

FOCUS

Technique • Friday, October 10, 2003

You blog, we blog

Two LCC professors are incorporating weblogging as part of the curriculum for this semester's English 1101 classes. **Page 16**

New Ludacris album is... tasty?

The rapper-actor, whose new album *Chicken N Beer* was released this week, talks with the *'Nique* about his days as a DJ at an Atlanta radio station. **Page 17**



Students speculate on tying HOPE to SATs

By **Viji Sundaram**
Contributing Writer

Most in-state students at Tech all have a common bond in that they receive the HOPE scholarship to support their tuition costs.

In the constant struggle to keep the scholarship, however, students become well aware of its requirements. Currently, HOPE awards Georgia residents with a 3.0 GPA (a B average) at the completion of high school full tuition at any in-state public college or university. Students can also earn up to \$3,000 a year for tuition at any private in-state university.

However, last week Republican Governor Sonny Perdue proposed the development of a committee to research the future of HOPE and possibly consider adding a minimum SAT score to the existing 3.0 GPA requirement.

Not only would this option significantly reduce the number of students the program provides for, but, according to Perdue, would create an incentive to do well on the SAT, helping Georgia rise from its 50th place national ranking when it comes

to standardized testing scores.

During the past school year, Georgia's students averaged a 980 on the SAT—20 points below the 1000 level minimum that Perdue has suggested for HOPE qualification.

Other state scholarships do include SAT scores as part of their requirements.

For example, West Virginia's PROMISE requires both a B average and a 21 on the ACT or 1000

This is evidenced in Georgia's statistics last year. Caucasian students combined scored 1035, while African-Americans only scored an average of 852.

In addition, if the 1000 minimum had been imposed at the start of the 2000 school year, approximately 8,100 of 20,000 HOPE recipients would not have met the requirements.

Two-thirds of that number—about 5,000 students—would have been black.

"They're also financially worse off, and the ones that need the scholarship most," he added.

However, both the research commission and Perdue agree that HOPE should not be turned into a need-based scholarship, especially since that would stain Georgia's continuous No. 1 ranking in the academic-based student financial aid (a list compiled by the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs) field.

But other minorities besides African-Americans may also be affect-

as well.

Steven Lee, a second year Computer Engineering major, said, "HOPE has always been 3.0. Foreign students always do badly on the verbal, so it'll be a disadvantage to us."

Why do minorities score lower on standardized tests? Critics deny that the test is culturally biased, but suggest that financial back-

ground may determine whether students can afford to take prep courses.

Financial background may also affect a student's motivation and incentive as well, both key factors in this debate.

Perdue found that 10 freshmen receiving HOPE in 2000 did have a 3.0 GPA, but scored under 500 on the SAT.

These students knew that despite their SAT score, they would still be able to attend a

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HOPE



SAT

"A lot of people feel that the HOPE scholarship is already biased towards minorities," said Robert Brooks, a Management senior.

ed by the minimum SAT.

For example, for Tech's large international population, language barriers may result in lower test scores

..... a look back at Tech History.....

Dean Griffin's "slush fund" used to help those in need

In a real-life version of the movie Pay It Forward, former Tech dean George Griffin used connections to secure loans for students—and then, returned loans were used to help others

By **Joshua Cuneo**
Senior Staff Writer

Imagine obtaining college funds without working, without fulfilling scholarship requirements and without paying back an interest-laden loan.

Interested yet? For students who attended Tech prior to the 1990s, such an ideal system, while never officially endorsed by the Institute, was a reality.

The system in question was Dean Griffin's behind-the-scenes Hip Pocket Fund, an informal slush fund that helped financially needy students meet their academic expenses.

It began in the 1920s, when students who were short on funds approached the dean and requested a short-term loan.

"Whether it was to pay their tuition, their check didn't come from home, they lost their job, whatever their need might be, they could approach the dean and be fairly certain that he would be supportive of their needs," said Marilyn Somers, Director of the Living History Program at Georgia Tech.

The dean would proceed to contact one of his many friends in the

upper ranks of the community—often presidents of banks or local utility companies who could afford to issue the loan.

Then, without notice, the student would find a check in his mailbox days later. "[The dean was] very abrupt about it," Somers said.

"Whether it was...their check didn't come from home, they lost their job...[Dean Griffin] would be supportive of their needs."

Marilyn Somers
Director, Living History

The student was instructed by the dean to give his word of honor to repay the money when possible.

According to Somers, all promises were followed through. "The money came back to Dean Griffin all the time," she said. "The students were wonderful."

However, the borrowing money had a twist. "Instead of sending the money back to where it came from, he would dole it out again to whomever he had on his waiting list," said Somers. That enabled the program to expand into something of a revolving "scholarship" for needy students.

And despite his infamous absent-mindedness, Griffin kept an accurate mental record of all transactions.

"He had this interesting way of keeping track of a lot of money going into a lot of needy students' hands," said Somers.

Griffin could correctly identify who owed how much money and who had already paid their loans back. Yet surprisingly, he never maintained written records of the system.

The popularity and success of the system helped it grow rapidly, and Griffin maintained it throughout his entire career at Tech.

By his retirement in the 1980s, thousands of students had credited Griffin's Hip Pocket Fund with providing the financial means for them to remain in school during economically strenuous times.

See *Fund*, page 12

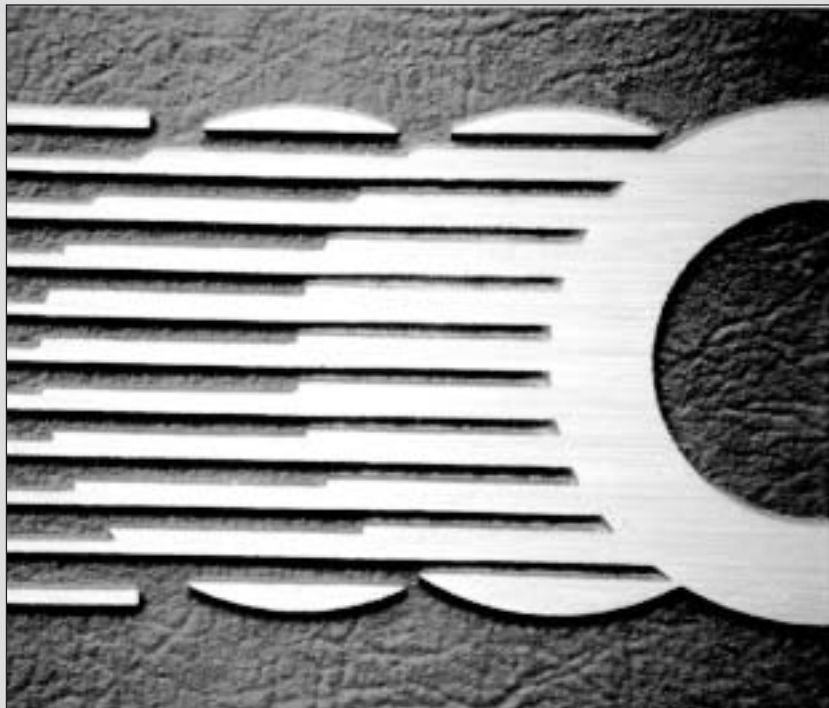


Photo courtesy 1949 Blueprint

Dean Griffin used his personal and business connections to secure money that he loaned to needy students. The loans were always paid back, and he would retain them in his "Hip Pocket Fund" to give to future students.

TechUpClose

Winner receives a free *Technique* T-shirt



By Andrew Saulters / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS



Last week's Tech Up Close:

Concrete lattice covering the windows of Van Leer

Last week's winner:

Pelham Norville

email: focus@technique.gatech.edu

Fund

from page 11

"He went on record saying no student had ever gyped him," said Somers.

"They always paid him back; they always wrote kind letters and he would often pass the letters on to his corporate friends and the bank presidents...letting them know how grateful the kids were for giving them that hand up," she said.

Furthermore, Griffin bore a personality that demanded students follow through on their word.

According to Somers, Griffin was reputed for being abrupt with the student body and could develop a terrible, commanding presence toward anybody who offended him.

"In those days, being on the Dean's List was not a good thing," Somers laughed.

However, Griffin probably could not have effectively executed a similar system today.

It was a product of its time. Griffin's solid reputation with the student body—as well as the small, enclosed nature of Tech society in the early to mid-20th century and the sense of honor that strongly pervaded the community at the time—made the system a practical one.

Nowadays, the inherent nature of society both at Tech and within the surrounding community has shifted at a fundamental level. People have become more transient, and the Tech student body is now too large for one person to coordinate the informal exchange of funds.

In addition, the heavily political climate of the more recent decades have discouraged unrestrained provisions of loans, and students seeking such funds might find themselves

facing a barrage of bureaucracy and red tape.

Also, the exponential increase in the presence of Fortune 500 companies, coupled with the doubling and tripling of Tech's student body since the 1920s, makes it impossible to become familiar with the entire student body and to acquire the social network needed to provide them with loans.

Even the most prominent officials, said Somers, can only maintain connectivity with so many people. "It was a much more informal society; it was a much more enclosed society," she explained.

"We didn't have the internet and

email," she said.

"Telephones were considered extremely progressive when [Griffin] started out here in the 20s. Everybody didn't have those, but as they got the telephone, he built up his network."

"No single person

could do something like that today," Somers said.

That means that, for the most part, modern Tech students are forced to resort to the old standbys—jobs, scholarships, loans and gifts from home.

However, in memory of the good ol' days, Student Affairs does run the Dean Griffin Hip Pocket Fund program, which offers emergency, interest-free loans of up to \$250 to students.

The fund became yet another aspect of Griffin's growth into a Tech legend, and students studying his statue in front of the Ferst Center might notice some bills peeking out of his shirt pocket.

He was, said Somers, "a unique man with a unique system at a different time."

"He went on record saying no student had ever gyped him...They always paid him back."

Marilyn Somers

Director, Living History

sliver box

why didn't the freshman issue of the Technique not have the most important number....the boy:girl ratio?

I know that question was late, but I forgot to ask earlier.

At least I'm not such a douchebag that I put the word "that" instead of "thought."

maybe the reason that tech women have TBS is that you keep telling them they have TBS

yeah, so the tech ratio is our favor? Yeah, the odds are good, but the goods are odd!

3rd year AE seeks new major... any suggestions?

In water, the shark wins, on land, the bear wins...barely. In shallow water, I still say the shark

Wait...what type of shark? I am assuming Great White versus Grizzly bear?

Big money!! No Whammies!

Yay for Tech Trek! Can't wait for my birthday!

I love you. No matter what happens.

Grrr, why are women so hard to understand? Really, they need a pamphlet or something =/

Or is that the connundrum to life? Finding a partner that you dont need a pamphlet to...interesting

I also think I just found out why I was destined to be in Biology this semester....

Braves...come on...do SOMETHING!

Go Marlins, way to beat the Sanfrancisco Bonds

Wow I slipped up last week, I only submitted one sliver and it was only on one page again....sorry everyone

The King of no pants has a test this week so that means that he is now goofing off trying not to study which means...MORE SLIVER FOR YOU TO POOP ON!

Woo Hoo Haircut...lets see if the reason I now like Biology notices....

tease d snuts

More sliverness on page 22

Grassroots forum encourages students to take "red pill"

By Helen Yu
Contributing Writer

"You take the red pill and you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes. Remember, all I am offering is the truth. Nothing more..."

Tech students will easily recognize the words of Morpheus in *The Matrix*. However, a few students at Tech hope to encourage students to consider those words in another context outside of the movie—as the introduction to another session of a Red Pill Forum.



A grassroots organization that has spread mostly through word of mouth, the idea to hold Red Pill Forum took seed on Georgia Tech's campus last spring, through the efforts of staff members from Victory Campus Ministries (VCM), a recently-formed Christian student organization.

However, its sponsors emphasize that the forums are not meant to be religiously affiliated.

Although VCM promotes the Red Pill Forum, Joshua Harrelson, Campus Director of VCM, said, "Victory Campus Ministries is what sponsors Red Pill Forum. Red Pill Forum



itself is not a campus ministry; it is a discussion group open for anybody and everybody who wants to come voice their own opinion without a set agenda."

Indeed, its student advocates say that the forums are meant to simply promote dialogue.

"I noticed on Tech's campus that philosophy and critical thinking are kind of a lost art," said David Harris, a Nuclear Engineering major who moderates Red Pill discussions.

The Red Pill Forum began as an idea that came from the University of California at Berkeley with the purpose of "bringing polite discussion back to campus."

Originally called "Brief and Amazing Discussions," the Red Pill Forum has grown into an international organization with 32 sites in the US. Their recently-published first DVD, *Red Pill Volume 1*, is jam-packed with 12 "pills" ranging from five to seven minutes in length.

Each "pill" is a video clips that combines excerpts from popular culture, news reports and street interviews that display the many different perceptions and issues facing various controversial subjects that are relevant to young people today.

"The topics are basically current issues that affect us," Harris said.

With video clips on topics ranging from evolution to the effect of violent music on society, the beginning of each Red Pill Forum is similar, but what, where and how they end is totally in the hands of the participants.

A mediator is provided to ensure an environment where people aren't afraid to share their

thoughts, but not to dominate or control the discussion. Currently, Harris and another student act as moderators, though more are constantly being added.

"The current moderators have been to [VCM's] meetings, because we want relationship formed with the people that are training...[we] want to make sure they're good moderators," Harris said.

The forums, which are held in more intimate, informal areas such as dorm rooms or lounges and hosted by student volunteers, last for 20 minutes each and garner about 10 participants each week.

This setup is designed so that the forums "are structured around people's schedules," Harris said.

"[They are] held in the dorm rooms," he explained, because they provide "a very convenient outlets for people to discuss that stuff that you usually don't have a chance to."

Discussions have been going on for about a month. "The one I moderated three weeks ago in Woodruff," Harris said, "we had about seven people show up."

At the beginning of each session, a video clip, reading or speech is presented, and then the topic is opened up for debate amongst all participants.

Discussions are usually very structured so as to not run over the 20-minute limit, though Harris said,

"Obviously, if there's really good discussion going on then we'll let it hang for about one or two minutes."

While the topics provided are great conversation starters, any topic can be brought up to be discussed. At the end of each meeting, a vote takes place to decide the subject matter of the next gathering.

The current goal, said Harris, is to host several meetings a week "so that anyone can...go to them."

The success of the forums is uncertain for now. Harris and others involved with the project plan to involve students and faculty, as well as advertise on Skiles.

He said, "Our immediate scope is to get people interested, have a few regular ones taking place on campus, see how many hosts we can find on campus, see what the response is and gauge it based on that."

Harris emphasized that "It's kind of a long-term goal... We don't expect this to happen this year." However, he added that "within a few years, I would like one in every dorm, and in academic buildings [as well]."

However, one of the problems that may face Harris

and the other students who wish to make the Red Pill Forums a campus-wide activity is Tech stu-

dents' apathy and lack of time.

For example, Trevor Christensen, a freshman Aerospace Engineering major, said he would probably not attend a forum "because I wouldn't find that very productive. At Tech I don't have time, so I either have to do something productive or sleep. I relax on the weekends, but I wouldn't find it very relaxing either."

"I think there are discussions here and there that come up," said Michael Dam, a Mechanical Engineering freshman, "but the problem is that people are not informed enough to

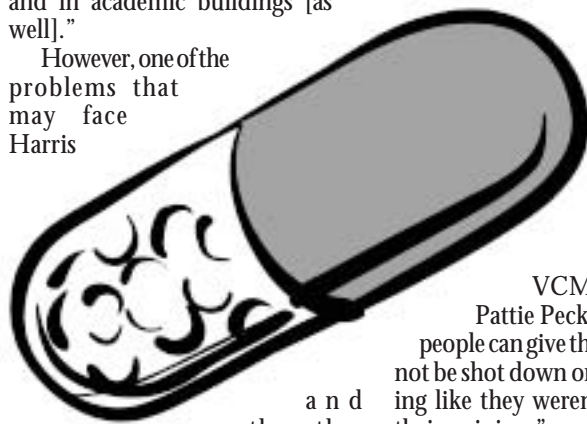


find them such that they can become a part of them." When asked whether or not he would attend a forum, Dam responded, "I would go given an interesting topic."

However, with topics such as evolution and the influence of music on society, discussions are often intense.

Still, they are always open. The Red Pill Forum is, for VCM staff member Pattie Peck, a place "where people can give their opinions and not be shot down or walk away feeling like they weren't able to share their opinion."

For more information, visit www.redpillforum.com.



Come to our weekly meeting at 7:00 p.m. in room 137 of the Student Services building and eat free pizza.

LCC professors explore weblogging in English classes

By Jeff Wei
Contributing Writer

The popular online pastime known as blogging has found its way into the English classrooms at Georgia Tech.

In an innovative approach, Dr. Charles Tryon and Dr. Doreen Piano have both integrated blogging into their English 1101 classes this semester for the first time.

Blogs—short for weblogs—are webpages that are usually made up of short, frequently updated posts arranged chronologically. The content and purpose of blogs depend largely on the author, ranging from personal journals to forums where aspiring writers can post poetry or fiction.

Students in Tryon's class were instructed to create their own blog at the beginning of the course using the weblog service of their choice, whether it be Blogger, LiveJournal, their own website or another service.

Every week, they complete a blogging assignment given by Tryon on his own site. Such assignments can range from writing their own personal blogs to analyzing and responding to sites and issues linked by the professor.

Other times, the assignments are traditional English analyses that students compose and post to their site. In one assignment, for instance, students had to read an essay by 1940s German author Walter Benjamin and post a response to their

own weblog.

Piano's class, on the other hand, integrated blogging into the course just last week, as the course focuses on electronic communications in general rather than blogging in particular.

Up until then, Piano's students used WebX, a system where some English professors establish electronic forums for their students. Piano carried out this transition to help her students observe the difference between the two online forums.

Both Tryon and Piano acquired an interest in blogging earlier this year when the war in Iraq broke out, which inspired a number of writers to start their own blogs.

Tryon in particular learned of a blog kept by a Baghdad resident who went by the pseudonym Salam Pax. Pax was able to provide firsthand accounts of the

American bombings.

Tryon and Piano shared their newfound interest with one another over the summer and decided that it might be beneficial to incorporate blogging into their English classes.

Both feel that blogging provides students with a real-world sense of what it is like to publish and share their writing with other readers. "It becomes less about the sacred literary canon and more about...authoring something," Piano said. "The whole concept of

"The whole concept of authorship changes when you begin to work in [this] electronic medium that is much more interactive and collaborative."

Doreen Piano
LCC instructor



Graphic by Scott Meuleners / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

In addition to requiring his students to keep their own weblogs, English 1101 instructor Charles Tryon uses a weblog as the class website as well. It is used for posting links to discussion topics, current events, interesting websites, and other related material. It has also drawn attention by members of the larger weblog community.

authorship changes when you begin to work in [this] electronic medium that is much more interactive and collaborative."

Furthermore, they said, blogging helps students focus on contemporary communication and literature in contrast to more historical literary studies.

"Authors such as Faulkner [and] Hemingway were writing in a specific historical context," Tryon explained, "and the novel and the essay form were an important part of what was going on in the 20th century United States."

"Electronic communities are a form that is emergent and important to understand," continued Tryon, "and it's important to know how authors are responding to a specific text...I think blogging illustrates that quite effectively."

He added that it helps students learn about and focus on current issues and events as well.

"The blog could very well become the new literary form," Piano agreed.

She also stressed the importance of understanding the new technologies that will become an inherent

part of 21st-century communication.

"It makes [the students] more critical of the technology," she said. "It's not this transparent thing [where] you can write whatever you want. Every technology provides different kinds of restrictions."

Tryon and Piano's new curriculum has earned them both considerable criticism and approval from students, as well as attention from those in the online blogging community.

See *Blog* page 15

join the 'nique
blueprint
erato
northavenuereview
T-Book
 writers ▼ photographers ▼
 pizza-eaters ▼ editors ▼ movie critics ▼ video
 game players ▼ sports enthusiasts ▼ layout
 designers ▼ artists ▼ theater-goers ▼ engineers

HOPE

from page 11

local college, with full tuition provided, based on their high school GPA.

This exposes a very different aspect of the Georgia school system. How many teachers provide a slight grade modification, or "inflation," to allow students to attain the mandatory GPA for HOPE?

Fortunately, the quality of admissions at Tech may cushion the impact of Perdue's proposal, should it go into effect.

Deborah Smith, Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment, agreed that Tech's high SAT requirement would not cause many disruptions in admission standards.

However, she said, "SAT scores used in a vacuum to determine access to a program is not appropriate."

"Making a decision of admission based entirely on the SATs, even the College Board agrees, is the wrong way to approach the decision," she said.

From a financial aid perspective, there may also be cause for concern. Marie Mons, Director of Financial Aid, said that she is "concerned about how students finance their education."

With the lack of appropriate funds that students might receive with the SAT requirement, they might choose not to attend Tech.

"There will be some belt-tightening," stated Mons, "not a complete castration."

Student opinion on the proposal also varies, though the difficult academic atmosphere of Tech cause many students to agree with the more stringent criteria for the scholarship.

Dave Studstill, an Industrial Engineering junior, said, "It's a good idea. It gets people to study more, since after all, if you have a high GPA, that can't be all."

Janet Moody, a third year Management major, agreed. "As long as they're giving money," she said, "they can put whatever stipulations they want on it."

Other students offer other suggestions besides a minimum SAT. One suggestion is that the spending on SAT programs could be monitored at the high school level, or a cut on some of the other avenues the lottery assets are spent on could maintain the HOPE scholarship.

For example, "We could increase the GPA required, but not include the SAT scores," said Thuy

Trinh Dang, a third-year Biochemistry major.

Budget concerns may also underlie the proposal to base HOPE on SATs. According to statistics, during the first year of HOPE's creation in 1993 by former Governor Roy Bar-

nes, 42,807 students were awarded a total of \$21.4 million.

Now, with the scholarship as an incentive, more students work harder to maintain the crucial 3.0 average throughout high school.

As a result, during this past 2002-2003 school year, the number of students receiving HOPE has jumped to 211,938, with \$360.7 million awarded in total.

The cost of the students attending college with HOPE grows larger with each year, and the profits sold from lottery tickets may eventually be unable to provide all students having a 3.0 GPA with the full scholarship.

"As long as they're giving money, they can put whatever stipulations they want on it."

Janet Moody

Management junior

It's innovation, baby



By Ethan Trewitt / SPECIAL TO THE 'NIQUE

The Global Learning Center at Technology Square was host to the GE Innovation Summit Wednesday, featuring a panel discussion with GE executives and Tech professors. Tech is one of seven colleges on GE's College Innovation Tour, which also includes Purdue, Northeastern and Boston University.

Blog

from page 14

Some of the students hailed the use of blogging as both liberating and entertaining.

"You are able to express yourself—both formally and informally—[and are able to] get your ideas out in a public forum," said Alex Kennedy, one of the students in Tryon's class.

Industrial Engineering major Chris Zhang observed, "[It's] more fun than writing papers."

Others, however, dislike the focus on weblogging, citing their discomfort over the personal nature and variability of blogs. "It's real

people that you're actually reading... they're constantly updating, so you know how they're feeling at different times," said Bobby Brewer, another student in Tryon's class.

Some students also prefer a more traditional English class curriculum. "I'd like to see us going back to older texts and analyzing older literature," added Brewer.

Industrial Engineering major Fan Yang simply felt that studying weblogs is a "waste of time," while another student said that it was "horrible [and] annoying."

Others dislike that the class is studying blogging exclusively. "There are other internet mediums," Brett Bell, a Computer Engineering ma-

major, pointed out.

However, there is no denying that the scope of weblogging goes outside the classroom. Earlier this semester, Tryon linked to well-known political blogger Rachel Lucas' site as recommended reading. Lucas, known on the web for her biting commentary and sarcastic wit, discovered the link and responded enthusiastically to the idea of being part of a class project.

This sort of reaction is encouraging for the future of blogging as a tool in the English classroom. Tryon, in particular, hopes to use similarly-structured classes in the future if this one succeeds. "In a way, this is the beta test," he said.