

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, June 2, 2000

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Summer housing crisis

After a fairly smooth fall housing selection process, panic ensued during the summer process due to a glitch in the computer software that handles room assignments. The Department of Housing itself cannot be blamed for the computer malfunction, as the glitch was not caused by human error. It is also understandable that Housing personnel didn't discover the magnitude of the data loss until the last minute given the fact that the number of summer housing requests is highly variable.

The situation was highly unfortunate, and many unsuspecting students were given the run-around by a Housing department which, quite frankly, didn't have the data it needed to make accurate placement decisions.

Although many students have "housing horror stories" to tell, the department performed as well as it could under the circumstances. However, it was absolutely unacceptable to force any student who selected the "stay" option online to move if the payment deadline was met.

In the future, the Department of Housing should more thoroughly test its software and should allow itself more time between summer room selection and the end of Spring Semester to handle any problems that may arise.

Fraternity hazing

Yet another fraternity has been found responsible for violating institute and IFC policies regarding hazing. This type of activity is completely inappropriate, and the fact that it has continued despite several highly publicized hazing cases is quite disturbing. One complicating factor is the fact that Kappa Alpha Psi, a historically African-American fraternity, is not an active member of the Interfraternity Council. This in itself is not bad, but it robs the Kappas and other historically

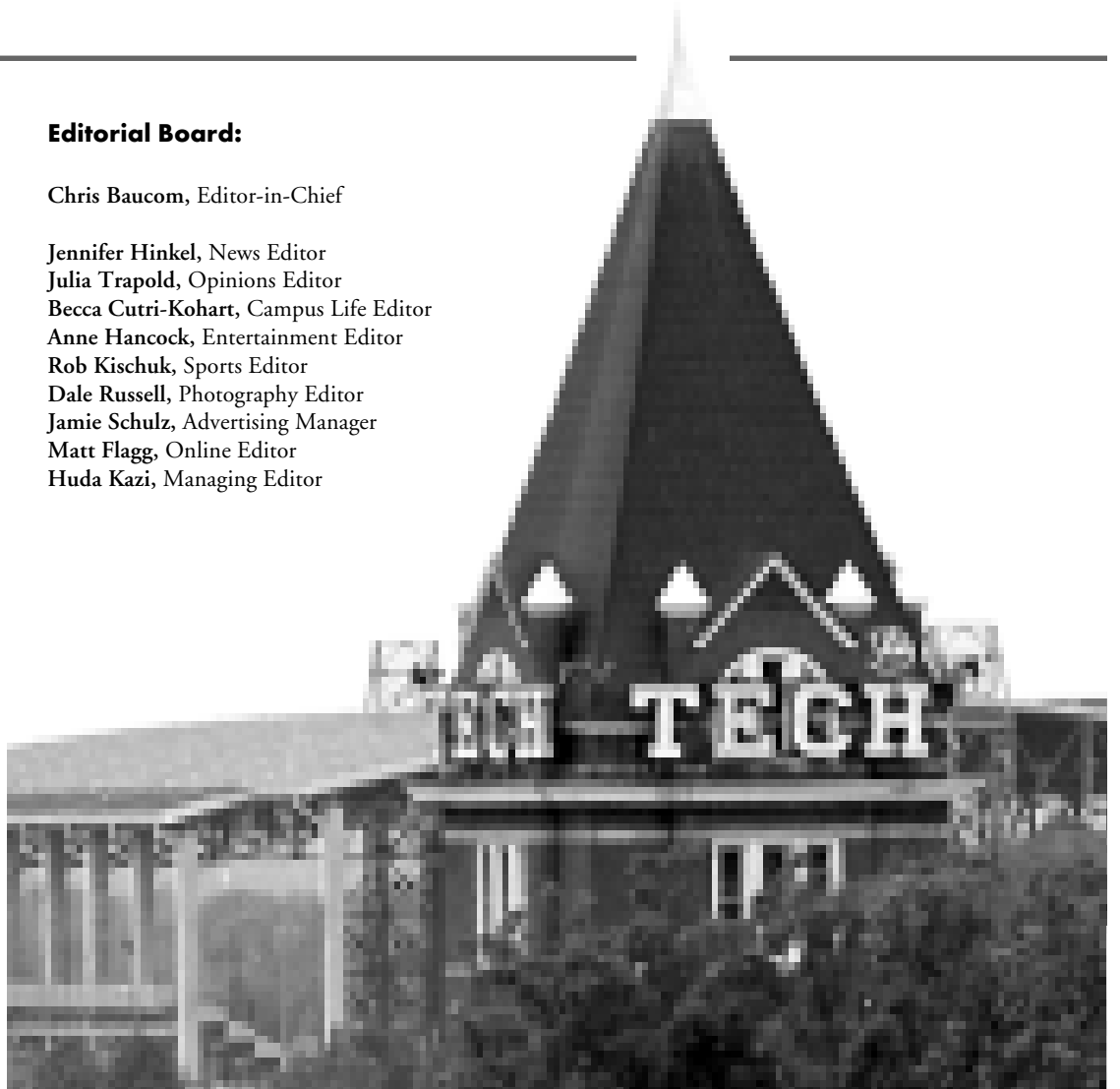
Quote of the week:

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."—Albert Einstein

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African-American fraternities of an avenue to communicate their needs and concerns with the administration.

Of course, there are other avenues of communication available, but the benefits of an overarching organization designed to promote interaction are difficult to deny. Such an organization does not exist for Tech's African-American fraternities. Whether IFC or some yet to be created entity should strive to meet that need remains to be seen. The Tech community will be watching.

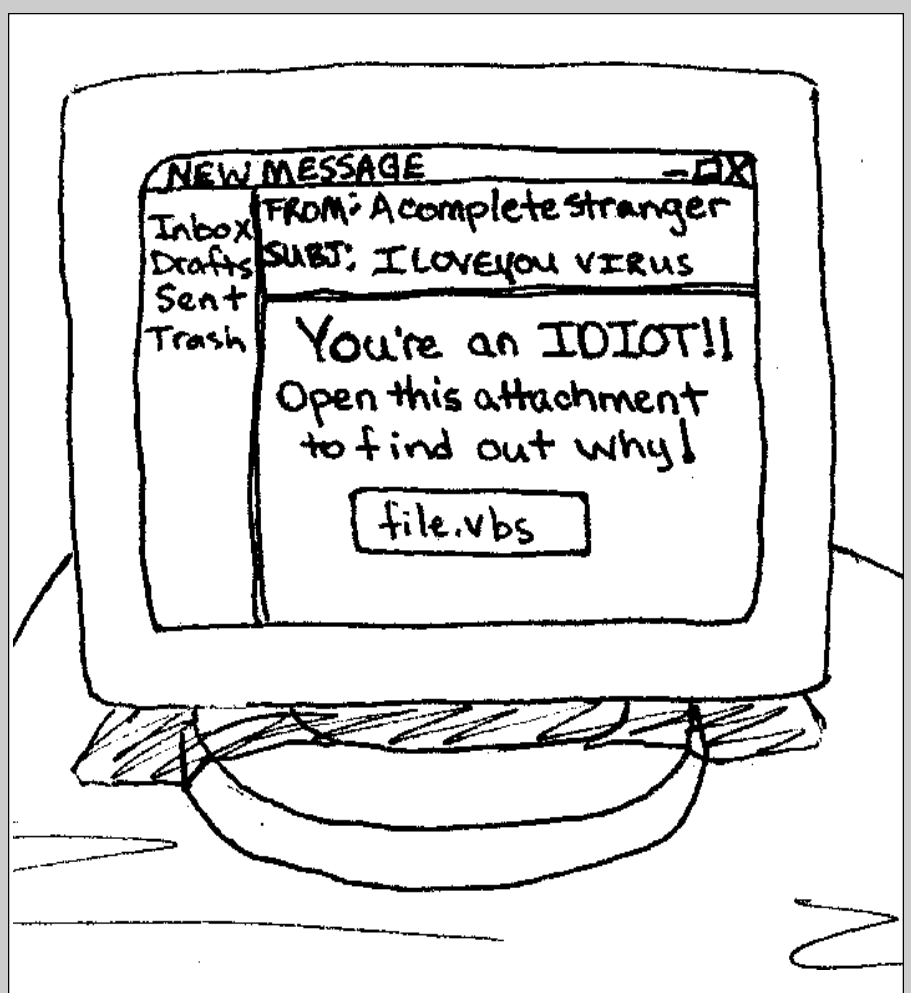
Consensus editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of The Technique, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.

Cartoon Corner Editorial Art

WE WOULD HAVE
 PUT A CARTOON HERE,
 BUT OUR COMPUTER
 LOST IT.

SORRY.

~The Technique



Misconceptions about campus safety threaten students

Complacency, passive treatment of safety issues can create dangerous situations; enhanced awareness and increased resources both necessary for combatting future campus crime

I can hardly imagine the fear, sadness, and pain that accompany a sexual assault or violent crime. Even more difficult to imagine is a college or university campus that does not do everything within its power to promote the safety, health, and general welfare of all students to the best of its ability.

I admit that I often treat my own safety with a cavalier attitude when I should be more cautious, whether I am jogging around campus at night, parking in a shadowy corner, or casually leaving a ground floor window open. Tech's campus feels safe and secure to most students, so safe that a student can forget that she is living in downtown Atlanta within walking distance of neighborhoods that would not be considered so secure. Although I generally feel safe, I am still scared when I consider the possibilities of something going wrong. If I were to find myself in an emergency situation, I am not sure that immediate help and safety will be forthcoming.

Few students would look twice if a campus phone weren't working, but if that phone is the only lifeline between being safe and becoming a victim, I would hope and pray that reaching a phone would save me from violence. Moreover, a dark shadow in the far end of a parking lot, a crease of darkness between buildings, or even a sidewalk under a burnt-out street lamp can become an unprotected and unsafe area, even in the center of campus.

When I need to be safe, I need my campus to provide me with adequate resources to do so. Last Thurs-

"We are living in a city that is not free of crime, violence, and threatening situations [but] too many students would rather hold a door open for a stranger than appear rude or inconsiderate."

Jennifer Hinkel
News Editor



day morning at 5:00 a.m., I called for a Stingerette ride so I could catch MARTA to the airport for an early flight. When no one answered after four calls, and my friends would not be awakened at such an early hour, I walked across campus in the dark. After learning of recent incidents on campus, I feel rather foolish and slightly threatened. However, I also feel rather angered that the resource I felt would be safest and most helpful was not available.

According to the Parking Department's Web site, Stingerette service stops at 4:00 a.m. and Stinger service begins at 7:00 a.m., leaving three hours of night and early morning where transportation is unavailable, yet traversing campus alone cannot be considered safe.

We cannot deny that we live on an urban campus. Despite trees, flowers, fields, and an aura of friendliness, we are living in a city that is not free of crime, violence, and threatening situations. Despite warnings from housing staff and rules about guest escorts, too many students would rather hold a door open for a

stranger than appear rude or inconsiderate. Many fail to realize that allowing a non-resident to enter a building is beyond inconsiderate when that person commits a crime, whether a violent assault or a simple theft. However, dormitories with many entrances, open windows, and no security personnel are difficult to make secure. I wonder how many incidents would be avoided if every person who entered and left a building had to check in with security personnel.

Coming from an all-female Catholic school background where women's issues were taught back-to-back with calculus, I feel that I should be adequately equipped to handle my own safety. I have read the books and articles, taken the self-defense classes, and solicited the advice of friends, sisters, and mothers. After all, I am a college woman, strong and self-sufficient...but how can I remain self-sufficient when I live in an environment where situations can change from comfortably secure to frighteningly helpless in a matter of moments?

I applaud the campus organizations that make our campus as safe as it is, and I realize that an incident-free utopia is a far-fetched impossibility. However, there is undeniably room for improvement in many areas.

I urge the Tech Police Department, those who control transportation and parking, facilities employees who maintain phones and lights, and the Women's Resource Center to provide a more secure campus for both women and men.

Moreover, only by reporting incidents can we make each other aware of the safety, or lack thereof, of our surroundings. I have great admiration and respect for the woman who was forthright enough to report a sexual assault. Why do we find it easy to call the police when our cars are broken into but so difficult when a person's life is involved? We must realize that the latter is much more grave and far-reaching, and that the consequences are not to be ignored. As a student body, we need to make our safety a priority, so we can jog, drive, park, walk, and live without unnecessary fear and concern.

A few small changes could save many students from harm; if only one incident is avoided or one person's safety preserved by such a change, the change is not only worthy, but also essential for the well being of the student body.

If Jennifer Hinkel were Buffy the Vampire Slayer, she wouldn't have to worry about campus safety. In fact, she could solve campus safety problems all by herself.

They're out to get us, and just who are they, anyway?

Objectification of "The Man" combined with a strong "Us versus Them" mentality contributes to antagonistic relationship between students and university administrators

Administrators and students have fundamentally different perspectives when it comes to the Georgia Tech experience. Students tend to be interested in short-term goals, while administrators are more focused on the future. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it has recently been a source of frustration and confusion over several issues.

When the administration pushed for the expansion of the Student Athletic Complex last year, the idea was met with strong opposition by factions within the Student Government Association and by parts of the student body in general. Graduate Student Government was particularly opposed to the issue. Basically, many students didn't want to pay for something they would not be able to use themselves since SAC II would take several years to complete.

Even though the Board of Regents does not need SGA's approval to implement a new mandatory student fee, the Tech administration did an excellent job marketing its SAC II plans to Student Government. As it happened, the Board of Regents decided to postpone the fee until fall 2001. When the fee is finally implemented, few students will remember the battle between students and administrators over the fee.

What's important is that the stu-

"It is very easy for administrators to dismiss students with legitimate concerns as just another bunch of whiners."

Chris Baucom
Editor-in-Chief



dent body will have a state-of-the-art athletic complex to enjoy for years to come. I don't mind paying for something now that will greatly benefit the campus for several generations.

Administrators were farsighted enough to see SAC II's potential for long-term benefit to the campus community. I feel that many students were only concerned with their pocketbooks.

The topic of senior final exam exemptions has graced the pages of this newspaper on more than one occasion. This is one issue in which the student voice was united in favor of keeping graduating seniors exempt from finals for the term during which they graduate.

The faculty's decision to require graduating seniors to take finals was not an attempt to shaft students. I feel the faculty was genuinely concerned with protecting the academic integrity of the institute and upholding the value of a Tech de-

gree by making students accountable for all of their coursework, even during the last term of their enrollment.

While I don't agree with the faculty's decision regarding senior finals, I am convinced that the decision was made with the students' long-term academic well-being in mind.

If administrators did a better job of communicating these motives to the student body, then I'm sure there would be fewer upset students.

More recently, campus debate has centered around the bookstore move. Regardless of how poorly the administration communicated its vision to the student body during the planning stages of this development, I still think the people involved have the best interests of the institute in mind. While I still don't fully support a relocated bookstore, I understand that there are competing goals and needs—even among students—when it comes to allocating space on campus and encour-

aging off-campus development. Unfortunately, many individuals are unwilling to consider others' viewpoints.

A lack of communication is certainly one cause of the problem. Students frequently don't articulate what's important to them, and they rarely take time to explore what their values are. Their pleas to the administration are often based on matters of convenience and selfishness, with no consideration of what really matters or what might be better for Tech in the long run.

Because of this self-defeating—and shaft-inflicting—attitude, it is very easy for administrators to dismiss students with legitimate concerns as just another bunch of whiners.

I'm not implicating all administrators and students, because I know several individuals who are quite adept at communicating across many levels of the campus community. I only wish the rest of us would use these examples as role models when we deal with people whose interests and backgrounds are different from our own.

Chris really wants readers to submit letters to the editor. What better way to communicate your concerns to the entire campus than by being published in the Technique? E-mail editor@technique.gatech.edu.

TECHNIQUE

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