Simplifying code

The current Student Code of Conduct has been problematic because of its complicated language and often lengthy, involved adjudication process. In the past students have found themselves caught up in Code violation cases for multiple semesters with no resolution. It is only appropriate that Student Affairs is updating the Code to make it more student friendly. Although John Stein, interim Dean of Students, could have chosen to avoid tackling the problem and let the permanent dean handle any changes, his choice to make this effort is admirable as well as better for students, who continue to face charges for violations and will benefit from changes made sooner rather than later.

Nothing seems solid yet, but the plans to “streamline” the system sound promising. However, “streamline” needs to be more than just a convenient buzzword. The committee revising the Code should focus on cutting down the time it takes to get through the process of clearing up infractions as they have planned. Cutting down the length of the process means that students will have holds removed from their records faster. Priority, of course, should be given to graduating seniors. The more rapid the process, the sooner students can get on with their academic careers.

The Code is very long and often confusing for students, who rarely look at it until they need to see where they stand for a judiciary hearing. Even if students do read it, the code is difficult to understand. However, it should be simple and straightforward enough to understand for those it applies to—Tech students who most likely have no knowledge of legal language. Student Government and others involved in the revision process need to look at the new Code critically to ensure that the necessary changes are made before a final version is approved.

Students facing charges for Code violations often have a lot of questions, and providing a simple, condensed form of the policies outlined in the Code to these students, such as a flow chart, timeline of procedures or general summary is important. Realistically, all students should be presented with a general summary of the Code, whether it is through an Institute-wide email or GT 1000 professors, because most students will never read the code in its entirety. Most professors do a good job of outlining prohibited academic conduct in their syllabus at the beginning of the semester, and they should continue to do so.

While some groups are taking appropriate action to inform students of their responsibilities, the responsibility is still the students’. As long as the proper parties continue to make an effort to keep students informed and the process truly streamlined, the proposed changes to the Code will be beneficial.

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

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OPINIONS

Our Views Consensus Opinion

Simplifying code

This past weekend, the lives of a family of four were lost in a horrific motor vehicle accident in south Georgia. Sadly, this was only one of several accidents occurring over the weekend.

Equally frightening is the increasing number of pedestrian fatalities nationwide. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported an increase of about 600 fatalities of this kind from 2004 to 2005. The toll reached 43,443 this past year.

In Atlanta, because the tendency among drivers is to exceed the speed limit, this statistic becomes even more worrisome. The city is a dangerous place for walkers and bike riders, and the campus is no exception.

Unfortunately, with the high volume of traffic at Tech, pedestrians and bicyclists are at a very high risk while on campus. Every day on Atlantic Drive, for instance, automobiles must drive among a sea of walkers and bicyclists. Bicyclists, some of whom do not wear helmets, often must ride in the middle of the street, sometimes because of the sidewalk traffic.

Although many drivers are accustomed to being cautious on campus, there are still some who speed through campus as if they are driving on the wider city streets.

People belonging to all three of these groups need to exercise caution. In order to make the campus a safer place, it is worthwhile to remember some subtle but important points.

1) Drivers should follow speed limits within a reasonable range. It is not appropriate to treat campus streets, even wider ones, as regular roadways: people who cross these streets, whether it be at an intersection or in the middle of a street, often expect cars to stop for them (as they should).

2) Pedestrians should also be careful enough to recognize reckless drivers who may not stop for them. They should not immediately assume that no drivers will acknowledge their right of way.

3) Bicyclists need to wear helmets and be much more careful about where they bike. After driving to campus nearly every day with the exception of school holidays for two years, what I have noticed most is that bicyclists are too carefree. On far too many occasions I have been driving behind a bicyclist riding in the middle of the street even though the sides of the street were empty.

Many bicyclists like this drive as if they were driving regular automobiles at regular speeds. It is acceptable for bicyclists to occupy the street if the sidewalks or bike lanes are too crowded, but it is unreasonable for them to do so if they are not.

Even worse, some bicyclists ride in the middle of the road but do not follow the same rules as drivers. While driving down Sixth Street, a relatively narrow passage, it is fairly common for drivers to come across bicyclists riding against the flow of traffic. These bicyclists could walk their bikes across sidewalk on Sixth Street or across the Burger Bowl.

For these commuters, I recommend following the example set by the club cart drivers. They usually keep to the sides of roads so that cars can pass them.

Biking in the middle of an empty street is not only extremely dangerous, but it also backs up traffic. If they make drivers angry, bicyclists put themselves at an unacceptably high risk of accident.
Find opportunities to aid, explore world

For the average Tech student, the trek to graduation is a long and arduous one. According to a 2004 report by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, among students who entered Tech all the way back in 1998, only 25.9 percent graduated in four years or less. (That number jumps to 40.9 percent after five years, in case you’re curious.) There is little evidence to show that the numbers have seen a significant improvement since. My own purely unscien-
tific impression is that the vast majority of the people I speak with expect to graduate at least one semester beyond the typical collegiate four years.

Further, unscientific impres-
sions lead me to believe that most people don’t hang around at Tech because of how much they love the courses they are taking, so presumably this is not a strictly voluntary phenomenon. The reasons for the long path to the BS are varied. Some are good, such as: “participated in a co-op program and got five semesters of work experience,” while some are rather bad, such as: “I flunked Calculus II. Three times.” And, of course, some are just plain ugly: “I transferred from a different school after three years and all the credits I had were reduced to just 10 hours at Tech.”

Regardless of the reason though, it seems Tech students actually take quite a while to graduate. Is it any surprise, then, that when it comes to going abroad, most students find the program that is closest to their academic or future career needs? Any program that does not fulfill some requirement, be it academic or professional, is very quickly eliminated from contention. While the attitude behind these decisions is quite understandable, the Tech-induced push toward “academics after all” carries a large downside: Students here are unable to do long-term volun-
teer work (among other things) without actively taking off the semester or year from school.

The impressive reaction of Tech students to major disasters around the world, ranging from the 2004 tsunami to last year’s Hurricane Katrina, has shown beyond a doubt that the student body is passionate about helping solve global issues. But at Tech, these students are limited to supporting the causes they believe in monetarily, or, at best, through short work trips during breaks. These opportunities are certainly better than nothing at all, but so much more could be done if the Institute’s policies were more obliging. Despite the fact that Tech lacks some of the majors for which going to teach English abroad or working in a non-governmental organization (NGO) is directly applicable, there is no reason that we should be passively discouraged from such undertakings.

Opportunities to make a difference are abundant. One such opportunity is available through an international student organization called AIESEC. (Full disclosure: I hold an officer position in the Tech chapter of AIESEC.) AIESEC in the United States runs the Salam, meaning “peace” in Arabic, program, funded by the U.S. Department of State, created after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 to help bridge the gap between the United States and the Arab world. It works to do so by sending American students on internships to one of four Middle Eastern nations: Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. There, students may perform a variety of tasks, from teaching English to schoolchildren to helping in the management of an NGO.

The American students who go abroad through this program will see the way normal people in the region live, rather than the vilified view of Middle Easterners that has recently been presented in the U.S. today. At a time when people are rushing off airplanes in fear simply because some poor innocent Arab needs to get from London to Madrid, these students will gain a more rational view of the world, rather than the “I’m passing my pants in fear” view that is being hosted upon us by sensationalist media and desperate politicians.

Just as importantly, these stu-
dents can be ambassadors for the U.S. in the Middle East, because the misconceptions about one another’s culture run both ways. Through day-to-day interaction with the regular people around you to all our students for the enthusiasm and support of our football team during last week’s Notre Dame frenzy. I can’t imagine a college campus in America that has more passionate involvement from its student body.

Although we were all disap-
pointed that we came up a few points short of upsetting the nation’s No. 2 team, the events of the entire weekend and the atmosphere in Bobby Dodd Stadium were a great credit to the Institute and its students. We proved to the nation that Tech is more than worthy of a national place. Your classmates gave a great effort against Notre Dame.

I am certainly aware that not all students were able to claim tickets to the Notre Dame game and questions were raised with regard to the policy currently in place for distribution. Much of this can be attributed to the unusually high demand for tickets of all types for this particular game. However, the policy was devised in conjunction with Student Government and in the past has worked extremely well. We will continue to work with Student Government to explore whether there are constructive changes that will make the process work better.

Suffice it to say that the support of Georgia Tech students will always be extremely important to the success of all of our athletic programs. I encourage all of you to keep the enthusiasm alive for the next three weekends and for the remainder of the season. Together, we will have many more exciting weeks down the road.

Dan Radakovich
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Lettets to the Editor

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By Kevin Chaney
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“They’re boring right now, but I’m about to get focused.”

By Amelia Randall
Third-year BIO
“Fun, but a lot of work!”

By Jeremis Smith
Third-year MG
“I don’t know. I’m usually asleep.”

By Allegh Guerrero
First-year UIAC
“I like everything except [Computer Science].”

By Photos by Rhonda Swaerzcek

Buzz Around the Campus
What do you think of classes so far?

Our Views

Game atmosphere good

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By Kevin Chaney
Second-year IE
“T...
Letters from page 11

Ruckus provides positive alternative to piracy
SGA has brought a legal music distribution system to campus. When I was a freshman two years ago, a bunch of Tech students were sued by the RIAA for illegally pirate-

ing music from the internet. Over 40 students were sued and some had to pay as much as $5,000 in fines. The lawsuits left a negative impact on Tech’s campus.

In response to students being sued, SGA’s campus services committee has actively negotiated with Ruckus Networks over a campus agreement that would best benefit students.

After much discussion, Ruckus agreed to provide free music downloading to both on- and off-campus students and to provide on-campus servers for the program. Ruckus offers over 1.5 million songs for students to freely down-

load.

In turn, the company expects to profit from advertising and other add-on features like movies and portability, which students could tack on to their Bursar account if they so choose. Other schools whose students use Ruckus include Ohio State University and the University of Florida.

Though I don’t claim to speak for all of SGA, I personally believe music piracy is wrong, since illegal downloading hurts the music indus-

try and is illegal. All too often there is much debate as to the extent piracy affects the music industry.

Moreover, music piracy or piracy of any other copyrighted material, directly conflicts with ITT’s Computer Network Usage and Security Policy, which all students implicitly consent to when they access Georgia Tech’s networks.

Section 3.1.2 of CNUSP states, “Users are prohibited from unlaw-

fully installing, using, inspecting, copying, storing or distributing copyright-protected material (e.g., computer programs, movies, televi-
sion programs, music) on GIT owned systems or on the GIT networks.”

However in light of my personal beliefs, I also realize students need to respond to proper incentives in order to make the right choices. Ruckus Networks provides a structure where students can use the internet to both easily and legally download music onto their computers.

This will motivate students to use lawful means to access music, as opposed to unlawful ones. By giv-

ing students incentives to ethically access music, the traffic of pirated music on campus will decline, and the CNUSP will be reaffirmed.

In addition to benefiting students, the campus community as a whole will be enhanced.

Given the nature of the Institute, Tech can emerge as a leader in protecting intellectual property rights and will even be able to use the legal music-downloading program as a recruiting tool.

Matt Peeples
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AISEC from page 11

them, Salaam participants can show “*4&$ that America is not the Great Evil in the Middle East right now; 50 slots

opportunities available for American students in the Western worlds.

the conflict between the Arab and that it isn’t true that everyone

in the U.S. simply hates Arabs. The

and passionate individuals, and an

all, good leaders are globally-aware

The Technique needs to have louder student voice

In the first issue of the Technique, I found the Technique Credo. I do not know if this credo appears in every issue, or only the first issue of the year. The first line was of particular interest to me:

“This paper is the voice of the student body and the servant of its interests. I also note that the Technique failed to even mention the recent decision by the Atlanta branch of the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of Georgia to deem Georgia Tech’s speech code unconstitutional. I thought that this story may have been pushed to the second issue of the Technique with all the first issue hoopla. Alas, it was not.

For those that don’t know, Georgia Tech has had a history (particularly in the past four or so years) of censoring speech from its own students. This censorship is typically of those students whose speech does not align with the ideologies of the Tech administration. It is often accompanied with threats of punish-
ment or restriction of funds to the students’ extracurricular groups.

Students may have noticed the small outdoor auditorium deemed the “free-speech zone” of Tech. How-

ever, under the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment, this zone should (of course) include the entire campus. The court ruled as such and has put Tech under five year supervisions for its failure to uphold the free speech rights of its students.

It certainly seems to me that the freedom of speech right of the student body is “of its interest.” The Technique has fallen short of its credo by omitting this story. This is not an issue of party politics or conservative/liberal divide. The constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of the student body to express itself is promised to all students, regardless of beliefs. Certainly the “voice of the student body” should proclaim this a victory for all, or at least address the issue.

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Safety from page 10

Safety

The high risk. They need to remember that if they are involved in an acci-
dent with a motor vehicle, extremely severe injuries are likely.

In conclusion, it is important that all three groups—drivers, pe-

dotters and bicyclists—pay special attention to the others.

Drivers, since they are ultimately responsible for any collisions with pedestrians or bicyclists, need to exercise the greatest care by fol-

lowing speed limits and yielding to pedestrians.

Pedestrians need to be careful and remember that all drivers may not be using to driving on campus. Finally, bicyclists need to remember that their bicycles are not cars. They

should not take unnecessary risks when they can travel at the same speed using a safer route.

Keeping these simple points in mind, we can minimize risks and avoid posting horrific fatality statistics of our own.