Physical Education Grades May Be More Important Than You Think

By Michelle Sigalov
Survey Staff Writer

The worst fear of the athletically challenged may be coming true—rumor has it gym is going to be averaged into our report card grades. It is still unclear whether or not this policy will apply solely to elective classes or to all courses but either way, Tech students seem to be evenly divided about whether or not they want it taking effect.

After interviewing students around Tech, I found an intriguing result—while almost all of the seniors interviewed said they would not want to have gym averaged in to their grades, almost all of the freshmen interviewed said they would. The big question is, is this new policy going to help or hurt our grades?

“It’s a 50, 50 chance—students in general fail if they have three strikes against them. For seniors it’s more detrimental because then they can’t graduate with their class and will also miss the opportunity in participating in prom and other senior events. I think it would help freshmen, sophomores and juniors more,” said Gateway senior Trapa Barua.

Undoubtedly, those students who are active members of athletic teams or who are just athletically gifted will benefit greatly from their high gym grades being averaged into their grades. However, there are many students at Tech, including myself, who are just not that good in the athletic department.

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“I believe that if gym is indeed averaged in it should be based off of participation and attendance rather than how physically adequate a person is,” said Barua.

Most Physical Education teachers will tell you that the grade you receive for the class is based more on participation and preparedness than athletic abilities. In fact, this policy will undoubtedly be helpful in promoting student participation in Phys Ed. In all honesty, most students slack off in gym because they know it isn’t going to hurt their grades. With this new policy in place, however, those who typically cut gym or come unprepared are likely to start caring more.

“As a gym teacher I find that a lot of kids don’t take gym seriously and just don’t show up at all,” said wrestling coach Todd Bloom. “If it becomes a part of kids’ grades I would hope that it motivates them to at least show up especially those with first period.”

Critics of the policy may argue that because Phys Ed. is not a course that colleges weigh heavily—if at all—it shouldn’t be given so much emphasis in high school. Many students are already frustrated with being assigned homework for Phys Ed. and having to take written tests for the course. Those who fail the course are also required to go to summer school and seniors who fail may not be able to graduate.

“I think overall it’s pointless because a lot of colleges only average in academic courses. It will definitely work against kids who don’t like gym and don’t like to participate,” said Geoffrey Greene ’14.

According to researchers, however, phys ed. is an essential part of every student’s academic experience. The American College of Sports Medicine reports that “numerous studies have shown positive relationships between academic achievement and both physical activity and sports participation, whereas a few have shown no correlation or an inverse relationship. The mechanisms by which students may improve academic achievement as a result of increased physical activity through physical education include increased arousal and reduced boredom, which may lead to increased attention span and concentration. Increased activity levels might also be related to increased self-esteem, which could be expected to improve classroom behavior as well as academic performance.”

If these studies are correct, then perhaps Phys Ed. should be weighted just as heavily as any other class.

“It’s important that kids stay active,” agreed Coach Bloom, “You show up, have fun, play a sport and you’re done.”

Occupy Wall Street: From a Student’s Perspective

By Nicole Bagnarol
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The American Job Market: enter at your own risk. It is as if we are swimming into our future alone, when a lifeguard should be on duty.

Our generation seems to be running through the muck of a messy economy, to no avail. Occupy Wall Street Protestors, however, are stepping out of the mud and splashing into the puddles of the rich, hoping to awaken their sense of morality. A majority of the protesters are fresh out of college but stale to the job market.

As one junior Technite remarked, “I went to Wall Street recently and there were mostly young people—they looked stuck in a way. Surprisingly they know what they want to achieve, but it doesn’t look like they’ll have the means.”

Now, that the movement has spread and grown, commonly referred to as “the 99% of Americans”, the younger protesters have been unable to find jobs or are being grossly underpaid—not to mention the sea of college debt eating at their resources and hope.

One unsettling sign from an Occupy Wall Street supporter reads, “My mom lost her job 5 years ago. I survive on food stamps and random gigs. I have a Master’s degree and no job prospects. I am the 99%. The stories of a distressed population are countless and from a teenager’s perspective, terrifying.

We have always been told that our passions come first, but where can we find the resources to pursue these passions? Oftentimes, families are unable to set aside money for college when immediate needs, such as rent, must be paid. With average college tuition increasing by approximately 8%, and national student loans for college reaching a trillion dollars, collectively, this year, the price of chasing a dream is steep.

But what if we stopped living in the trenches of a fiery economy? What if we assume our role as the future working class now and peacefully protest? Of course, this would be a stretch since hours of homework topple onto our desks each night. Luckily, there is a less-radical approach: educate yourself about the Occupy Wall Street movements, and be better informed on the arguments that surround them.

We must assume responsibility for our own future. There are alternatives to the doom and gloom of a fractured future: take advantage of scholarships, demonstrate commitment to a specific area, through internships and volunteering, and research how you can make a difference in the environment of America’s skewed policies.

“Be informed, be aware of the economic climate before you leave to go to college,” says Serge Avery, a social science teacher at Tech, “the Occupy Wall Street movement will expose you to the economic, political, and social changes of our time.”