

TechNews

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Our mission is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

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SUBMISSIONS

TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at technewsiit.com.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The editors reserve the right to determine if submitted material meets TechNews' policy and standards. For more information about our editorial standards, please email assteditor@technewsiit.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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3 mass graves discovered in Pakistan

Shireen Gul

COPY EDITOR

I come from a very educated Baluch family, where I have always been thought to support the right thing and fight for your rights. I have always been taught by my parents, how to be human and to feel the pain of everyone, regardless of this fact that who they are and what they do, but you are a human and you should act like one.

But I wonder what's wrong with my country fellows, what happened to them all of a sudden that they have even forgotten the value of one's life? While scrolling down my news feed, all updates that I get from my country are about human been killed by human over ethnicity or religion. When everything becomes too much, you'll either explode with anger or start crying because you have finally decided that it's all too true.

On January 25, three mass graves were found after one of them was discovered by a shepherd who saw pieces of human bodies and bones. He informed the Levies, a private armed force organized by tribal leaders, and according to Assistant Commissioner, district Khuzdar, Mr. Afzal Supra, Baluchistan, the grave was excavated and 15 bodies were found. As the news of the mass grave spread throughout the district people gathered there and started digging in the nearby area where they found two more mass graves. I don't know what the exact figure is but all I could read with my blurry vision was something around 103 bodies which

were recovered from the graves.

After reading this line I couldn't read further. I was just too scared to do that, because I know the pain of losing a sibling. All I could think of was the family of the missing persons, those who had some hope in their heart that one day their sibling might return. I know for them this world might have come to an end. My heart goes out to all those families who lost their loved ones in these inhumane acts; it changed everything in an instant forever

At that moment, all I could think of was a famous quote by Louis Pasteur, "One does not ask of one who suffers: What is your country and what is your religion? One merely says: You suffer, that is enough for me." I buried my face in my shirt. I was all alone in my room but I felt as if everything in the room sat together and wept. There was no one who could speak to fill the silence. Even if there was anyone I believe that, that moment wasn't about saying something, it was about understanding. It was about being human and sharing in the communion of pain that we so often try to isolate.

Since 2001, Pakistan state security forces have abducted and enforcedly disappeared more than 180 thousand Baloch political activists including teachers, Journalists, doctors and students. Out of these they have received more than 1500 mutilated dead bodies tortured inhumanly and beyond recognition found dumped in desolate areas across Baluchistan. The corpses, most of which were decomposed and beyond recognition, were discovered after a local shepherd reported to security personnel the discovery of bones, body parts and the

possibility of a suspected grave in the area.

Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Gilani summoned the Inspector General of Police in Baluchistan and Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar on Saturday February 1, and has ordered them to submit a detailed report on the incident. Baluchistan High Court judge Justice Noor Mohammad Muzkanzai was appointed the head of the commission. According to a statement issued by the Baluchistan's Interior Ministry, the commission would submit its report in a month's time after conducting the investigation. But this is not the first time when a summon was order they did that before too but no result yet.

On behalf of my people, I would like to appeal United Nations human rights commission to appoint a U.N. special rapporteur on Baluch human rights crisis to investigate the human rights abuses Pakistan has committed in Baluchistan on daily basis.

I believe a society that accepts mass killing as norm, indeed is a dead society. It pinches me to accept this bitter truth about my society, everyday dozens are butchered amongst us but it has no effect on our social lives. But today I pledge you all to spare a thought for these unidentified bodies of God knows whose, as you start your life peacefully tomorrow. If that thought provoke you a bit then help people. Sometimes you have to be strong when you feel like giving up, have to fight when you just want to run away. Sometimes it's all you can do just to keep going and in hope of a better future we will keep doing. Help me raise my voice against the violence and help us to bring peace in Pakistan.

Administration decides when to open, close

Jeanne Hartig

IIT VP OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

I followed with great interest, and an occasional twinge of dismay, the many posts on the IIT Admitted Student Facebook Group page about the decision by the University's leadership to stay open for most of last week when Chicago experienced another cold spell. Some students were outraged that the university was "putting them in danger" by not cancelling classes on Monday, January 27. Others called for the disruption of the presidential lecture scheduled for that afternoon since that was likely the "only reason" the university stayed open. Senior administrators were taken to task for their insensitivity. The phrase "lack of transparency" began to circulate in the Facebook threads.

Emotions ran high and civil discourse seemed to hit a new low.

I thought, therefore, it might be helpful for the IIT community to know how weather-related decisions are made. The president makes those decisions with input from both the academic and facilities sides of the IIT house. They are based on weather forecasts and an assessment of how temperatures and wind chills, as well as snowfall, road conditions, and visibility, would affect the ability of faculty, staff, and students to reach campus safely for scheduled classes.

It is a decision based on the best available information. Once made, the decision stands unless new information comes to bear that dictates a change.

In this era of social media, however, it seems that a story really never ends. I have no doubt that there will be more comments

and posts and tweets after this article appears. And some will not accept the explanation given here because it is not what they need or want to hear or believe.

I'd like therefore to suggest that we all remember the following: 1) The IIT community is comprised of adults who have choices; 2) It is always reasonable to assume that decisions are being made by reasonable people based on the best available information; 3) Sometimes things don't go the way we hope they will and; 4) It is not unreasonable to expect below zero temperatures during a Chicago winter.

So moving forward, please know that the expectation is that classes will be held as scheduled unless you are notified otherwise. And that it is indeed time to move forward and focus on what is important—your studies, your learning, and your classwork.

Recitation not useful for all students

Kyle Stanevich

STAFF WRITER

A common thought among Illinois Tech students is the uselessness of recitation. Some students see these sessions as unproductive and a waste of time. While there are students who like these sessions and use them to their fullest, many don't. Maybe a more personalized approach to learning should be attempted, allowing students to skip recitation if it is unneeded.

Certain students just don't need to go to these sessions. Especially in the science classes, the information is presented in many different ways, lecture, lab, homework, textbook readings, and recitation. This repetition of material is useful for some, but there are others who can pick up a topic much quicker and will need less reiteration.

Furthermore, some students have different learning styles, making recitation not an ideal for everyone. Some will learn better from lab time, others from lecture, and some from recitation. When multiple teaching styles are utilized, some students just don't need the repetition to learn effectively. Additionally, recitation is very similar to lecture; however, a

TA is presenting the ideas, often not as clearly or concisely as a professor. TAs can still be useful, but more for miscellaneous questions during office hours.

For many students, recitation time is wasted doing activities other than learning. A typical classroom will have numerous students surfing the web, checking their emails, texting friends, and even doing other homework. Several students might even need to listen to the material, but because they are not motivated to pay attention, they will not learn anything from these sessions. This is not recitation specific, and also happens during boring or repetitive lectures.

A final concern that many students have with recitation is the trouble understanding their T.A.s. Assuming that the students are even paying attention, they will have difficulty comprehending the ideas presented by the T.A. either because of their accent of poor teaching skills. First, this discourages people from paying attention; if you can't understand, just don't listen. Second, important information might be missed, such as due dates or room changes. Finally, others might confuse themselves while attempting to understand what the T.A. was doing. This idea can also be seen on SGA's

VoteBox.

One proposal is to use course evaluations to identify teachers who cannot effectively teach, and then send them to a teaching class. The other idea is to make sure that all teachers at IIT can speak easily understandable English. While both of these ideas are not just specific to recitation—they are geared towards all classes—their ideas can still be applied.

I propose another plan: give students the option to pick what classes will help them learn the material. If a student knows that a recitation session will not help them perform better in the class, they should not be forced to attend recitation. The individual students know how they learn the best, so students should have the freedom to control their schedule. Of course, they are still expected to take the same tests, quizzes, and final as all the other students, and are all still responsible for learning the same material.

Not all recitations are bad, and some T.A.s can be great, but there is a general feeling that the time spent goes to waste. If an individual student has a question, they can email the professor or T.A. at any time or stop into their office hours, recitation is not necessary.