

SUNBLAZER

Florida International University

Tuesday, September 6, 1988

Volume 6, Number 2



■ Students angrily demand answers regarding the future of FIU's computer lab for engineers

Students protest shutdown of engineering computer lab

REY QUINTANA
Sunblazer Editor

Students of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Florida International University are fighting to keep their computer lab from being shut down by school officials. A protest organized last week bought the students some valuable bargaining time, but the problem remains far from solved.

In a memo dated August 26, 1988, Gordon Hopkins, dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, explained the reason for the proposed "phasing out" of the Computer Aided Engineering Center located in VH 165: "due to severe budget cuts imposed upon us by Academic Affairs, it is no longer possible to support the computer lab as a separate entity." His instructions to Neil Hout-Cooper, program director and assistant professor of engineering, were

to "make plans to terminate operation of the lab and submit to me by Wednesday, August 31, 1988, a strategy to phase out the computer lab."

When FIU students showed up to the lab last Monday, August 29, they found a memo taped to the door informing them that the computer facility was to be shut down at 4 pm the following Wednesday. "They gave us no fair warning whatsoever," commented Joseph Acosta, an electrical

-continued on page 3



■ Dr. Manuel Cereijo, associate dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, confronts an emotional group of engineering students.

Photos: Rey Quintana/FIU Sunblazer



■ SGA Secretary Lorraine Pollack could not contain her laughter when Vice President Manny Lamazares stumbled and fell on his way to the podium.

Student Government Senate holds its first weekly meeting

RUTH SUAREZ
Sunblazer Staff Writer

Papers and memos rustle and the sound of the gavel is heard as student Senators confer with one another. The first meeting of the Student Government Association's legislative body is under way.

The SGA Senate held its first meeting of the fall semester last Wednesday, August 31, in the conference room in UH 150. Representatives of Florida International University's student body met to discuss serious issues and concerns. "SGA is the best source to voice students' opinions," said Tracy Peterson, chairperson of Student Services. "By taking part in SGA you are better informed of your school

and the money you put into it."

Issues addressed at the meeting included longer library hours, building a better rapport between students and the Financial Aid Office and the initiation of an FIU auxiliary police force project.

The Student Government Association has been working all summer long to prepare for the new semester. Its lobbying efforts during the last legislative session in Tallahassee resulted in a zero per cent increase in tuition for the 1988-89 school year. And just recently, President Tim Benjamin and Director of Governmental Relations Ralph Patino travelled to the Republican National Convention in New Orleans where they met with Congressman Jack Kemp and Senator Bob Dole to discuss the future of

education and the Florida Legislature.

With fourteen committees, each representing an area of interest, SGA organizes the majority of on-campus events. Its Academic Committee gave students the opportunity to economize on textbook expenses by organizing the Book Exchange. And its Inter-Organizational Committee plans to host a club orientation on Tuesday, September 13 in UH 241. Free food and beverages for up to 500 students will be provided.

SGA Senate meetings are held every Wednesday at 3:05 pm and once every four weeks on the North Miami Campus. The meetings are open to the public and all students are encouraged to attend.

FIU shows off its genes

RON LEE
Special to the Sunblazer

Several Florida International University faculty members and students recently returned from the 16th International Congress of Genetics, held this year in Toronto, Canada. The week-long event, which is organized by the International Genetics Federation, takes place every five years.

Scientists and researchers from around the globe had the opportunity to display their work in the field of genetics and to learn from the presentations of others.

Most of the research presented by FIU pertained to sex determination - fundamentally, the question of why and how do males and females become what they are. Dr. Martin Tracey, professor of biology at FIU and coordinator of much of the research that was presented, has been studying sex determination for over ten years. "Sex," he says, "is one of the unsolved problems in evolutionary biology because nobody has ever provided a really good explanation as to why some organisms reproduce sexually."

Since reproduction occurs without sexual intercourse in many organisms, a question often addressed by evolutionary biologists is why sex occurs at all. If a species has evolved to a certain degree of fitness which optimizes its survival, why should it reproduce sexually and disrupt this genetic "code" for its fitness? The recombining of genes from two individual parents usually weakens an otherwise advantageous code. It does not create a code which will increase the fitness of the new entity. This problem has invoked much theory and research, including that of Dr. Tracey.

The genes of an organism are its "blueprint" for development. A specific order of genetic processes must occur at coordinated times in order for a normal male or female to develop. Occasionally, however, a mistake or "mutation" in the genetic mechanisms alters normal sexual development of an organism. Some lower organisms may possess the genes of one sex and the physical traits of another. A rare occurrence in humans due to genetic alterations, is the development of enlarged breasts in a genetic male.

"Knowledge of the underlying genetic processes which cause these abnormalities may one day give us the ability to correct such problems," commented Tracey.

FIU students played an important role in producing and presenting data at the conference. Graduate students Arlene Leon and Patricia Meiszner presented work performed with Drs. C.K. Okubo and P. Pechan on sex reversal in fish and shrimp. Ray Gallero showed results from experimentation with Dr. Rene Herrera on silk worm genes and Mario Mateo compiled a comparative study of the effects of splenectomy on sex ratio.

Not only was the meeting the ideal setting for presenting FIU's data on sex determination, but it was also an excellent opportunity for FIU student and faculty researchers to interact with other scientists exploring similar topics. This provided the participants with expert feedback, troubleshooting advice and references for future correspondence.

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* Supreme Court Justice:

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- Interprets the constitution and statutes of Student Government in cases of disputes within Student Government and/or between student groups

* Attorney General:

- Serves on Executive Branch as a presidential appointee
- Shall be the legal advisor to the President
- Shall represent Student Government in legal situations
- Shall advise and assist students with academic problems

* Assistant Director of Governmental Relations:

- Shall assist the Director of Governmental Relations in matters dealing with FIU and Student Government lobbying efforts locally, statewide, and nationally

Pick up applications at UH 311 or SC 259.
Deadline for applications is Wednesday, September 14, 1988 at 5:00 pm.

Want to get involved?

Club Fair

Tuesday, Sept. 6
11:00 am - 1:30 pm, UH Building

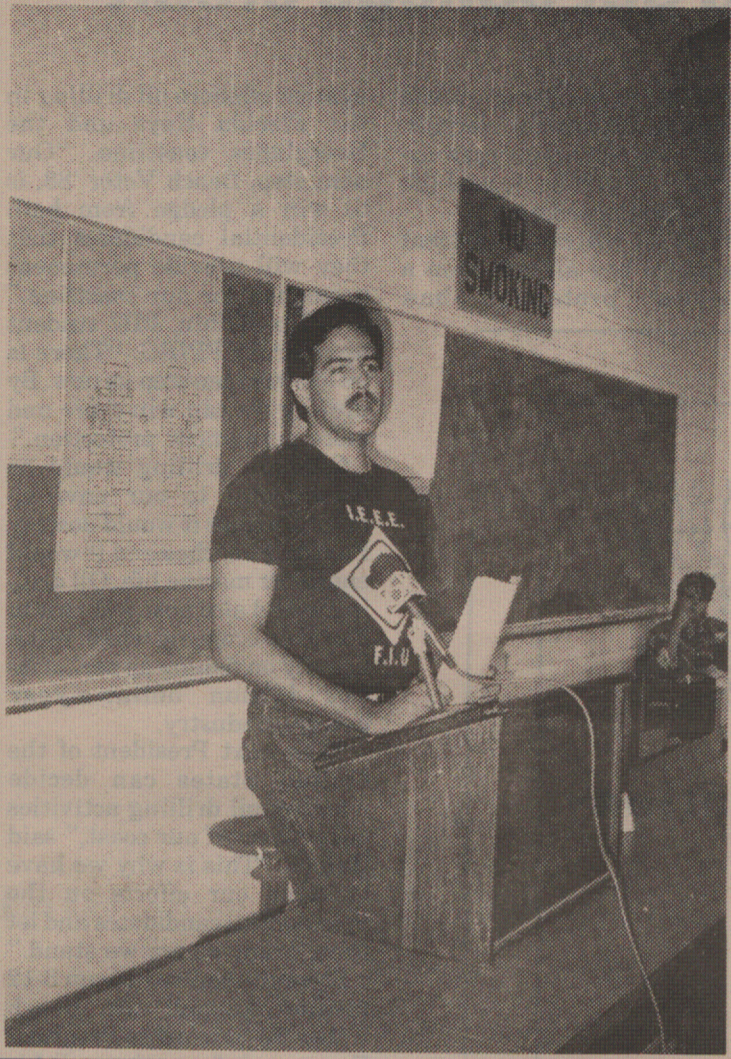
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■ IEEE President Joseph Acosta reads a press release from FIU's engineering students.

-Lab, from page 1

Photo: Rey Quintana/FIU Sunblazer

engineering major who is also president of FIU's Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). "They wanted to just close down the lab without giving us a chance to fight back."

But the students did fight back. In less than 24 hours a petition was circulated requesting a meeting between Dean Hopkins, FIU President Mitch Maidique and students of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. The students' goal was to discuss ways to fund the computer lab and thus prevent it from being shut down.

The meeting was scheduled for the following day, Tuesday, August 30, at 3 pm in VH 135. Engineering students were present in strong numbers to argue their cause. Hopkins and Maidique were nowhere in sight.

"Apparently our President did not think that this matter was important enough to merit his attention," yelled one angry student from the back of the room.

The lone emissary from the Dean's office was Dr. Manuel Cereiyo, associate dean and professor of engineering. He informed the students of the administration's desire to cooperate and he also voiced official approval for the formation of a committee consisting of four students and four faculty members that would attempt to resolve the critical issue of funding for the computer lab.

"As for now, the lab will remain in operation for at least the next semester," said Cereiyo. "After that we'll look to this committee to come up with a long-term solution."

Acosta feels that this is just a delaying tactic on FIU's part. "They want to form a committee just to quiet us down," he said. "This kind of publicity can be very bad for the school."

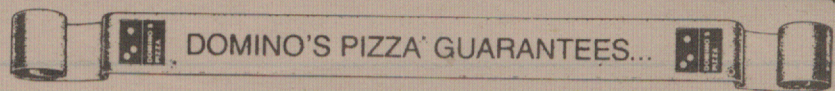
"It seems to me that the administration doesn't know or fully understand what goes on in the computer lab," Acosta continued. "Many of our professors have structured their courses around the facility. If the lab is shut down now our degrees will probably be worthless."

Another angry protestor found little use for a new building to house the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences if it will not contain a computer lab. "Why construct a new building to expand our engineering program when taking the lab away will shrink it?" he yelled. There seems to be a serious lack of communication here."

Better communication between students and administrators is one key issue that the Committee will address. Now that tempers have dropped back down to normal it is hoped by parties on both sides that some kind of compromise will be reached.

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FIU's computer store offers terrific deals

NATASHA PEREZ
Sunblazer Staff Writer

If you're in the market for a personal computer you could scout the shopping malls of Miami in search of a good deal. Or you can head on up to the SERDAC Computer Store for a terrific deal.

Located on the fourth floor of the PC building on the University Park Campus, the computer store sells PC's at a 40 per cent discount to degree-

seeking FIU students, faculty and staff. The store carries IBM, Apple and Zenith brands exclusively and it is located in PC 405.

"Our philosophy is that if we can't save the students money on a deal, we won't sell it," said Jay Samuelson, who has been managing the store for the past 2½ years. Both he and Donna Schore, office automation analyst, sell the merchandise at no commission, although the University does make a small profit. "Our goal is to give the university community the best price

available," commented Schore.

The showroom consists of a classroom with some systems set up for display along several tables, some empty "Apple" computer boxes for decoration and a reception desk.

The merchandise available includes several IBM models as well as Apple's Macintosh Plus system. Printers for the IBM and Zenith computers include Proprinters, Quietwriters, Citizens and Epsoms. For the Apple computers the Image Writer and Laser Writer printers can be purchased.

The store receives its merchandise directly from the factory upon request. A maintenance check is then run to make sure the equipment is in good working order, and the computers are then passed on to the buyer. SERDAC does not keep a large quantity of computers in stock, but instead orders them upon customer request.

Many students had the opportunity to view some of the IBM models found in the computer store during the first two days of classes at a small display which was set up in

front of the FIU Rathskeller. "We got a lot of response from that," said Samuelson. "We plan to hold another show next month to display Apple models. Zenith will get their turn later on."

SERDAC is also an authorized warranty servicer, which means that it repairs damages to any of its merchandise. Representatives are also available to assist first-time computer buyers with any questions they may have.

The computer store also carries diskettes and printing cables as well as a limited amount of software such as WordPerfect and the DOS operating system. Store hours are from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm. "Come by and visit," said Samuelson. "We'll help you get a real good savings on a personal computer."

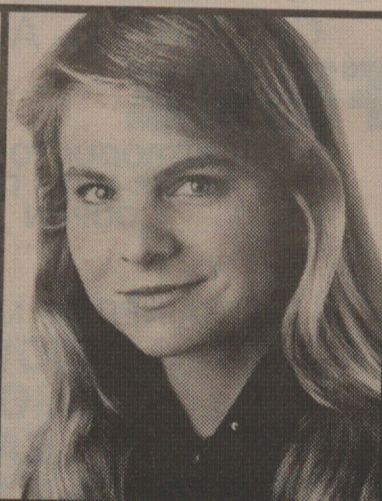
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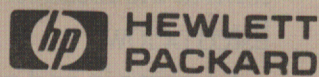
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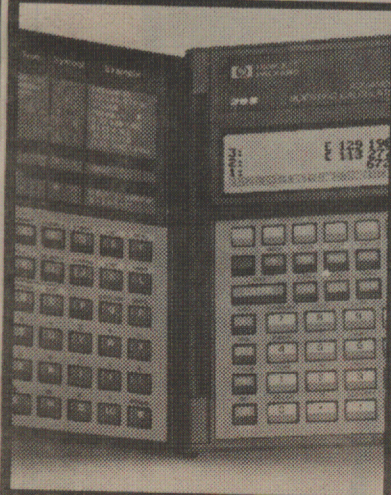
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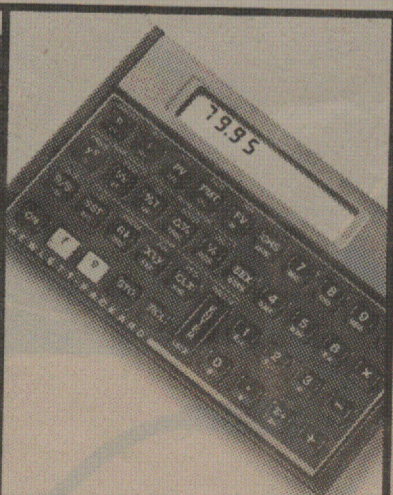
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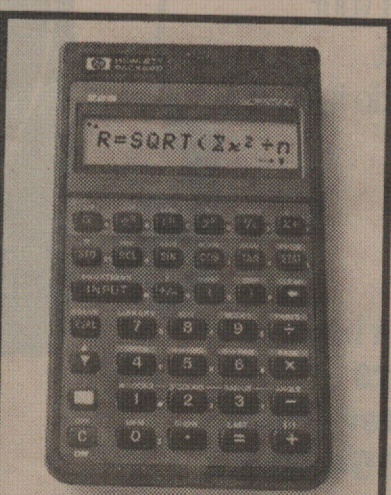
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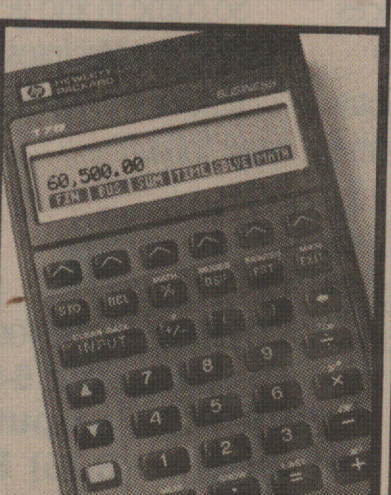
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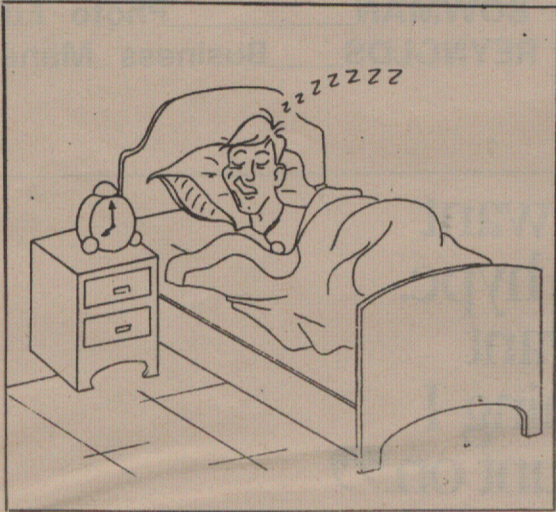
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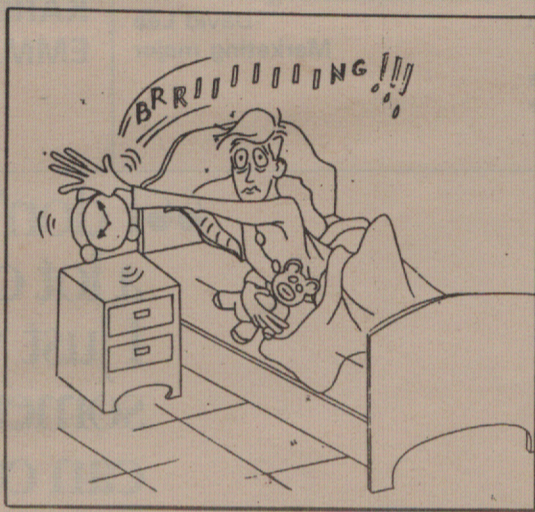
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"i" on campus



by Kevin Kaufman



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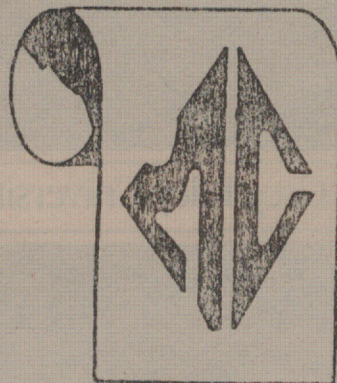
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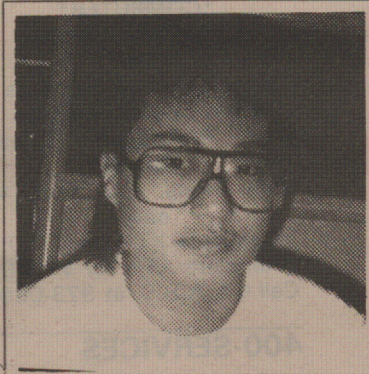


ESTABLISHED 1974

Speak out! - Student opinions

This week's question:

"What gave you the most trouble at FIU during the first week of classes?"



"Our class schedules were rearranged at times which were inconvenient for us. I have class on two separate days from 8:30am-5:00pm with no scheduled break."

-Holly Rose
Medical Technology major

"During the first week of classes there were long lines, far-distance parking and a lack of air conditioning."

-David Lee
Marketing major

"Finding out what room my classes were in. Many rooms weren't chosen until the last minute."

-Thomas Gilbar
Electrical Engineering major



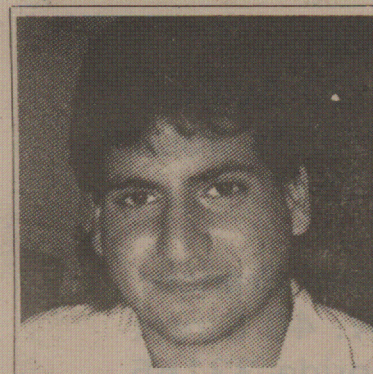
"Registering for classes-what a mess!"

-Susan Leyva
Exercise Physiology major



"Trying to get into courses that had been closed since the first week of registration, and trying to get in contact with teachers that are never in their office."

-Ileana Calvo
Accounting major



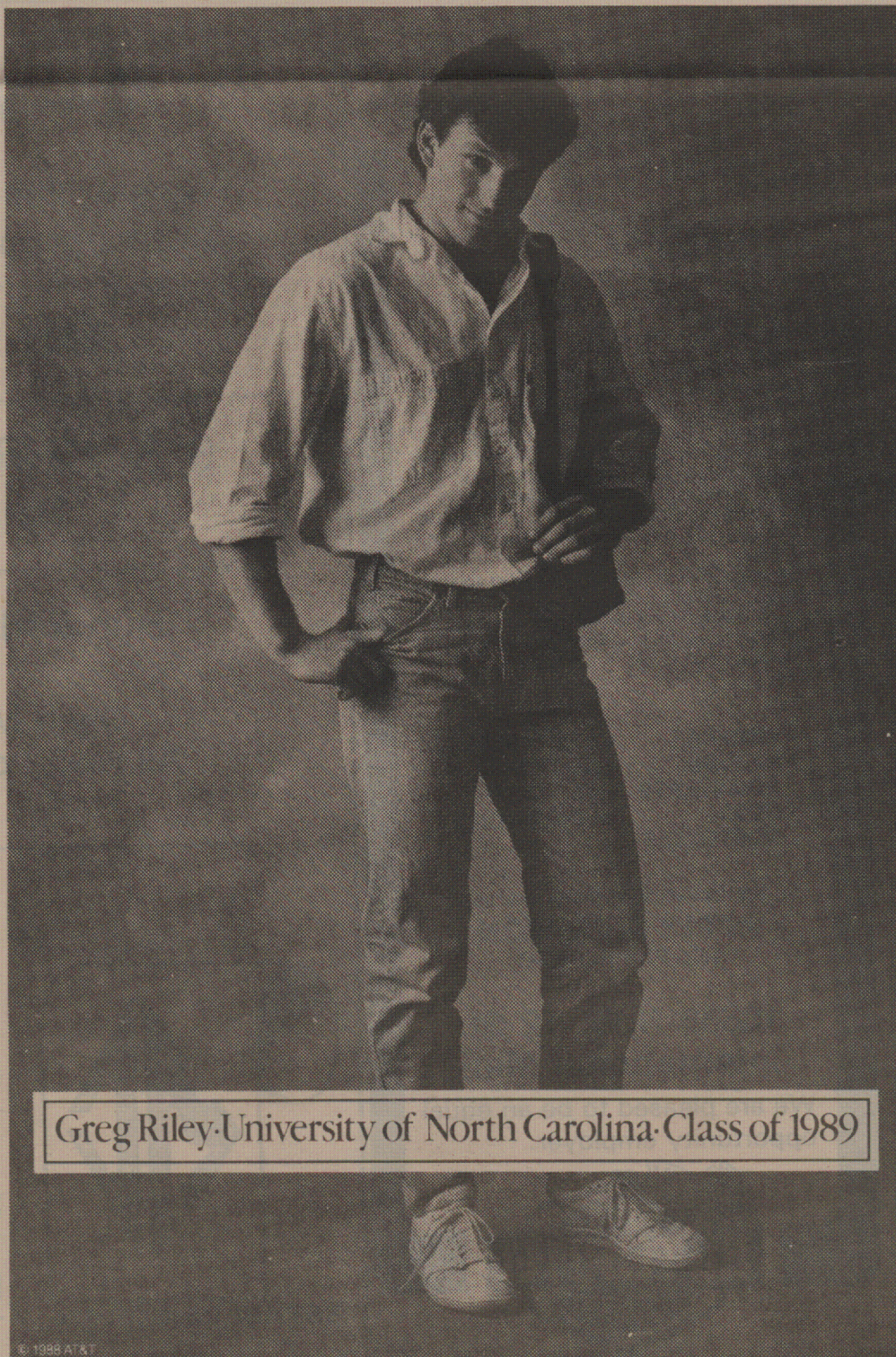
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-Scott Hechemy
Hotel Technology major



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