March Madness

A year ago at this time, the Jackets were beginning their incredible run that led to an appearance in the 2004 NCAA Championship game. This year, the Jackets have once again become the team that no one wants to face in the tournament. Tonight the Jackets will face Washington University in a sold-out game in Nashville. Coming off the heels of narrow loss to Duke in the ACC Championship game, the Jackets appear to be more than ready to take on the Colonials, and the fans will be behind them every step of the way, win or lose.

The fanbase for the basketball team has been incredible this year, unlike last year when fans didn’t really seem to catch on until the tournament began. Long gone are the days when Head Coach Paul Hewitt had to create contests like the Greek Step of the way, win or lose.

With the increased attention that Tech has placed on “internationalizing” our majors, students and campus, why not implement a simple “study abroad requirement” for our high school graduates and their accompanying parents only serves to make campus that much more an “international” campus. The benefits of this are countless.

My four years at Tech have been plagued with things that personally abhor: apathy, bad grammar and a recent lack of Ben and Jerry’s ice cream pints in the Student Center Food Court. I can overlook the zealots on Skiles who never stop pushing the new “dining options” that abound on campus—but although their hours are not sufficient. I must admit that they are better than the cockroach infestations of Wingzone and Papa John’s that I survived on freshman year.

 win or lose tonight, students, and the rest of the Tech community, will never forget the joy, excitement and pride that Hewitt, his class of five outstanding seniors, and the rest of the team have brought to us over the past two years.

A speedy recovery

On Monday, Head Coach Chan Gailey suffered a heart attack, while playing racquetball at the Campus Recreation Center. We would like to extend our best wishes to Coach Gailey and his family. We hope he has a speedy recovery. Additionally, we would like to commend Gailey for his unfussiness and dedication to Tech during this difficult time—he called from the hospital to encourage his team to begin their spring practices as scheduled. The team could have delayed its practices due to a recent lack of Ben and Jerry’s ice cream pints in the Student Center Food Court.

Tech focuses on superficial issues

“Why does Tech spend so much money on superficial surface alterations without fixing any of the...problems?”

Amy Schmusser
Copy Editor

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Ludia in ‘da house

Move like #8, get out the way. This will be the first thing on Techies’ minds when Ludacris plays at Sting Base. Yup that’s right. Ludacris is currently scheduled for April 7. The planning committee has delivered on its promise to bring another huge act to campus after the success of last year’s Fuel.”

Cyberbuzz downtown

Sometime on Tuesday, Cyberbuzz went down, affecting many student organizations who were not able to access their websites. The impact is actually local, mainly Cyberbuzz. The situation dates back to April 7. The planning committee has delivered on its promise to bring another huge act to campus after the success of last year’s Fuel. The concert will be free to students, a bargain considering Ludacris’ concert tickets sell for big bucks.

Baseball sets record

The No. 8 Jackets set a new ACC record for most consecu-
tive wins Sunday with their win over Wake Forest. Head Coach Dan Hall has also earned his 500th
school victory. The record had been unbroken since 1988. With only five more wins, Hall will become the winningest coach in school history.

Lights off

Whenever a flashing light appears from one of the emergency phones on campus, it signals that someone needs help. However, at the Woodruff Parking Lot, the light has been malfunctioning for weeks now, with the blue light continually blinking. Someone should fix this right away.

Letter Submission Policy

The Technique welcomes letters to the editor and will print letters on a weekly and space-available basis. Letters must be marked “For publication” and mailed to the Technique, Georgia Institute of Technology, 755 Ferst Drive NW, Atlanta, GA 30332. Letters published in the Technique are edited for style, content and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

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Coverage Requests

Press releases and requests for coverage may be edited for the Technique-in-Chief or its individual section editors. For more information, email editor@technique.gatech.edu.
Ombudsman needed to fight for graduates’ rights

Those of us in the “graduate” zone understand that graduate students can be grouped into one of four general categories.

1. There are the newbies, those who are still fresh with the zeal of the idea of graduate school and graduate studies. They are out to change the world and nothing can stop them.

2. There are those who are in the middle stages—still taking classes but concerned about their proposal—who are just muddling along.

3. There are those in the final stages, who only have “six more months” to go.

4. And then there is the group of old wizened grad students. They’ve been here longer than anyone can remember, and for all anyone knows will likely be here for years to come.

It is these “old-timers” that I wish to address in this column.

There are a variety of reasons why these old timers are still here.

Some simply get caught up with their research, and more.

Others get stuck in the middle of their work, continually over and over again.

And still others are simply content to drag the process out “a few more years.”

There are, however, a variety of other reasons that have some students still here five, six and seven years after they began.

These reasons have nothing to do with personal preference of motivation.

The longer you hang around the fourth group of graduate students, the more you hear scary stories. These stories include: stories of students having to battle to be allowed to graduate; stories of students being forced to change thesis topics because a professor has decided to claim their previous work; stories of students who do not have the appropriate equipment to conduct their research, and more.

How true are these stories?

How prevalent is this behavior?

I’m honestly not sure, but each of the stories mentioned above was told to me personally by the students involved.

So I have to say that at the very least these stories are more prevalent than they should be.

There was a recent article in the Nov. 2004 issue of Physics Today summarizing the results of a survey of ethical training and awareness. It found that a large number of junior members of the American Institute of Physics view “the unethical treatment of subordinates in research as a very serious problem.”

One of the problems as I see it is that there isn’t a well-established procedure for reporting alleged injustices, nor is there a dedicated person for graduate students to turn to for guidance in this area.

The students I have spoken with are at a loss as to what to do. A graduate student’s advisor is the first person he or she has to see to report such problems.

If the problem is with the advisor, the student has no clear idea where to turn. Many simply grin and bear it, sometimes for years.

If they do consider the problem large enough to seek outside help, they may speak to their graduate coordinator.

A graduate student’s advisor is the first person he or she has to see to report such problems.

And although I am loath to introduce more forms and bureaucracy to the academic process, it might also be interesting to introduce a yearly survey to all students who have taken longer than the prescribed 4-5 years for a Masters/Ph.D program, to do a pulse check of them.

Then they are confronted with the truth: there is little that can be done.

After all, by the time you reach the PhD level, your research is highly specialized and there is often no acceptable alternative advisor.

So most of these problems are just dealt with quietly, which makes it hard to tell if these stories indicate a real problem, potentially isolated incidents or a fragment coming from the overtaxed mind of a frazzled grad student.

Perhaps I am making these stories into more than they are.

Or perhaps these situations are good training for the real world, and we should begin to apply real world solutions.

I think that it is time a graduate student ombudsman was brought in to provide a dedicated person for graduate students to turn to.

This person can provide neutral advice to both students and faculty members while concurrently serving as a source of institutional memory.

Personally, I believe that this role would best be filled by an emeritus professor or dean or someone with equal standing among the faculty.

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If a problem is found, they can report such problems.

If the problem is with the advisor, the student has no clear idea where to turn. Many simply grin and bear it, sometimes for years.

If they do consider the problem large enough to seek outside help, they may speak to their graduate coordinator.

A graduate student’s advisor is the first person he or she has to see to report such problems.

And although I am loath to introduce more forms and bureaucracy to the academic process, it might also be interesting to introduce a yearly survey to all students who have taken longer than the prescribed 4-5 years for a Masters/Ph.D program, to do a pulse check of them.

If a problem is found, they can take steps to make the student aware of his or her options in order to help both the student and the graduate school.