OPINIONS

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OUR VIEWS

The Merit of Buzz

Let’s play a word association game. When we say “Buzz,” what first comes to mind? The annoying sound of a vibrating pager? Do you think of the deformed insectile symbol of the now-infamous Salt Lake City minor league baseball team? Hopefully, an image of Georgia Tech’s long-revered mascot pops into your imagination. Perhaps you should first think of money.

Through Buzz mascot licensing revenues, the BuzzFund has provided scores of Tech students with merit-based scholarships. This year, however, BuzzFund money will be channeled into the multi-million dollar licensing lawsuits to protect our Buzz from those nefarious imitators. Sorry, no BuzzFund scholarships this year.

Without doubt, funding for these lawsuits should be derived from other financial sources. A great need exists at Tech for these merit scholarships. Now, the Presidential Scholar program is the only publicized merit-based scholarship remaining. The PS program is not a bad program for what it is, which is an unabashed recruitment tool. The program represents a money-making opportunity for in-state students: it effectively says, “come to Tech with your HOPE grant and full PS scholarship, and you can make in excess of $1,500 per year!”

That’s great for PS recipients, but bad for everyone else. Even with BuzzFund money, Tech’s merit-based scholarship supply is seriously deficient. If the PS program were filling the need, the number of PS scholarship retainees would definitely be higher than it is. Of last year’s incoming scholars, 16 percent have already lost the scholarship. That’s a pitiful number. Certainly, the excess PS money that is currently being used to pay students to attend Tech should be used for the creation of additional scholarships. Now what do you think of when we say “unfair?”

Our thoughts are with you

Our thoughts are with the family, friends, Zeta Tau Alpha sorority sisters, and Cheerleading teammates of Leanna Piver. Leanna was driving southbound on I-85 Monday morning when she was involved in a car accident.


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A Question of Honor

Honor Advisors respond to recent Code uproar

We, the Honor Advisory Council, are pleased that the issues of honor, integrity, and ethics are reemerging as important topics of discussion among all members of the Georgia Tech community. We remain deeply concerned and committed to the ideals vested in our Academic Honor Code.

Since January, the Council has held faculty roundtables, a student town hall meeting, and sponsored an academic ethics discussion based on a popular film. The Honor Advisory Council will soon host a town hall meeting for students to voice their opinions on the Honor Code. In the upcoming weeks, we will also be sponsoring an essay contest and our annual Honor Awareness Week.

It is important to remember that the Academic Honor Code is in its infancy and is still weaving itself into the fabric of the Institute. Now, two years after its implementation, a renewed dialogue on the Code is evident. This current atmosphere of reflection and discussion affords all of us the opportunity to focus upon the Code, its purpose, and its role in the daily lives of the Tech family.

The success of the Honor Code lies in the personal commitment of every individual at Georgia Tech—every student, member of the faculty, staff member, and administrator. We encourage each person to take positive action and make our Code more than a mere piece of paper, rather a living document that truly embodies honor and integrity for our entire community.

If you are interested in sharing your ideas about the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code or have any questions regarding the Code or the Honor Advisory Council, please e-mail us at honor411@smash.

The Honor Advisory Council

VIEWS ON HONOR

Letters to the Editor

Problem lies with people, not with Honor Code

What is wrong with the honor code that we have here at Tech? After all, it was formulated in response to the need for integrity in today’s students. It was carefully written, but still left room for individual professor’s preferences, and it is being kept up to date by an Honor Advisory Council.

Yet the honor code has not done its job. Dean Boyd has heard around 100 violations since only July, and know of no instances where a student was intending to cheat in some form on a test or assignment and then realized that this would violate the honor code and held themselves back.

The problem is not with the code, but with a simple fact of human nature we don’t follow the rules. No matter who we are, we can never really do what is right. If we are all honest with ourselves, we will realize that we never really act how we should. Rules with associated punishments may deter us from certain behaviors, but rules never change our hearts and intentions. In fact, rules such as the honor code may even make the problem worse.

Consider the child told not to touch the expensive vase. He may not have even considered touching the vase, but when presented with the rule he will grab at the vase as soon as the adult turns around. It is the same with the honor code. Now that we have the honor code, there is controversy across campus about the present state of honor.

Is there a solution to this problem of honor and of our misbehavior in general? Fortunately there is. Jesus said that everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin, and indeed we are trapped in our inability to act as we really should. In Romans, however, Paul writes the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. Jesus death on the cross and resurrection not only frees us from sin, but also gives us power over death through life in Him.

Mark Birney

Mark Birney

Honor Code just “words on a page,” says student

Last year I was an incoming freshman to Georgia Tech who was incredibly surprised that I was made to sign the Honor Code before being allowed to register for classes. I had assumed that any such policies regarding cheating and/or plagiarism would have been included in the student handbook. To be honest, I am not sure what people expected the Honor Code to accomplish. As the editor of the North Avenue Review put it, “It’s now official; cheating is bad.” The truth is that the Honor Code is nothing more than this letter. That is, words on a page.

Do you really expect those words to jump off the page and physically stop a student from cheating? No, it is not going to happen. The truth is one really can’t require integrity. You can however, help to teach it. The only way
Tech students just not breaking the mold anymore

Are Georgia Tech students getting education or learning job skills during their careers here? We need to examine this distinction and so enrich our existances.

Hey. I've got a question for you — ask yourself — one you might have asked yourself before, maybe about four o'clock in the morning when you’re trying to get a good night’s sleep: What am I doing here?

That said, I would like to pose some new legislation. I can do just learning how to do whatever job we see ourselves doing in five years. After all, anyone can be trained to do a specific job well.

I think we should be doing more than just learning how to do whatever job we see ourselves doing in five years. After all, anyone can be trained to do a specific job well. Take in- structs, for example — most of them spend their entire lives completely absorbed in one or two little tasks, incapable of considering anything outside those tasks. Granted, they do what they do well, but that’s all about you can say for them.

For example, it doesn’t help when the College of Engineering decides to split the classes. When students major in computer science and electrical engineering, they will not be able to take classes in both areas without taking additional courses outside of those majors.

What’s really unfortunate here is that the opportunity to reexam- ine curricula and ask the question “what does someone really need to know in order to graduate with this degree?” was missed. Instead of being critically examined, it seems that some students were simply transposed into semesters. Obvi- ously, something had to give, and that was something was students’ inter- ests.

Sure, those that graduate under semantics will probably know a lot about what they are majoring in and they’ll probably get a good job be- cause of it, but that’s probably go- ing to happen because of the right and not because of any sort of personal, non-science backgrounds to draw on.

I like to think that despite this additional obstacle that’s been placed in the way of Tech students, we’ll still be able to avail ourselves of opportunities to go beyond the ‘typ- ical’ technical curriculum.

However, even more than now, we are going to have to make the effort to do this. So, if you could leave me with a small piece of advice, I’d tell you to work hard. Find something you’ve never tried before and do it. Take a random elective next quarter. Pick up a language. Study abroad. But whatever you do, get out and do it while you still can.

Holland Alday
Copy Editor

The question came from a guest lecturer in a biology class, and it forced me not to consider distinctions between the two, but also to ask myself which I was pur- suing. The answers I came up with have led me in interesting direc- tions, so I thought I’d pose the same question to you and hope that you might start to ask questions about whether you are graduating educational or are you here for job training?

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person. See, I have a puppy dog! I love my puppy dog. And my mom. And I eat apple pie every day. If you don’t vote for me, you are saying you hate apple pie. And moms. And puppy dogs.” In most campaigns, the ads are briefly of type B, but quickly degenerate into type A. Occasionally, there are transitional forms, like “I love kittens. My opponent HATES kittens. He voted yes for Bill 380147.2984-J to make kittens ILLEGAL!” However, these types of advertisements are fleeting. Political ads offer no useful information at all. They try to hide this by quoting “facts” like “In 1987, Joe Smith voted NO on House Bill 203!” This means that he wants to ABOLISH EDUCATION!!!” The people who make these ads know that they can say things like that whenever they want to, because a) no one is going to look it up, and b) Joe Smith can’t deny it, because he doesn’t remember if it is true or not. As anyone who has ever watched C-SPAN (well, flipped past C-SPAN while channel surfing) knows, being in Congress is one of the most boring occupations in the free world, second only to proofreading calculus books. Being in Congress is like sitting in lecture all day, every day. We shouldn’t be surprised that members of Congress fall asleep, we should be surprised they show up at all. And most of the bills they vote on are so confusing not even the people who wrote them can figure them out. The result is, many politicians have a nagging suspicion every time they hear one of these accusations that they may actually have done whatever it is, totally by accident. So they retaliate the only way they can: by making up accusations of their own.

As you can see, both the candidates and the voters would be well served by abolishing all political ads. No rational person can overlook the overwhelming evidence I have presented here. And if you don’t agree with me, I’d like to talk to you about your operating system.

Kim Wilson, the Technique’s new Managing Editor, has a dog named Chica, a little porcelain angel, and a proclivity for writing long editorials.

Feedback: Letters to the Editor

Are you happy? Are you sad? Are you indifferent? Whatever...send letters to editor@technique.gatech.edu

**Commercials**

I was enrolled in Professor Flannery’s PHYS 2121 class in the Spring Quarter of 1997. [Editor’s note: this was not the same quarter as the incident previously reported in the Technique.] Shortly after the first test, I realized that he had basically taught us the questions that would be on it during the review session the day before. Others did, too, and word got around to be sure to attend his next review session.

Again Professor Flannery gave us “possible questions” on the day before the second test. Students who had neither attended a lecture nor done a single problem since the last test had all they needed to know to make an “A” on test two. This pattern continued through the quarter. The regular lectures were dry and theoretical, and the class on the day prior to tests was packed with students eager to be spoon fed the test questions. The most appalling performance of this nature occurred on the day of the final exam review session. I vividly recall him giving us exactly twenty kinds of potential problems. For proof of this fact, one need only look and the next quarter in e-mag, when I was called upon to apply those skills “learned” in Particle Dynamics. From the first day of e-mag, we were throwing vectors around. I barely knew what they were. After bombing the first test, I spent hours with the tutors, trying to learn the fundamentals I should have mastered in PHYS 2121.

What if my e-mag class had been taught by Professor Flannery as well? I surely would have had another easy “A” under my belt. Why not take him or someone with his teaching style for optics too? Then I would be able to get out of learning vectors altogether, right? If other professors in this school adopted his teaching methods, students would undoubtedly overload their class because “it’s an easy ‘A.’” Too bad our degrees would be worthless upon graduation.

For that reason, and for compromising Georgia Tech’s reputation of providing only the finest education, this teaching style should not be allowed here.

Craig Forest
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For more student perspectives and information on the current Honor Code situation, see page 3.

**Students harmed by Flannery’s actions**

Former Flannery student speaks out about his class experiences

**Commercials**

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