

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, March 2, 2001

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Engineer more options

The Board of Regents needs to approve the addition of a bioengineering undergraduate degree. As the field has grown in recent years, Tech has lost talented applicants because there was not a program to accommodate them—so they went to other schools which could. Although beginning departments are often forced to start small, hopefully they will open it to as many students as possible—including Tech students already here. Biomedical engineering is the wave of the future, much as computer science was ten years ago. By starting such a program, Tech graduates could be making major breakthroughs in the coming years of biomedical technology.

'Speed 3' at Tech?

Some students had all-too-close of a look at road rage last week when a Stinger driver refused to stop the bus. It was not because there was a bomb on board, but instead because the driver went a little crazy. While this is the second occasion in the past month that could damage the Parking and Transportation Department's reputation, it is actually an example of a bad situation that was handled appropriately. The driver was fired almost immediately, which was the correct response. If only all sections of Auxiliary Services could deal with their problems so effectively.

A little more net

Paul Hewitt has helped the basketball team realize its full potential, and his strong recruiting and coaching skills can make next year even better. This season was truly a rewarding one for the team's seniors—and for Tech fans everywhere.

Consensus editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Editorial Board, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.

Iraq topic for Buzz around Campus was inappropriate

I was disgusted at the *Technique* for this past "Buzz Around Campus" section. It asked, "Why did we bomb Iraq?" And Tech students answered with great sarcasm. I understand that this section's purpose is humor. However, the death of innocent people is no laughing matter. It disturbs me that the editors picked this topic knowing that the replies would be cynical. Consider this, in the past 10 years over 1.5 million Iraqi children have died, and 5000 die monthly. Former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark said this about the sanctions, "There is one crime against humanity in this last decade of the millennium that exceeds all others in its magnitude, cruelty and portent. It is the US-forced sanctions against the twenty million people of Iraq. If the UN participates in such genocidal sanctions backed by the threat of military violence—and if the people of the world fail to prevent such conduct—the violence, terror and human misery of the new millennium will exceed anything we have known." Is this humorous to the *Technique*?

Something that the internation-

al community and various human rights groups condemn. Its disturbing to know that of all the US' allies, only Britain joined the bombings. These two countries are the supposed champions of human rights. I ask the leadership of these defenders of our individual liberties, what about the liberties of the Iraqi's?

Unfortunately our past leadership was content to kill an entire civilization without remorse. Secretary of State Madeline Albright when asked whether the deaths of these children are worth it replied, "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price, we think the price is worth it." I don't know who could justify genocide against a nation under the guise of removing a tyrant. These sanctions might be justified if removing Saddam Hussein was the goal, but 10 years have shown otherwise. It is up to the people of this country to wake up and see that our nation is taking the lead in a campaign of injustice and murder, and we need to speak out instead of laughing.

Abdur-Rahman Shareef
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Quote of the week:
"There's a bomb on the bus."
—Keanu Reeves in 'Speed'

YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

Intramural refs among best in the state

I was very disappointed to read Carmen Jackson's letter in the *Technique* on February 23. At the Intramural Department, we take very seriously any attack on the integrity of our employees. I am very disturbed at the remark that Intramural officials consistently make biased calls because I can assure you right now that the officials who work these games simply do not care who wins and who loses. They just referee the game to the best of their ability, night in and night out.

And yes, they referee to the best of their ability. I don't know what standard is being used to judge our officials, but I can assure you that they DO miss calls, and quite fre-

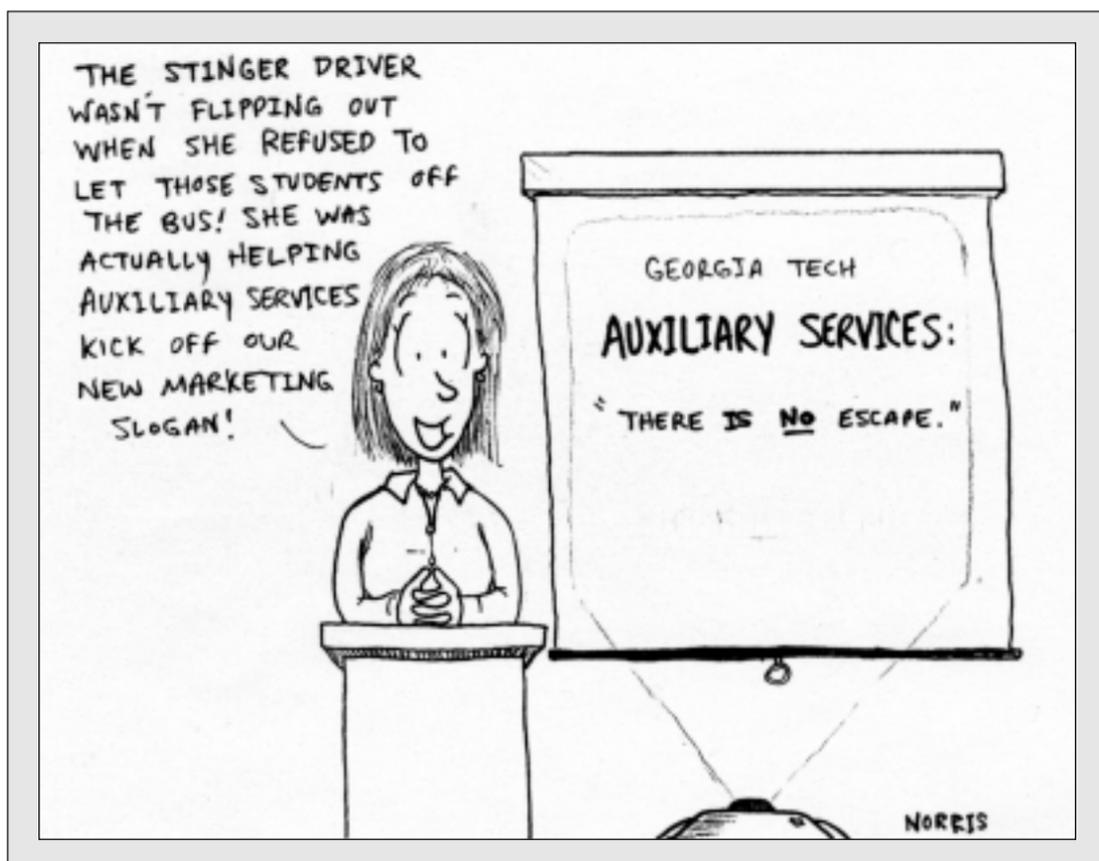
quently. Our officials are not perfect. In fact, the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) considers an official to be a top official if he/she simply gets more than 90% of his/her calls correct. At best, officials who work in the State Tournament for the GHSA get a little over 95% of their calls correctly.

We do not expect our officials to be of that quality, we simply ask them to work hard night in and night out, and I think our officials do that. The fact that an official is man/woman enough to admit that he/she made a bad call in a games speaks to the integrity of our officials, the very integrity attacked in the letter.

Ms. Jackson, you are very lucky to be playing Intramurals at Georgia Tech. Last weekend we had the honor of hosting the 6th Annual Georgia Collegiate Basketball Championships, officiated by Intramural referees from across the state.

Tech's officials were the best in the Tournament. Nine of the top 18 officials in the State were from Georgia Tech. Three of the top 5 were from Georgia Tech. And one of your officials was selected to represent the state of Georgia in the Southeast Regional Collegiate Basketball Championships at North Carolina.

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Tech needs to classify its growth in order to improve

Have you noticed the recent rapid growth of new buildings on campus? The impressive additions of the IBB, Love Building, and upcoming Environmental Science and Technology Building have sparked an important question for Georgia Tech; in what ways should the institute continue to improve? Should we focus on improving our current programs or continue to provide opportunities to study other fields? Build up or spread out? I'll consider the pros and cons of both choices here in this editorial.

Establishing new programs, like the recent addition of bioengineering, could be an exciting strategy for the Institute. It would surely attract a more diverse group of students in terms of intellectual interests. Right now, Tech has a somewhat small group of elite and reknowned fields of study, such as mechanical engineering and computer science. It's hardly difficult to find an extracurricular organization or competition that caters to these core areas of interest. But, there are a number of other subjects that aren't as supported for those kids who are dying to get involved with an obscure topic they are passionate about.

If Tech continues to spread its subject area limits for research and core education as it has done recently, the support networks for these new subject areas will surely grow along with it. Georgia Tech would become more of a true technology institute and less of a trade school if it focused on building more pro-

"Tech would become more of a true technology institute and less of a trade school if it focused on building more programs."

Matt Flagg
Online Editor



grams.

The student experience also hinges greatly on how Tech will grow. As more colleges are born, a larger number of minor degrees would naturally become available. Students will always want to venture outside their major school, and many would enjoy the certification of a minor degree. If Tech chooses to simply improve our current schools, the potential for minor degree program development would certainly be reduced.

On the other hand, Tech doesn't want to spread itself too thin. Improving in this manner would definitely reduce funding potential for currently established programs of study. Improving our most prestigious departments with fewer resources is surely a challenge. Aside from reducing the basic real estate needed for continuous growth, student support would also suffer. Currently, since so many students study computer science and mechanical engineering, it's not hard at all to find a friend to help you out in these areas.

Assuming the population doesn't

increase dramatically, the likelihood of our students changing their majors over to a newer and exciting field is pretty good. Therefore, it could harm this concentrated support group.

There's also a lot to be said for simply improving what we have instead of spreading out. Many students come to Tech because they know it's a powerhouse in certain fields, like mechanical engineering. They want to come to a place that's known for producing engineers of a high caliber. Choosing the other strategy certainly wouldn't restrict Tech from being this type of place, but the size and quality of these programs wouldn't be what it could be. Pumping funding into current programs would enable the development of new courses inside current colleges. Instead of establishing an entire school for nanotechnology or computer music, the bioengineering and computer science departments could simply build in support for these classes. While this would certainly pose infrastructure challenges for our current schools, it would benefit the schools more

than the institute as a whole. Many new subject areas can be classified under existing colleges. Why not take more advantage of current resources for these new courses? Inject some new choices for the core requirements instead of making students wade through the preset core courses for the first 2 years.

Improving our current family of colleges could lend more to the idea that Tech is a sort of trade school. It's quite true that Tech is an engineering school more than a place of general study, where humanities and liberal arts are supported. It's also improbable that Tech would choose to take giant steps towards the development of its humanities programs. We are a technology institute, after all. But, the choices we make for future growth and improvement should focus on all areas of technology more than just traditional engineering.

Many of these ideas boil down to how the Institute chooses to classify its growth. New courses will always be developed and offered. But, when is a subject area important enough to justify the construction of a new building or college? When should it simply be integrated into current programs? Much of this is obviously linked to the importance and implications of new discoveries. Entire new subject areas have yet to be born. Tech is on the right track with its recent adoption of new fields of study. But, it's important to question how the Institute will continue to improve.

Bush's agenda shows thoughtlessness about consequences

The first hundred days of a presidency is called the "Honeymoon period." President Bush is really behaving like a honeymooner, flattering the American people with trinkets and tokens of affection in the form of tax cuts and popular phrases like "helping education." But his tokens, from the beginning, are ill-conceived and the public should quickly realize the honeymoon would soon be over.

Just like the honeymooner who realizes that roses and candies won't feed her family or pay the rent, the public should realize that the President shouldn't be catering to frivolous whims but be engaged in the serious process of long-term planning for our country.

Take a look at the President's agenda for this year, and it is easy to see why his plans are poorly thought out, their implementations fraught with difficulty, and their consequences bordering on tragic.

The topic of the week, of course, is the tax cut. It sounds great, you say, it just means more money in your pocket. But in reality, unless you make hundreds of thousands of dollars a year—or more—you're not going to get too much back. According to the Citizens for Tax Justice, an admittedly progressive group that monitors the Bush tax plan, the top ten percent of the population will receive over 60% of the cut, even though that high income group pays less than 45% percent of the total taxes. Those same top 10% would have average savings of over \$54,000 a year.

Under the new tax plan, George and Laura Bush would save \$100,000 a year.

Compare that to the bottom 60% of income earners—that's people

"The President shouldn't be catering to frivolous whims but be engaged in the serious process of long-term planning."

Becca Cutri-Kohart
Campus Life Editor



who make under \$44,000 a year—which will receive an average of about a \$250 tax break.

Let's look that the problems with Bush's "fuzzy math" in his claims of helping the economy. The Reagan administration proved: "trickle-down economics" just doesn't work. If you give the upper end of income-earners a tax break it doesn't go straight back into the economy. They are much more likely to save their money in places that aren't immediately reinvested in the U.S. economy—think Swiss bank accounts, safes in their mansions, or even low risk savings accounts. If you were to give a tax break to a low-income family, they use their added income as consumers, buying essentials like clothes or food, or even leisure items, pumping the money right back into the economy.

Even more important is that the proposed tax cut is that the government doesn't really have this money to spend. Even with our current budget surplus, we also have a national debt of over one trillion dollars. It is not fiscally responsible for us to be giving taxpayers a break without paying off our national debt at the same time. The President still has't proven how he will pay off the debt while reducing taxes so drastically, especially with the shrink-

ing economy.

But Bush isn't all about "giving money back." One of his other much-touted programs is Missile Defense. An enormously expensive program, it will cost the public \$60 billion. To put this in perspective, NASA estimates that it would cost about \$40 billion to land humans on Mars in the next fifteen years. But it's not just about the cost—it's about our role in the world arena. The reality of the missile defense program is that its not just about defense.

The problem is the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty that we've abided by since the 1970s. The very wise premise behind this treaty is that if all the countries with ballistic missile technology agree not to have defense systems, then no one will feel invincible against missile attack. If you don't feel like you can survive a retaliatory missile attack, then you are less likely to be an aggressor and launch against another country. Even the European Union has expressed their opposition to our violation of the ABM treaty.

But, if Bush charges ahead with this without thinking, he has the potential to spark an arms race, with other countries building their own missile defense programs and also building advanced missiles capable of getting past our defense systems. The consequences of an arms race

could balloon out of control. Bush shouldn't feel the need to create a lasting legacy by sparking World War III.

We shouldn't just worry about Bush's international policies; he's also driving us to disaster domestically with his plans for education reform. There's no doubt in anyone's mind that more money needs to be directed at education to improve public school shortfalls. The President's support of education comes through the ill-conceived voucher system. He plans on supporting private schools with vouchers so that there are alternatives to public schools. The argument is this forces the public schools to compete for students.

What will happen is that middle class children will move out of public schools, taking the support of their often-involved parents and their money to a private school. The consequence of this is that lower income students will be left behind, as their vouchers won't be enough to support their move, leaving an economically segregated system, where only the most underprivileged attend the poorly funded public schools.

Now let's talk about faith-based spending programs. The problem with this is that there is no way to give out the money fairly. It's pretty obvious that the Wiccan's or the Hare Krishna's won't receive the kind of money that the Presbyterians will.

And there's no way to promise the federal money will not go to programs designed to convert underprivileged peoples, buy Bibles, or otherwise support distinctively

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TECHNIQUE

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MORE VIEWS Letters to the Editor

GUEST EDITORIAL Campus Issues

Centralized government does more harm than good

In her February 16 editorial, Christina Freyman seems to be implying that the founding fathers did not implement centralized control over local issues because of the inherent inefficiencies of long distance communication during that time period. Advocates of limited government reject that argument. We contend that the founding fathers recognized just the opposite; that centralized government leads to gross inefficiencies and massive corruption. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "It is not by the consolidation, or concentration, of powers, but by their distribution that good government is effected."

Classic liberals and modern

conservatives agree that our system of education needs improvement. However, we believe that the benefits of a free-market are the best way to implement this change. By privatizing the existing system through a program of vouchers and personal choice, the elements of competition, the "invisible hand" as Adam Smith dubbed it, will accomplish this necessary reform. I encourage all of you to visit the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation for School Choice located at <http://www.friedmanfoundation.org/> to learn more about this very important issue.

Micha Gbertner
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Ferst Center making student friendly changes

I would like to thank the *Technique* for presenting an opinion on the Ferst Center, "Lack of student-friendly events hinders Ferst Center," in the February 23 issue. It gives me the opportunity to inform everyone of all the positive occurrences at the Ferst.

First, I invite the entire student body to the Ferst Center Student Open House, from 11 am-1 p.m. on Tuesday, March 13. \$15 rush tickets will be sold for all remaining events starting at 11:30, and there will be entertainment provided by two a cappella groups, Sympathetic Vibrations and Nothing But Treble. Buzz and WREK will be there as well. There will be giveaways, tours, booths for student arts groups, and food and drink.

Second, the Ferst Center now sees the students as its most important commodity. The \$15 rush ticket program offered two weeks prior to each event allows students to view prominent artists cheaply. What is often not said, though, is that Student Government used to help fund the Ferst Center in return for cheaper student tickets, which used student activity fee money. During this time, student ticket sales averaged at about 20-25% of the entire house for each show, a remarkable number. When the SGA funding disappeared, and student sales dropped to 6% during the 1999-2000 season, Rosalind Meyers, the Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Services, found funding for the \$15 ticket program from an outside source, Coca-Cola. Student ticket sales began to rise again this season, with 20% of the audience for the February 27 and 28 performances of Aida being students.

Another important contribution comes from President Clough. He understands that the \$15 rush ticket program is only a means to a further end—securing a permanent endowment for cheap student tickets. He is now funding a full-time development director, which the Ferst has never had, to search for this student endowment. He will

also fund the Ferst Center at \$500,000 per year until the endowment is in place.

People who work in the arts business know that an arts center like the Ferst will never make money, and it is a further struggle to make ends meet with the necessity of having affordable student tickets. Everyone to whom I have spoken sees the number one priority as making sure students are involved with the theater, and securing an endowment for student tickets.

Perhaps the most important recent contribution comes from the interim Ferst Center director, Andrea Hoffer. When she was developing the 2001-02 season, she had a poster solely for the purpose of writing down student suggestions for shows. She takes the time to

organizations. The 2001-02 season is truly a joint student/staff effort, as the Ferst is trying to get many student suggested artists, such as Jim Brickman, Penn & Teller, Rockapella, Cabaret, and many others. The Board conveyed concerns about student ticket pricing and the lack of student collaboration with programming early last Fall, and by the end of the semester, the situation had changed drastically. A student series offering guaranteed low student prices is a definite for next year, and the shows will be selected by fellow students, ensuring that the series is student-friendly.

As of February 22, 8 out of 20 shows have sold over 80% of the house, which is astonishing in the arts industry, with all but three breaking even or better. That partially comes from a redirected marketing strategy led by the new Marketing Manager, Sharon Ahmed. This strategy is more student-oriented—hence the additional ads in the *Technique*, the Student Center, and Student Services Building. This came despite the cancellation of shows last September, which was hailed as a disaster. The shows were cancelled because those types of shows did not sell in the ambitious 1999-2000 season. The point is that shows were cancelled because they were not going to sell.

Over \$710,000 has been made in ticket sales this year, which vindicates the show cancellation strategy. Further, the major management groups that represent hundreds of artists are still willing to sign with the Ferst, because they understand that this year is a reevaluation period. Being deeply involved with the Ferst Center, I am confident that soon the entire student body will agree with me in saying that the Ferst Center is there as a resource for the students, and that it is acting with students' interests in mind.

Rusty Johnson
Chair, Ferst Center Student Advisory Board
gte058p@prism.gatech.edu

"The Ferst Center is there as a resource for the students, and that it is acting with students' interests in mind."

check the artist fee for every student suggested artist, and if the fee is reasonable, she books the show. This is unprecedented and is exactly what the *Technique* stated students need—more student-friendly shows. Andrea also searches for artists willing to provide master classes or perform with student music groups. If you have a show that you feel other students may like, all you have to do is talk to Andrea and she will look into your suggestions.

Another positive is the Ferst Center Student Advisory Board, whose purpose is to promote the arts throughout Georgia Tech by collaboration on programming, student initiatives such as offering pre-show performance opportunities to student groups, and co-sponsored events with other student

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This performance is a tribute to the official's hard work and willingness to learn and improve their skills. The officials went through a rigorous, maybe too rigorous, training program. They are evaluated and even shown taped games so they can see for themselves how they are doing and what areas they need to improve.

Simply put, Ms. Jackson, your opinion to the *Technique* was un-

fair and misinformed. If you still think that our officials are not performing as good as you think they should, or that you can do better than them, I openly invite you to join our program and become an official yourself. I look forward to receiving your application.

Miguel A Cartagena
Intramurals Program Coordinator
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Bush

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faith-oriented programs, when the money is supposed to be going to education, work-placement, food, and housing for the needy. Do we really want to live in a country where a starving homeless person is forced to convert to Christianity in order to have a meal or a place to spend a cold night? Federal money should be going to programs to support the

needy, but there shouldn't be religious strings attached.

It's time for the President to stop thinking about his own popularity and start thinking about the consequences of his actions. The U.S. government is not a major league baseball team. We're the leaders of the free world, and we should start acting that way.



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