted for this person because my friend thinks he’s the best man for the job” than “I voted for him because he’s in my fraternity.”

So, at some point, I want to know who you’re voting for, and why—because it’s the people whose views I respect and trust who will sway my decision in the end.

Jennifer Lee
Focus Editor
Turn the clock back a few years and consider where you were when you first heard that an airplane had driven into the World Trade Center. I remember that I was trying to straighten my tie for the job fair as my roommate burst out of his room with a funny expression. Watching live as the second one pummeled the other tower, I quickly came to the realization that, no, this was not an accident.

Since that day, I have watched as my father’s job at Delta Airlines sailed narrowly across the chopping block, as airports all over the world have instituted inordinate security measures and as a national color code that now gives us an indication whether the latest fanatic in North Korea is feeling trigger happy.

I’m sure that every one on this campus can quickly point to something that has changed in their daily lives as a result of Sept. 11; some of what I’ve seen has been legitimate security upgrades that were neglected as our national infrastructure decayed in recent decades, while others are nothing more than knee-jerk reactions with more psychological than practical effect.

Terrorism is not a new idea; if you look in the dictionary, you’ll see that the word comes from the French revolution and quite literally the terror of huddled masses. Long before then, medieval kings would enforce tax collection by randomly savaging an offending township, thus enforcing the terror of a populace. The more important historical observation is that nearly all of the groups that used terrorism are no longer in power.

An obvious question once you have accepted that terrorism exists is to ask what we can do about it to cease its control.

The different responses certainly depend on the governments involved and especially the leaders — there is not a chance in the world that Bush would stand by idly as American peacekeeping forces were dragged through the streets, while Clinton didn’t lift a finger. European countries typically use designed loopholes in their civil liberties laws to execute swift justice (sometimes at the personal expense of a few individuals), and Israel responded so severely that they bombed entire villages in response to a crazed suicide bomber. Clearly there is a trade-off in our individual security (information, records and right to privacy) and our communal security, and it is very controversial to say whether Ashcroft is going in the right direction.

My reason to address this topic is the very disturbing response of Spain’s ruling party to the recent bombing in Madrid. Al Queda has again claimed responsibility and has seemingly made quite a difference in public opinion to the point of having large portions of the population consider drastic changes.

From a purely analytical perspective, Spain was one of the most likely countries for an attack to create lasting damage — the country already has internal strife between diverse peoples and economic classes and is approaching an unpredictable time in government. Without the solidarity of a single government, there are no real discussions of bombing them out of the hills, but rather just fear.

Before we can destroy terrorism, there is a viable option for minority groups to gain attention, we must accept a simple fact: if any reasonably bright group of individuals chooses to set their minds towards hurting others, then they will probably succeed in some fashion. Their mission is simply to make an attack on the human condition (usually relatively few individuals are actually killed) and gain attention for some stupid cause they claim to represent.

Despite not being pro-government so much, I believe that the U.S. is doing most of the right things, but that they are being hindered by always playing by the rules. Perhaps if we forget the moral high ground nonsense, we will prevent attention-hungry idiots who choose to splatter their disdained guts on innocent bystanders.

OPINIONS

Abandon moral highground to end reign of terror

Terrorism is not a new idea; if you look in the dictionary, you’ll see that the word comes from the French revolution and quite literally the terror of huddled masses. Long before then, medieval kings would enforce tax collection by randomly savaging an offending township, thus bringing the others in line, and the Romans won more battles with their roars than their swords.

Many of these may be more politically correctly called acts of war than terrorism but all had the same result of using intimidation to control a populace. The more important historical observation is that nearly all of the groups that used terrorism are no longer in power.

An obvious question once you have accepted that terrorism exists is to ask what we can do about it to cease its control.

The different responses certainly depend on the governments involved and especially the leaders — there is not a chance in the world that Bush would stand by idly as American peacekeeping forces were dragged through the streets, while Clinton didn’t lift a finger. European countries typically use designed loopholes in their civil liberties laws to execute swift justice (sometimes at the personal expense of a few individuals), and Israel responded so severely that they bombed entire villages in response to a crazed suicide bomber. Clearly there is a trade-off in our individual security (information, records and right to privacy) and our communal security, and it is very controversial to say whether Ashcroft is going in the right direction.

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Voter apathy prevalent

Staff Editorial
Central Florida Future

Central Florida Future — What college students care about elections anymore? Students missed the fun of being a part of the political process this year because a lot of them were out of town enjoying spring break.

The end result is exactly what MTV has been combating — voter apathy among the youth. Students already have shown a lack of interest in politics, at every level. The recent SGA elections are a perfect example. Though voter turnout was high compared with years past, less than 15 percent of the campus voted.

So why don’t young people vote? It’s not because they don’t relate to middle-aged and older candidates, because the students at UCF didn’t care when people their age were running, either.

It must be that young people don’t care what the outcome is. In the SGA election, it seemed a foregone conclusion, anyway, since the favorite won.

Regardless of whether you care about the person in office, you should care about the issues, because everyone wants a decent job and a decent chance at a happy life. Don’t let that chance slip by in November. There won’t be a spring break to use as an excuse this time.