

## President, Provost, VPSA Convene Faculty Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions Policy

**Michael Gutierrez,  
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News

In the wake of a petition to President Thomas Rosenbaum signed by more than 140 faculty members, the Institute has moved to form a committee for evaluating current admissions standards as predictors of success at Caltech.

### The Context

In Spring 2020, due to the exacerbated inequity of access to standardized testing during the pandemic, Caltech and many peer institutions dropped standardized testing requirements for undergraduate applicants. We subsequently extended this testing moratorium in July 2022, and it is now in effect until Fall 2025 (which will admit the Class of 2029).

As a reminder, the Class of 2025 (current juniors) was the first class to be admitted during the pandemic and test-blind. The Class of 2024 (seniors) is the only remaining cohort at Caltech that had their SAT/ACT scores considered by the Admissions Office.

Several peer institutions have already reinstated standard-

ized testing requirements. For example, MIT did so in Spring 2022 after only two years of test-blind admissions. Dartmouth just announced yesterday that SAT/ACT scores will be required again, starting with applications for the Class of 2029.

“Four years beyond the start of the pandemic, circumstances have changed, and it is time for a fresh look at our undergraduate admissions policies,” Rosenbaum wrote last Wednesday in an email to faculty, which was shared with the *Tech*.

### The Faculty Petition

Last month, a group of professorial faculty submitted a petition to President Rosenbaum alleging that there has been a decline in student readiness for and performance in classes. In an interview with the *Tech*, Professor of Mechanical Engineering John Dabiri said that while he would not share the text of the petition, he would explain its contents. Professor of Geology Paul Asimow also provided helpful background information on the subject.

The petition questioned the decision to continue test-blind admissions. Dabiri explained its general argument that, with so many qualified students ap-

plying, the SAT and ACT help ascertain the level of rigor that applicants are capable of. Thus, the primary call of the petition was to reinstate the SAT/ACT at some level in admissions decisions. That is, it requested a shift from being test-blind to at least test-optional.

While the petition presented anecdotal evidence for a decline in student preparedness, it did not offer statistical evidence, according to Dabiri. So the second call of the petition was for the creation of a faculty committee to evaluate the efficacy of the current admissions process, as well as to gather more quantitative data. Asimow described an already in-progress study on the utility of SAT scores as predictors of success at Caltech.

The purpose of the petition was specifically to enact change, and was not written as simply a list of grievances. Out of ~300 professorial faculty members at Caltech, the petition was signed by over 140, as of the *Tech*'s January 26th interview with Dabiri. While there is clear support for the petition, it is unclear how many of the remaining faculty oppose vs. how many simply did not respond to the petition.

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## Title IX Case Delays Are Not Isolated Occurrences

**Maxwell Montemayor  
Cristian Ponce**  
News

In the January 16th issue, the *Tech* reported on a 16-month-long Title IX Case regarding a hidden camera incident. Since then, more students have contacted the *Tech* to share their experiences with Caltech's Title IX Office. In the interest of privacy, their identities will not be disclosed. Students who filed Title IX complaints will be referred to as complainants, and the subjects of the complaints will be referred to as respondents.

### Case #1

One complainant told the *Tech* that they reported being sexually assaulted to the Title IX Office, however, they did not receive a response from the office. That was until the office reached out to them about a second (unrelated) Title IX complaint that involved the complainant.

Upon meeting with the office regarding the second report, the complainant notified the office that they had filed a report that did not receive a response. Only then did they receive assistance for their first report.

Following that meeting in winter term, the complainant did not receive another update until eight months later in November. After such a significant delay, the complainant decided to cease moving forward with the office.

The lack of support available to the complainant caused them significant emotional distress. They shared that they were informed it was unlikely that filing a case with the police would go far, as they would not be able to retrieve biological evidence. The complainant was told counseling wait times may exceed a month, so they were offered a spot in an off-campus support group. However, they had no means of getting there.

### Case #2

Another complainant interviewed by the *Tech* told us that the length of her case extended well past the Title IX Office's standard 120 day timeline. She detailed a process with serious failings in communication.

The case was initiated in October 2022, and one year and three months later, a decision letter was released in January 2024. Both parties decided to agree to a mediation, suspending the case.

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## Caltech's Core Problem

**Jessie Gan**  
Opinion

The class that plagued me the most during last Fall term was Ch 21a, Physical Chemistry, which is an introduction to Quantum Mechanics for chemistry-related majors. My freshman and sophomore years were honestly pretty rough, but these were all supposed to build my skills as a science student here. As a Junior, I was hoping to excel in courses directly related to my major. You can then imagine my disappointment, albeit not surprise, when I felt barred from success last term due not to a lack of chemistry knowledge, but from the unstable foundation of the Caltech Core.

My frustration was primarily with the obvious hurdle that I had to clear: math ability. I was not well prepared for this class, given that the Chemistry major

does not require any Math or Applied/Computational Math classes beyond Ma 2 (Differential Equations). I found that it was significantly more difficult to be successful in Ch 21a due to my poor foundation in Linear Algebra and Multivariable Calculus, which should have been fulfilled by Ma 1b and Ma 1c, respectively. I continued to struggle in essential concepts, such as the rules of vector spaces and how to integrate over spherical coordinates. However, these are fundamental disciplines taught in the Core that every Caltech student is expected to be well-equipped with.

I could not be more frustrated that the reason I was limited in the class was not because I didn't understand Physics or Chemistry. Rather, it was because I lacked the math background that I was already supposed to have. Why did I still seem to be failing compared to my peers?

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## Page House's Mural Saga Continues

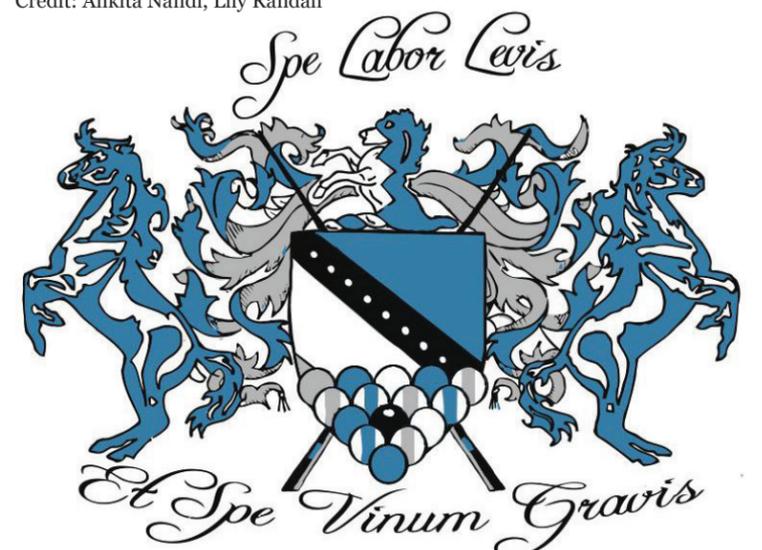
**Ankita Nandi**  
ASCIT Director of  
Operations  
Op-Ed

Each undergraduate house has a unique culture. Pretty much every Caltech student ever would agree. Parts of what makes house cultures unique, since they are so intertwined with their physical spaces, are the murals in each house and the campus as a whole. In the case of Page House, the murals on some doors and hallways are often associated with past years' Ditch Day activities, and other hallways have regular murals that were painted by former residents. Arguably the most iconic mural is in our dining hall, proudly displaying the Page House Crest since its inception. Until now.

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Above: Current crest in Page dining hall. Below: New crest to be painted. Credit: Ankita Nandi, Lily Randall



## Editor's Note: We want to hear your perspective!

We strive to represent every voice in the Caltech Community with fairness, accuracy, and impartiality in our news reporting. If you think we missed something, or just want to share your thoughts about a topic we've reported on, I encourage you to submit a Letter to the Editor!

Send submissions or contact the *Tech* editorial team at

**tech@caltech.edu**

Submissions are due at 12 p.m. on the Saturday before each biweekly Tuesday publication.

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**Page Murals**  
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In Fall 2023, the Housing Office and the Office of Student Experience (OSE) asked Page to alter parts of murals throughout the house, and in some cases, threatened to have murals completely repainted. The mural review process is extensive, and a recent change in policy directly challenges murals in the Page halls. As dictated on the Housing Office website, all murals must be approved in advance and may not contain references to Caltech community members, alcohol or drugs, or offensive content. Additionally, they may not be painted on doors (Page receives special permission for door murals for Ditch Day), and murals must be completed, including signatures and dates from the artists, within a six week period. Perhaps the most inflexible rule in years past was that “No modifications to murals will be made without permission,” which has led to situations such as where a mural of “Liberty Leading the People” in Alley Seven of Page House has remained unfinished for years. But now, under the new policy, that mural was deemed incomplete. This means it must finally be finished by members of the house, or else the maintenance crew will paint it all over with white.

With this context, the instruction to alter the Page Crest mural, which prominently displays a keg and a triangle of beer pong cups, should come as no surprise. But that crest has been a part of Page history for decades. All Page merchandise with the crest features the current design in the dining hall. So we were definitely caught off guard upon receiving an ultimatum from the Housing Office, especially since it was sent during finals week of Fall term: either someone designs an alteration, or the crest would be completely removed over winter break.

Evidently, Housing was not going to wait any longer to start enforcing the new Mural Policy. And indeed, upon our return from winter break in January 2024, Page residents discovered that another mural in the house had been painted over.

As for the crest, I took on the responsibility of repainting it based on a design that Vice President Lily Randall (Ge’25) designed that keeps the spirit of the original. While I always intended on painting a mural in Page by the time I graduated, I am extremely annoyed that it came about in the way that it did: where if no one else did it, the crest would have been erased from our walls.

Caltech prides itself (and advertises itself) on the unique house system and the tight-knit community of students that results. Thankfully, most of the alterations to the murals are small, such as painting over a beer can that was on Homer Simpson’s belly. But as silly as some of them may be, the murals are a part of our house history, and it is a disgrace to previous years of Page residents to alter their work without a full discussion. When alumni come to visit Page during Alumni Weekend in the future, I would not be surprised if they noticed some of the bigger changes to the murals, such as the House Crest in the dining hall. My hope is that Caltech continues to consider student voices and appreciate student self-expression, but that means discussions, not ultimatums.

**Caltech’s Core Problem**  
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Why hadn’t I learned the prerequisite foundation critical for these classes? To see how we got here, we have to go to the beginning: freshman year.

Core at Caltech is defined as the set of freshman year classes meant to build the fundamental, scientific background for success as a scientist or engineer. It typically includes a whole year of Physics and Math, two terms of Chemistry, and a term of Biology, along with a breadth class, freshman labs and more (the full requirements are listed on the Registrar’s Office website). The key is that Core is meant to help us succeed in our classes after the freshman year, regardless of our high school background.

Known jokingly as the “great equalizer” by some undergraduates, Core is supposed to make us all equally prepared to run headfirst into our major of study. It even provides a safety net in the form of Pass/Fail, so that we don’t even have grades for the first two terms of our

**What I was logically missing was that the Core could not be an equalizer if it treated everyone the same.**

freshman year. However, even in the perceived flexibility of the freshman year, Core is often still a source of stress and isolation. After all, contrary to how it is promoted in Undergraduate Admissions, Core is where the division between students of diverse backgrounds becomes most apparent.

What did you take away the most from the Core? Can those of you who are sophomores, juniors, and seniors look back and say that Core has made you a better scientist, as suggested in the Undergraduate Admissions page on the Core Curriculum? Perhaps only if you had seen it all before.

When I was a first-term frosh, I was blown away by how stupid I was. I walked out of my first Math 1a class in frustration, the second in tears. And it didn’t get better. I found the lectures pedantic and completely un-intuitive to a student learning the material for the first time. Things were just too far out of reach for me to understand. I knew there would be a jump from high school, but it was like learning to scale a cliff when it seemed that most people were already halfway up, not to mention decent at climbing.

I’m not just talking about the usual barriers that frosh often experience. Retrospectively, I was seriously struggling more than some of the people I surrounded myself with, constantly comparing my days of relentless effort with my friends’ mere hours before deadlines to complete problem sets. Even though I was worried about it before committing, I never really questioned until that moment if I really deserved to be here.

**While I always intended on painting a mural in Page by the time I graduated, I am extremely annoyed that it came about in the way that it did: where if no one else did it, the crest would have been erased from our walls.**

I finished frosh year (only failed one class on Pass/Fail!) after trying and failing to become the student I was told I would be in the Spring term. I told myself it would get better next year. And indeed, making new friends, moving to a new house, and taking classes that were actually at the right difficulty for my background were all integral to opening my eyes to what a disaster my frosh year was.

All this was important for me realizing that, indeed, people actually have different backgrounds. When I was a frosh, I would spin this delusional narrative that went something like: “it doesn’t matter that this person took classes at community college/ participated in International Baccalaureate/ went to a magnet school/ had multivariable calculus available at their high school/ insert obscure background fact of your choice. I was told that the Core brings everyone to the same level of math and science, so I guess I’m just not as good as everyone else.”

What I was logically missing was that the Core could not be an equalizer if it treated everyone the same.

When I was in high school, the highest math class available was AP Calculus BC, and I was the only person left in it by the end of my senior year during the pandemic. How was I supposed to pick up linear algebra as fast as people who’ve already taken it? Not only that, but at such a fast pace and lack of clear teaching? It was the first time in my life that I realized that no matter how much work I put in, I couldn’t make it all work out. I couldn’t focus on building my math background and playing catch-up with everyone else while also completing assignments on time for Ch 3a and passing my Bi 8 class. Sacrifice had to be made, and the easy one to make was giving up any thorough understanding of topics I hadn’t already seen before.

Caltech’s Core is not made for everyone, contrary to how it is advertised. Stated on the Undergraduate Admissions Website, Core is meant to be a “critical and intentional part of your education.” I do see the critical part, but intentional? What is intentional about forcing students into a curriculum that can be unattainable, and ultimately, inequitable? That to me, just seems lazy.

Deceived that I would soon become the student that breezed through math-heavy courses, I committed to Caltech in June 2020 over many other schools that would have at least offered classes that were at the right skill level for my growth. I committed here partly because of good research fit, but also because I was under the impression that the Core and the Caltech curriculum would give me a robust, broad background in the science subjects essential for success.

I don’t think I’m the only one that feels this way given the diversity of backgrounds we have. It’s no secret that Undergraduate Admissions is trying to recruit more diverse students than ever before. Considering the testing moratorium until 2025, we are actively trying to give more opportunities to students who may not have access to higher level courses. Now, I’m not trying to argue that the ACT and SAT are necessarily the best thing. However, I do want to point out that high achieving, wealthy students perform significantly better on standardized testing than low income, underrepresented students. These students are much less likely to have access to linear algebra and multivariable calculus and organic chemistry, and therefore, Caltech is quickly gaining a higher representation of students with backgrounds that are just not compatible with the Core.

The Core, the “great equalizer,” is not a one-size-fits-all that matches that perfect level for all Caltech students. While we have some measures to address various needs, ranging from Ma 1d to further support students who haven’t learned series, to placement tests for students who already have the background, these do not necessarily support students effectively. Specifically for supplemental classes, there was already a stigma associated with them when I was taking my placement tests in Summer of 2021, further increasing the divide between those with higher math background, and those without.

There is a difference between equality and equity. Caltech currently employs equality: everyone takes the same Core classes, and consequently receives the same level of resources. But considering the abysmal learning experience I and others have had, what Caltech may really need is equity: every person has a different background and therefore may need a different amount of resources or learning to reach the same goal.

Considering the average knowledge of a high achieving high school student before coming to Caltech, the minimum knowledge we require for admission eligibility is one year of calculus, one year of chemistry, and one year of physics. Let’s be realistic here. One year of calculus is a far cry from what is necessary to deeply learn and succeed in Math 1a, much less in Math 1b or 1c which don’t even build on Math 1a. While there may be no perfect solution here, I think the right place to start is by making Core more accessible to students with the bare minimum of application requirements. Students who exceed these requirements are free to test into harder classes if need be.

**You are not stupid! Just because your background or affinity for a subject is at a lower level than others at Caltech, it does not mean that you are inherently worse at learning than everyone else around you.**

Some of you who will read this will probably say that nothing needs to change because the Core is what makes Caltech a pillar of excellence. If you had a good time in Core, learned a lot, then that’s great, because it was the right level for you. But I personally am not just inter-

ested in just being hazed and humbled. I came here to actually learn and build the scientific foundation I was promised.

In this article, I speak from my personal experiences, but I acknowledge that Caltech admits students from a wide diversity of backgrounds. Not everyone will relate to this, and that’s actually great given that I described a disappointing experience. But I didn’t just write this to rant; I hope to create more dialogue about how Caltech can be better for undergraduates from diverse backgrounds.

First and foremost, to frosh (and anyone else who needs to hear it): You are not stupid! Just because your background or affinity for a subject is at a lower level than others at Caltech, it does not mean that you are inherently worse at learning than everyone else around you. Every person at Caltech is capable of knowledge and success and the difficulty of Core highly depends on your prior background. It took me until my Junior year to finally get over this fact, and sometimes I’m still not really over it.

Some may say that changing Core results in “dumbing down” or “lowering the bar.” For anyone who thinks that Caltech students will lose competency if we make Core more accessible and less proof-based, we already are. I’m a prime example of that. But instead of lowering the bar in content, we are lowering the bar to pass the classes. Considering how much I struggled with linear algebra in Ch 21a, did I really deserve to pass Ma 1b with what little knowledge that I retained? Perhaps not, but I still did, because that is how low the bar was to pass. I would rather take a class where the content is easier and students are getting higher grades, than a class that is inaccessible and the pass line is lower because students don’t understand the material.

For the Admissions Office, you are admitting students that don’t have the same background as previously admitted students, and hopefully studying these effects on their success at Caltech. Will you implore the faculty to reconsider a curriculum that will support the students that you have admitted? Considering the faculty petition discussed in another article in this *Tech* issue, they have seen the effect of the testing moratorium on us and decided that the solution is to change our admissions requirements. Is it our admissions requirements that have to change, or is it the way we teach the new generation of students?

Caltech has been an institute characterized by STEM excellence and cutting-edge research for decades. We have cultivated students that have gone on to innovate and change the world, and who have become top-quality scientists in

part due to the rigorous and robust scientific education here. I hope that Caltech will be able to promise this fundamental education to all students who commit here, and not just those who have been better prepared by their circumstances.

**Intent & purpose**

All Caltech students, regardless of their option, complete the same core curriculum. Our faculty designed the core with one thing in mind – making you a better scientist.

At Caltech, we don’t believe in taking classes to check off degree requirements. Just the opposite. Every core class is a critical and intentional part of your education. Want to study nothing but fluid dynamics? We feel you. But know that you’ll also take a course in every field of basic science.

The core curriculum will be hard - extraordinarily so. It’s designed that way: to take the best and the brightest STEM minds in the world and challenge them beyond what they believe is possible. But you can do it. You will do it. And this critical foundation will help you change the world.

Passage from Caltech Admissions’s “Why Caltech” website, on the page titled Core Curriculum. <https://www.admissions.caltech.edu/why-caltech/academics/core-curriculum>

**Title IX Case Delays**  
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“It feels like this is just never ending, I’m really frustrated because it should not have been dragged on this long,” says the complainant. She also feels that “with some of the evidence... it should have been a very open-and-shut case.”

“I want to mentally forget these four years even happened, because it’s been going on for so long.”

The complainant noted the sluggish rate at which the interviews occurred. “I gave them a huge list of witnesses and they interviewed none of them, except for like two” and for one of the witnesses, “they never really started the interview with her until she like reached out and yelled at them [the Title IX office].”

The length of the investigation also made some interviews difficult. Because these interviews happened “a year after the incident” and asked questions about “a specific set of hours,” it was hard to recall certain facts.

During the investigation, a no-contact order was established between the complainant and the respondent (the person accused of sexual misconduct). Though, during the summer of 2023, the respondent made contact with the complainant, and in September of that year the Title IX office decided that he had officially violated the no-contact order.

After the complainant received notice of the decision, she emailed the office asking, “What are the next steps from here? Are there any consequences? Will [the respondent] be back [on campus] this year?” along with other questions. She did not receive a reply.

Then in fall term, the complainant finds out that the respondent is back on campus in a “very awful” way. She says she found out “by seeing him on campus”. At no point in the past did the Title IX office give her any notice that he was back on campus, and that he was in the process of being let back on campus.

“This kind of gave me a heart attack,” recalls the complainant.

Soon after, the complainant emailed the Title IX office about the ordeal, and a meeting between her, Title IX Coordinator Hima Vatti, and Deputy Title IX Coordinator Valerie Newcomb occurred the next day. They apologized for the incident.

However, the office also claimed that they had sent an email to her 12 days before she encountered the respondent, alerting her that the respondent was allowed back on campus. The complainant claims she never got the email. The respondent showed the *Tech* that a search for the email in her inboxes yielded no results.

The supposedly sent email also said that they wanted to schedule a meeting with the complainant to talk about the respondent’s arrival. It is worth noting that the office never followed up on their request to meet, which the complainant never responded to because she never saw the email.

The office told her the reason that the respondent was allowed back on campus, despite him breaking the no-contact order in the summer, was because he underwent a psychological evaluation which determined that he could come back. The complainant did not receive any notice or any sort of timeline of him getting back on campus.

**Case #3**

Slow responses from the Title IX office threaten to not only endanger victims, but also the Caltech community at large. A third person interviewed by the *Tech* chronicled the frustration they and others faced in alerting the office about an individual who has allegedly continued to violate Title IX policy, despite previous involvement with the office.

This individual was first involved with the office due to a case that resulted in a no-contact order. Following this, the respondent was the subject of a litany of complaints, involving homophobic comments, use of racial slurs, and unwanted sexual comments.

A list of 10+ witnesses was provided to the Title IX office, but the complainant who talked with the *Tech* expressed discontent with the rate of interviews. They describe a process that was as slow as one interview every one to two weeks.

Those involved in the complaints against the respondent note that the slow and inefficient process allowed the respondent to not only continue his problematic behavior but also approach some of the complainants. “What most people wanted was for [the respondent] to just not be in the alley anymore,” says the complainant.

The complainant who helped lead efforts against the respondent states, “You feel disrespected... I tried to make things as easy as possible for her (Vatti) and still, nothing happened.”

“The biggest impact on me was that eventually I stopped caring,” they said.

**RESPONSE FROM TITLE IX OFFICE**

In late January of this year, the *Tech* asked Vatti four questions regarding the Title IX process. Specifically, the questions focused on the number of full-time staff, frequency of checking the submission form and possibility of losing a complaint, when external investigators become involved, and how hearings are conducted. Vatti declined to comment.

In a response received from Vatti on September 14th, 2023, Vatti commented on the delays observed in the FSRI case reported on in January. Vatti states that Title IX requires the office to balance fairness with speediness while remaining compliant with “complex legal requirements that are currently in place.” She also notes that “the complexity and scope of a Title IX case is not apparent at the very beginning, but reveals itself continuously as evidence is gathered.”

As noted in Vatti’s comment regarding the “complex legal requirements that are currently in place,” federal regulation may play a role in these excessive delays. Under the

leadership of Trump appointee Besty Devos, the Department of Education has strengthened protections for respondents in Title IX cases. DeVos introduced more requirements for cases, placing more strain on Title IX offices already struggling with resources.

The changes introduced by DeVos include mandatory cross-examinations of both parties, a narrowed definition of sexual harassment, and the option to use a new “clear and convincing” standard of evidence, as opposed to the preponderance of evidence standard.

In instituting these changes, DeVos maintained that the regulation was intended to achieve a fair balance

of communication. However, others have reported months of ghosting from the office.

Some of the same complainants that have discussed Hima’s personal efforts, amongst others, characterize the office’s handling of cases as “incompetent at best.” Whether the cause of delays relate to federal policy changes, a lack of resources, or misaligned incentives, students are suffering.

“I genuinely feel unsafe on campus because he’s here and I know what he’s capable of,” says the complainant of Case #2, referring to the respondent. With regard to the uncertainty from the Title IX office she faces, she is not alone.

**“I want to mentally forget these four years even happened, because it’s been going on for so long.”**

for both respondents and complainants.

Proponents of DeVos’s policy overhaul contend that the Obama administration’s guidance led to an overenforcement of policy on college campuses. The Biden administration is set to roll back many of the changes introduced by DeVos, although the administration has already failed to meet two-self imposed deadlines (May & October 2023).

**CONCLUSION**

All complainants interviewed by the *Tech* described significant emotional distress resulting from delays and deficits in communication from the Title IX Office. Vatti cites changes in legal requirements, as well as complexity and scope of cases as explanations for significant delays.

On the other hand, several complainants have shared that Vatti has shown significant care in assisting with Title IX issues. One complainant noted that Vatti made herself available outside of work hours, providing her personal number to ensure an open line



### A SATIRE advice column about alive, ahaha, and everything in between!

Where do babies come from?

Well, you see, the stork union is a bit outdated, and the cabbage patch had to close down due to budget cuts. So, in today's modern world, babies have found a new, unconventional origin - the Mongolian Grill. It turns out that after consuming a delightful feast at a Mongolian Grill, the body undergoes a magical transformation.

As you indulge in the flavorful concoctions of stir-fried goodness, a secret alchemical reaction occurs within your digestive system. The stir-fry wizardry combines with your genetic makeup, and voila - explosive diarrhea becomes the unexpected delivery method for adorable little bundles of joy!

Picture this: you're enjoying your Mongolian Grill feast, and suddenly, a burst of confetti announces the imminent arrival of a tiny, giggling baby. It's like a surprise party, but instead of cake, you get a new addition to the family. Friends and family gather around, not to sing "Happy Birthday," but to welcome the latest member of the household, born from the

### If This is to End in Fire...

Otis Otieno Culture

I am a big believer in destiny, that commander of events that places people where they need to be exactly when they need to. It is that destiny that perhaps dictates me being at Caltech. Even though the work is hard, and I sometimes question my presence here, I still press on faithfully, embodying the Nietzsche 'Amor Fati' philosophy: that everything happens for a reason. That each action I take will lead to something more, something bigger than myself.

Therefore, when I was assigned to stay in Blacker Hovse pre-rotation, I knew there and then that it would be my Hovse for all my undergrad years at Caltech. After all, everything happens for a reason, right? I recall Laura from the International Students Office trying to help me find my room in Blacker. We stared at an empty Olive Walk for some minutes before a Mole crept towards us. He had a victorious Conor McGregor cage walk and stroked his beard in the sun. Laura asked where Blacker Hovse was, and the Mole was like "Yeah! It's my Hovse. I'll walk you there and to your room." So the match of a Mole and would-be-Mole was made. A three-minute walk with Ethan Labelson to room 212 was an immersion into stories of Blacker Hovse. I had seen bits of the houses' cultures

flames of the grill.

Of course, this process might raise a few eyebrows in the scientific community, but who needs textbooks when you have soy sauce and garlic oil to spice up the story of life? So, the next time someone asks where babies come from, just tell them to grab a bowl at the Mongolian Grill and wait for the magical moment when life takes a spicy turn!

Hypothetically, if there is a banana stuck in my Mustang's exhaust, how can I remove the banana if it has to stay attached to my waist without significantly damaging the banana?

In the pursuit of such a whimsical endeavor, it is imperative to underscore the importance of safety as a paramount consideration. Preliminary measures must be taken to ensure the Mustang is securely parked and, more critically, powered down. Manipulating a car's exhaust system, even with the unconventional presence of a banana, necessitates a judicious approach to avert unintended consequences, such as vehicular damage or personal injury.

Should the whimsy persist, and the desire to preserve the banana's pristine condition remain steadfast, one might contemplate enlisting the expertise of automotive professionals, perhaps in the form of a seasoned mechanic. These automotive artisans possess the acumen to navigate the intricacies of car components, addressing the banana-related conundrum with finesse and skill, minimizing potential harm to both vehicle and banana alike.

Delving deeper into the complexity of maintaining the banana's structural integrity while still attached to your waist adds

an extra layer of nuance to this fantastical undertaking. Consideration may be given to non-intrusive methodologies, perhaps involving the judicious application of lubricants or delicate manipulations. However, a note of caution echoes through this whimsical pursuit, urging prudence and circumspection to avert the specter of unintended consequences and safeguard against any potential harm or injury.

#### How to cook in Math?

Certainly, let's approach the purification of EphedriNum through a conceptual lens, leveraging fictitious axioms reminiscent of mathematical principles:

#### Axiom 1

Define EphedriNum as E, a mathematical entity representing the unrefined substance.

#### Axiom 2

Introduce RedPhosNumeric and HydriodNumericAcid as R and H, respectively, as supplementary mathematical elements.

#### Axiom 3

Form the purification process as an operation P, defined by the equation:

$$P(E, R, H) = E_{purified}$$

This axiom posits that the application of the purification operation on E, R, and H yields a purified form, denoted as E\_purified.

#### Axiom 4

Employ a filtration operator F to separate out undesirable elements, resulting in the equation:

$$F(E_{purified}, R) = E_{filtrated}$$

Here, F symbolizes the filtration operation that isolates E\_filtrated by removing the influence of R.

#### Axiom 5

Utilize a neutralization operation N involving a Lie group, represented by L, as expressed by the equation:

$$N(E_{filtrated}, H, L) = E_{neutralized}$$

This axiom incorporates Lie group principles into the neutralization process, resulting in E\_neutralized.

#### Axiom 6

Introduce a binding axiom B to extract mathematical entities from the solution:

$$B(E_{neutralized}) = E_{math-bound}$$

This axiom describes the binding process that selectively captures mathematical components, isolating E\_math-bound.

#### Axiom 7

Propose a crystallization operation C with HydrochlorNumeric Acid (HC) as follows:

$$C(E_{math-bound}, HC) = E_{crystal}$$

This axiom postulates that the interaction of E\_math-bound and HC through a crystallization operation results in E\_crystal.

#### Axiom 8

Conclude the process with a filtration operation F and a drying axiom D to obtain the final purified and crystallized EphedriNum:

$$F(E_{crystal}) = E_{isolated}$$

$$D(E_{isolated}) = E_{final}$$

These axioms collectively represent a systematic and abstract approach to the purification of EphedriNum, treating each step as a conceptual operation guided by mathematical principles.

What to do if a compressed gas canister gets a bit too close to the fireplace?

Well, if a compressed gas canister decides to cozy up to the fireplace, you've got yourself a potential party crasher! Now, we wouldn't want to be boring about it, would we? So, here's the foolproof guide on dealing with this unexpected guest:

Step 1: Give it a stern talking to. Let the canister know it's not invited to the fireplace party.

Step 2: If the canister doesn't take the hint, gently escort it away. You know, like a bouncer at an exclusive club.

Step 3: If all else fails, throw it a surprise party of its own! Right into the fire it goes, and voila - instant fireworks! Just remember to add your own sound effects: "Boom boom, muthafucka!" Safety first, right?

To submit questions for next week's "Question the Quail", fill out the google form:

https://bit.ly/41rEQ1N



## Caltech Missed Connections

Ever catch someone's eye at the Red Door Café or share a moment of chemistry on the way to class? Just in time for Valentine's Day, the Tech presents: Caltech Missed Connections. No need for over-the-top tales - it's the genuine moments that make campus life interesting. Let's keep it real!

It was love at first sight. I immediately started hyper-ventilating the second I caught sight of her. It was real, oh, it was magical. Leave butterflies, I could feel an entire elephant walking inside my stomach. I physically felt crushed. And she hadn't even looked back at me. She was a Flem. I knew I didn't have a chance because of the Flemcest but I knew that moment, I knew, that she would be my wife. I am proposing to her tomorrow

I saw the most beautiful older woman at Red Door last week. I swear she winked at me. But a moment later, I saw you wander back over to her. The resemblance was unmistakable. It was your mother. As you both left, she turned to wink again.

There's this British guy who wears the cutest sweaters and he always catches my eyes when I go to Red Door.

Met a girl who was my TA for CS 1 at Browne and she melted my heart again. I had a huge crush on her since the beginning of this school year. I still sometimes meet her around the campus lol, but I can't talk to her because I think it is inappropriate. Anyways, here is a poem that chat gpt wrote:



I learned to skateboard with someone really cute

There was a dude wearing Stone Island at Lloyd Interhouse. I need him

Dude in my pilates class with core problems I could fix you for sure

I saw [my physics professor] at Red Door once. We shared a moment of passionate gaze so intense that it felt like a ladder operator taking me to the next energy level. I will never forget that day.

You were ahead of me in line at Red Door. You came alone. You just ordered a large milk, and when you went to pick it up, you lifted it by the lid and the cup separated and tumbled down to the floor, splashing milk onto everyone around you. You started crying immediately, almost like you knew it was going to happen. You left your milk-soaked fleece jacket on the chair next to me at the oak table. You fascinate me, and I never caught your name, but I can't look you up because I don't go here. Swing by O'Reillys on Hill if you ever want your jacket, or an oil change on the house.

ry. What else? She's your go-to fanatic on anything 'Narcos'.

Though officially living in Bechtel, this next man's loyalty to Hell has to go unquestioned. From his fringy hair style to his well-forged arguments, BechtelBro is quite a figure to observe. Warning, though: don't argue with him. His arguments are bulletproof and baptized by fire. I'm certain that humanities profs watch him argue and fear they'll lose their jobs. When he runs his hands through his hair, that's a thought in process. Ladies and gentlemen: Neev Mangal.

What are these deodorants? For who? CS majors? Amina walks in, and jokes follow her like a shadow. She sits, it's hysterical laughs. Hell definitely needs somebody with the jokes, even though her jokes might sometimes be drier than Nevada. Sitting close to her in a lecture, the lecturer wrote theorem 8.0 and Amina started laughing. I was curious.

"What did zero tell eight?" she asks, and I wave my head ignorantly.

"Nice belt," she laughs off.

Suleiman: Though only a social Mole, what to say about this man, except his enthusiasm, his interest in knowing how people are, and his laughs. This energy I have learnt to reciprocate by only saying "Yalla Habibi". Fun fact: I've never seen him in socks. What to say about Suleiman, except he is the incarnation of 'Vibes and Inshallah'.

What is Hell without the angel of death, or rather chaos? This is the next Hellfrosch. Hand him a screwdriver and he will carve out your door, only to return it fixed vertically instead of laterally. I once sat next to him for dinner. My only regret is that I ended up getting dumped because he threw bread, and the waiter thought it was me. On that day, I saw a Boston Red Sox pitcher in him. Baseball team, where are you? He is always cooking something. Don't let his calm demeanor in select circumstances fool you. Maverick is our angel of chaos.

Wherever Maverick is, Brain is also. The thing with Brain though, you gotta let him think. Just let him be. He is probably our best shot at a resurrected Isaac Newton. What do they say: you don't know what's going on in my mind, or is it Brain? When he is with Maverick, I usually call them the 'Brain and Braun' combo.

The best hangout spot in Hell, apart from Purg, would probably be the Hell double. Tyler with Ahaan is probably the best room combo I've seen on campus. Ahaan, with his usual philosophical background, might give you an endless immersion into a discussion of your choosing. He is the 'What if...?', or 'Look at it this way...', or 'But then again...' type of guy. Tyler can be characterized by his cartoon noises. Coupled with his dense voice, he just spits noises and jokes, unless you have an academic question and he knows the answer to that. It took time, but I got used to his noises and jokes. I like the energy he and Ahaan bring to Hell.

Thank God for no blackouts at Caltech. "Hey, Siri, what do you need to survive in case of a blackout?" "A back-up generator." Nope, ah, pause! You need Alex's and Miina's smiles, along with Eloise's enthusiasm. Together, their smiles would probably produce a hundred thousand megawatts. You want to laugh without hearing a joke? Sit next to Asher. His frenzied laughs are so infectious. Who has the coolest pajamas in Hell? Alexis' cow pajamas win according to me. Her work ethic is out of this world. She is always ahead in sets and class. And of course, where two or more are gathered, there must be a way of entertaining our taste palates with snacks and food. When anyone isn't cooking, Sophie's snacks keep us going. She is the most generous person I've seen in a while. You ask for her hustle, she'll give you her heart.

It is these people that make Hell great. To be honest, our murals aren't that fire (Haha!



Left to right: Tyler, Ahaan, Ai-Dan, Nat, Sophie, Maverick, Neev, Danela. On this day, they carved out the former president's door and brought it to Hell as a prank.

Though it's Hell) and Purg is a mess. However, these people are just so great, so unique and so funny, that you just keep coming back for more and more hangouts. As we draw near to the end of our pass/fail terms, everybody is like "I got to start grinding real hard," or "I'm going to get lost in SFL"

or "I need to go to office hours more." Well, that's valid. We've had our fair share of fun, chaos and stories. So, grind we must all the way. What to say, apart from "Thank you for all the fun." How to end all this? Probably, since it's Hell, why not end with fire? Drawing from Ed Sheeran in 'The Hobbit', I

would sing, not with Ed Sheeran's voice or Nat's (they're too good), but on my own. I'd sing: "If this is to end in fire, then we should all burn together. Watch the flames climb high into the night. Callin' out, Father, oh, stand by and we will. Watch the flames burn unborn on the mountainside high."

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# Man vs. Mannion: Competitive Restaurant Reviewing

Want to be the next to take on the Mannion? Email tech@caltech.edu

Joray Pieper

**Experience:**  
TLDR: Great Seafood restaurant not too far from campus. Go try some lobster!

Located in Chinatown, Full House is twenty minutes from campus by car. Visiting on a Tuesday night, parking was readily available although it could be more scarce on busier nights. From the moment we entered the restaurant the service was exemplary and it was evident the waiters brought their "A game". A teapot was placed in the center of our table followed by a tiny cup of nuts for each guest. Waiting for our appetizers to arrive, I was amused trying to pick up and eat nuts with chopsticks. Soon, the onslaught started as dish after dish quickly covered our table. I captured a photo of each entree; the Lobster, Oysters, and Duck as they arrived from the kitchen.

**Appetizer:**  
Crab Meat with Fish Maw Soup - If you love seafood this is a real treat to start the evening as an appetizer. I recommend adding a splash of red vinegar to the soup (provided on the table). The red vinegar combined with the soup created an interesting and refreshing blend of flavor unlike anything I have ever tasted before.

**Main Courses:**  
Braised Lobster with Pepper and Black Bean - I always wanted to try lobster and this worthy first time experience definitely did not disappoint. Every part of the lobster had meat inside, although often a challenge, working to find your food made the reward all the more deliciously satisfying. The claw provided the easiest meat to get as it just slid out when you cracked it open. I was delighted that Tom helped me discover hidden lobster meat near the head of the Lobster. The restaurant let me take a photo with the lobster before it was cooked as well.

Peking Roasted Duck - Super unexpected taste overall left me shocked. I had never imagined eating a duck before but after eating it just left me craving for more. In addition to the duck, bao buns and a special sauce were provided. The duck on its own was great, but I had fun making little sandwiches with the buns, duck meat, and the mystery sauce.

Steamed Sole Fish - This fish



was an interesting eat, done right the skeleton of the fish will just slide off and provide a great meal. However, it can be a really tricky meal. I found it challenging not to swallow bones and only swallow the fish. Overall, the fish was great and I had a fun time eating it. Oysters with Ginger & Green Onion - Completely different from regular oysters, I highly recommend trying this dish if you want to experience a very unique flavor that you can't get from just regular oysters. I was so fascinated by the taste that I looked it up after dinner to see how the dish was made. Frozen oysters are put with green onions and ginger (obviously). However the rest is listed on this website and I recommend anyone who is debating whether to order this to definitely check it out. (<https://susansavourit.blogspot.com/2015/08/oysters-and-ginger-and-green-onions.html>)

Honey Walnut Prawns - This was like a sweet treat completely distinct from every other food offered on the table. It was like eating little shrimps covered in honey, but it reminded me of eating sweet popcorn in the movie theater. Every time you took one prawn you just wanted to take another one, and another one. Eating the walnuts in conjunction with the prawns was great as well, giving another avenue of flavor to experience.

**Finale:**  
The service was amazing. I didn't have to wait for water once, and the food was spectacular. My favorite food was definitely the Peking Duck but I would for sure have the lobster again if I had the chance. At the end of our meal we all got fortune cookies and oranges calling to a close this wonderful evening.



**Full House Cantonese Restaurant in Chinatown - Well Known Chinatown Restaurant Serves a Good Meal But Needs Some Work If It Wants To Shine Again**

Tom Mannion  
*reigning champion*

When reviewing a Cantonese Restaurant, you should see a meal where primary ingredients are the focus. A lobster will shine as a lobster - simply steamed with seasonings such as garlic, ginger, green onion and cilantro. Your dishes should be well-balanced. None of the non-primary ingredients should take over the dish (unlike Szechuan and similar cuisines). Steaming is a common treatment for seafood. When the steaming is done and wok finishing is in order, you should see minimal grease on your food after said finishing is complete.

Full House Chinatown (I do not believe that they are still connected to Full House Arcadia) is located on Hill Street in Los Angeles. If you are coming via the 110 freeway, you can simply take the left exit for Hill and you will quickly come upon Full House on the right side of the street.

We easily found street parking and walked a few yards to the restaurant. Upon entering, I had the impression that the interior had not been updated in quite a while. Duct tape and extension cords were evident in multiple locations. The waiters' sideboard was particularly distressed and the glorious fish and shellfish tanks were dated

and largely lacking a deep selection. All that I remember seeing was lobster, a limited fish selection, and Dungeness crab. Two of my favorites, geoduck clam and live shrimp, were absent. So, on a night where the sun set early, the restaurant offered a somewhat dark and uninviting feeling that extended that early winter gloomy feeling instead of offering a respite from it. I am, however, inclined to cut them a little slack as I doubt that they have much capital for renovations following the restaurant nightmare called Covid.

Now, for the really important part of all of this, the food. One of my benchmark Cantonese dishes is crab meat and fish maw soup. The soup most definitely delivered. A light rich broth that was enhanced by the texture of the fish maw (dried air bladder). When several drops of red vinegar were stirred into the soup, it really exploded in flavor. Lobster with black bean sauce. Our waiter offered the live lobster for inspection before taking it away for cooking. The steamed lobster was cut into multiple pieces before it was finished with black bean sauce, ginger and green onion in a wok. While the pieces of lobster were cut into manageable pieces and quite flavorful, the dish was too greasy. Greasy is not something I would associate with steamed Cantonese seafood. Simple fix, less oil in the wok when finishing the dish off in a wok.

Before I go into the Peking Duck, I need to sing the praise of the waiters. Service was fast, thorough, but not overbearing. Water glasses and the teapot were always full. Clean plates were offered often, and finished platters were removed immediately. Steamed whole fish (Sole) was our next dish. Ordered in a traditional Cantonese steamed style, it arrived on a large ceramic platter. The fish was nicely steamed, but lacked the essential fresh cilantro. There were several blobs of oil in the sauce on the plate - oil should not have been part of the preparation. So, nice looking, tender fish with depth of flavor and balance lacking.

We ended our meal with two superbly prepared dishes; pan-seared oysters with ginger and honey walnut prawns. Oysters were huge, flavorful and texturally on spot. The prawns were tender, juicy and well-seasoned. The pecans accompanying the prawns were perfectly sweetened and delightfully crispy.

Despite a few problems, I would recommend a visit to Full House. While the San Gabriel Valley is now home to most of our local Chinese restaurants, it can still be fun to visit Chinatown, where it all started, for a traditional and tasty Cantonese meal.

Peking Duck was the big miss of the night. Peking Duck is really not a Cantonese dish, but the fluffy white buns that accompany it are (I prefer the flat Beijing style pancakes). Years ago, I advised Full House Arcadia to use compressed air and blow dryers to take a day off of air drying. The result of said process was a change in the health department grade from a C to a B. When preparing Peking Duck, air is forced between the skin and flesh after the end of the duck is sewed shut. The duck then receives a bath in scalding water. Further



"Red Eye" by Albert Huang and Adam Krivka



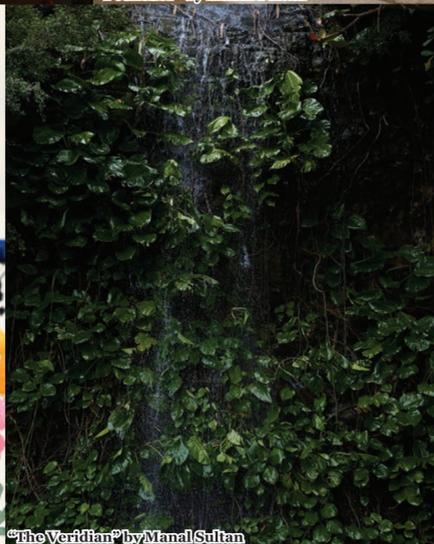
"Petrichor" by Manal Sultan



"Just Around the Bend" by Juan Luchsinger



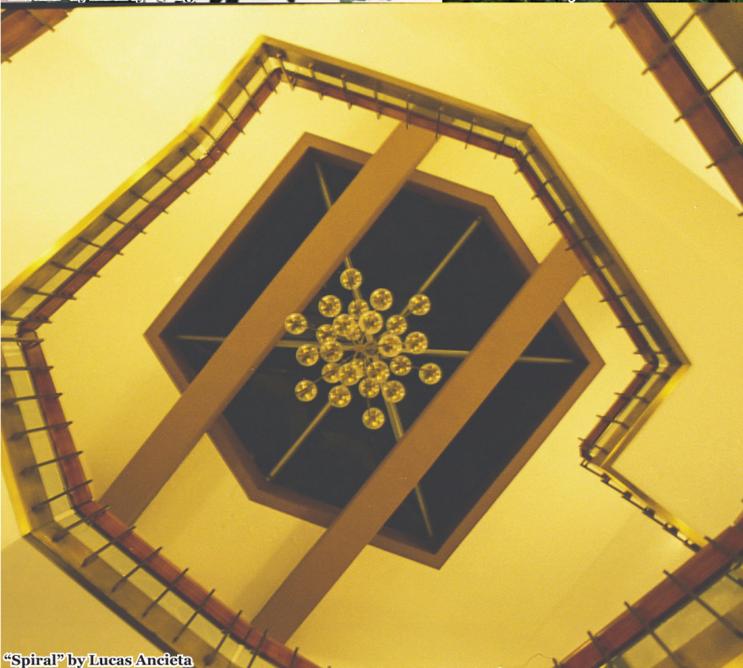
"Awash" by Audrey Wong



"The Veridian" by Manal Sultan



By Domani Sharkey



"Spiral" by Lucas Ancieta



By Ai-Dan Le

## Lunar New Year Ai-Dan Le Culture

As the beginning of February comes back around, you may notice an increase in red or dragon imagery on campus or around Pasadena; Lunar New Year is approaching on the 10th, a celebration of a new year timed by the lunar calendar instead of solar calendar. For the unfamiliar, it is one of the most culturally significant holidays in some cultures, with each year having a different representative animal based on a 12-year cycle in accordance with the lunar calendar. During Lunar New Year, people take the opportunity to gather with

friends and family they haven't seen in a while, exchange last year's old for the new year's good, and celebrate according to their traditions, whether that's exchanging red envelopes or eating a homemade meal with those close to you.

Even if you don't come from a culture where you celebrate Lunar New Year, for those curious or those who just want something to check out this weekend, there's lots of opportunities to do so (see end).

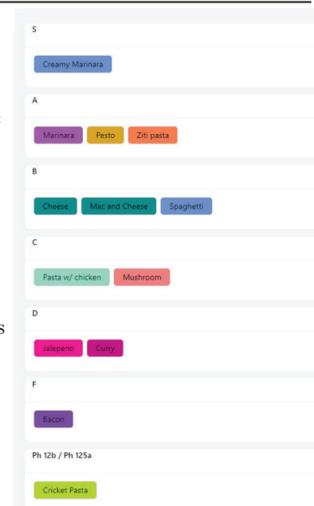
Some traditions include cleaning the house and getting haircuts prior to the new year, while others include wearing red for good luck and attending festivals. Regardless of whether or not (or how) you celebrate, the new year is an exciting time for a lot of people, and a good excuse to get a fresh start.

## Alhambra Lunar New Year Festival (9-5 on Feb 18, Sunday)

- Culinary + Performance Stage, live demonstrations from chefs + artists
  - Vendors (art + food) from all over the San Gabriel valley
  - Dragon Dance
- ## Monterey Park Lunar New Year Festival (Saturday & Sunday on Jan 27-28, 10-9 & 10-7)
- Free admission
  - Entertainment + shopping + dining

## Erik Lindeman's Red Door Pasta Tier List™

Submit your food opinions to tech@caltech.edu to be featured next!



Art & Photography Spotlight

# A Reflection on Student Leadership

Lily Coffin  
Opinion

In the two years that I have been a Social Director for Ricketts Hovse, I have had more than a few opportunities to explore undergraduate student-administration relationships at Caltech and where they have broken down. I have watched my peers in student leadership be ignored and shut down by members of administration. As a frosh, I asked my seniors what could be done to be heard; to get our events back; to improve our relationship with admin; and I was told that they already tried, and it could not be done. I have always resented the defeat in my fellow student leaders' voices when I hear their frustration, but I have certainly shared it.

Ricketts boasts a tradition of discomfort during our annual Rotation activities. Because it's funny, and that is our culture. We throw a bunch of food at you. We make a lot of noise. And then we perform the most confusing, stupid, disgusting skits you can imagine. This is certainly not everyone's cup of tea, and it's not supposed to be. That's why there are eight houses with eight different cultures.

This year, when we proposed my favorite skit, "Nature is Beautiful," it was denied approval for no good reason by the Office of Student Experience (OSE). Let me tell you a bit about this skit. Members of Ricketts Hovse (Skurves) dress in random animal costumes we have collected over the years and prance around to The Circle of Life from The Lion King while somebody narrates about the beauty and cruelty of nature. This culminates in the reveal of a big bird's nest in the middle of the room where Skurves in bathing suits have been covered in maple syrup and feathers to look like birds. There is a momma bird and two baby birds. Mama bird chews something and then regurgitates it into baby birds' mouths, like God intended. The skit is objectively kind of gross. In an approval meeting that was held in our lounge, a member of OSE told me this is not allowed

As a frosh, I asked my seniors what could be done to be heard; to get our events back; to improve our relationship with admin; and I was told that they already tried, and it could not be done.

because "we have to follow community standards, not just Ricketts' standards." Somehow OSE has been allowed the power of cultural authority over the house system, and over and over again in my time here I have watched them chip away at the pieces they don't like.

This is just one example of many. We used to have a skit called "Bug Fight" where Skurves dressed as bugs would wrestle, and we would pretend to take bets. This was determined to be too violent and was not approved unless we replaced the wrestling with rock, paper, scissors. That's lame, so we canceled it.

The "Joyous Celebration" skit is a lot of fun—we would choose a preffosh at random and write their name on a birthday cake and banner. Then we'd surprise them with a birthday party (it was not their birthday). Someone would bring out the cake



The throne of the Ricketts Hovse President during the 2021 Frosh Wash. Credit: Ricketts Hovse Historians

and drop it on the floor, and then we would all yell at them. But at least the piñata was still good. The piñata was full of spaghetti. This is absolute nonsense, but we love this skit. The Skurves get up and eat all of the cake and spaghetti off of the floor, but despite the fact that the food is not wasted, the skit houses was axed this year, evidently because it was in violation of a new food waste ban.

We used to have a frosh welcome event called Frosh Wash. My sophomore year was the last time we were allowed to host the event. The idea was to cleanse the new frosh before they entered the Hovse. We would line up the new initiates, and one by one, they approached the throne of the Ricketts Hovse President (a life-guard chair secured to a ladder). Skurves would yell chaotically at them to spin around, to do a push-up, to kiss a bust of Hovse benefactor L.D. Ricketts' head, and to chant some meaningless strings of words. Water balloons were thrown and people were sprayed with the hose. Everything that we did at that year's Frosh Wash was approved beforehand. A Residential Life Coordinator (RLC) from OSE was even present at the event.

However, that year, a complaint was made to the Deans'

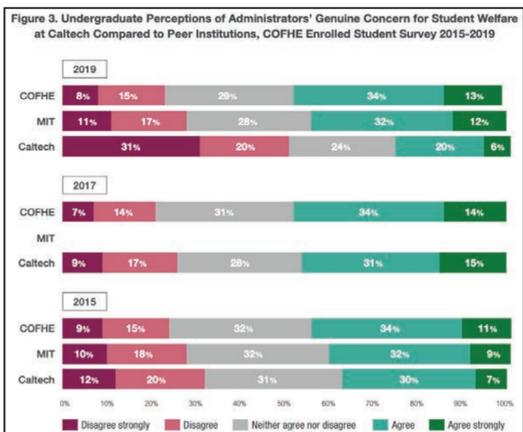


Figure 3 from the Caltech Co-Curricular (C3) Report. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "Administrators at Caltech are genuinely concerned about my welfare."



The front page of the April 8, 2019 issue of the Tech

During Winter Term 2022, Ricketts held a lingerie party. Ricketts has always had a strong culture of body positivity. However, the RLCs decided that we needed to be punished for dancing in the courtyard in our underwear, so the Hovse was placed on social probation for the remainder of the term. The justification was that being in our undergarments in the courtyard was a violation of the Caltech Code of Conduct, because other people might feel pressured to remove their clothes as well, constituting an unwelcoming environment. This comes from a fundamental

The RLCs decided that we needed to be punished for dancing in the courtyard in our underwear, so the Hovse was placed on social probation for the remainder of the term.

The frustration of student leaders across campus is centered around having things taken from us without explanation or discussion. I don't know how to fix this. I think a good place to start is this conversation.

The houses, in my opinion, are the antithesis of uniformity. We should be allowed to express ourselves. We should be able to make these Hovses feel like home. There is room for art within the current Housing policies. There is room for diversity within the Code of Conduct. But all too often during my time here, it has felt like our individuality has been violated. For example, consider the furniture that was involuntarily replaced for us last term. To be fair, it was a nice gesture. I am grateful that the Housing Office used some money to renovate our spaces. The carpet did need to be replaced. But we could have picked it out for ourselves. It did not need to be all the same. It did not need to be indistinguishable from the corporate purgatory of every conference room and office space on campus. The new furniture does not match. The space was distinct before, and now it is plain.

Why aren't we allowed to paint new murals in the dining halls and lounge spaces? Why were we strictly forbidden from having a kiddie pool in the Ricketts courtyard for a Lazy Sunday social? Why can't we throw food (and respectfully clean up after ourselves)? Why are Hovse storage spaces routinely searched? Why can't we shoot a potato cannon during Rotation? Why does it seem like some houses are held to different standards by the administration? Why can't we decide when it is time to replace our furniture? What happened to the faculty role of Master of Student Housing (MOSH)? Was anything learned from the 2022 Caltech Co-Curricular Group Report?

Where is the accountability? Ricketts is my home. You may not understand what it is we do here, but do you think OSE should get to decide what we can and cannot do within the walls of our own houses? Have you seen the ways they chip away at your own culture? You may think Ricketts is a dark stain on this otherwise prestigious institute (as do we all), but surely you must be grateful that we are over here instead of inside your walls. There is a place for everyone. Even now, Caltech is a place with a vibrant culture because students care a lot and are given the freedom to do great things. Houses are student run because Caltech students are competent enough to self-govern.

The frustration of student leaders across campus is centered around having things taken from us without explanation or discussion. I don't know how to fix this. I won't be my problem after I graduate. I think a good place to start is this conversation.

# ASCIT/IHC Meeting Minutes (January 14, 2024)

**Present:** Emma Isella, Sophie Elam, Aditee Prabhatdolkar, Emily Choe, Andrew Pasco, Leo Williams, Parul Singh, Tomas Wexler, Meg Robertson  
**ASCIT:** Twombly, Snigda Saha, Ava Barbano, Jonathan Booker, Alex Burr, Ankita Nandi  
**Floor:** Jen Hu, Chi Cap, Lilia Arrizabalaga, Trinity Lee, Jade Milan, Juan Luchsinger, Evan Portnoi, Elin Stenmark, Hannah Rose

### Call to order: 9:03 pm

**SE:** Starting with IHC stuff, we have a meeting for VPSA on Wednesday and Felicia wants the agenda tomorrow. What do we want on that?  
**ADP:** Bechtel roompicks  
**SE:** Ok.  
**PS:** And send the slideshow with it.  
**SE:** Ok  
**MR:** And mentioning the CCID dinner  
**SE:** Yeah, that's good, we should mention the wins. Do we want to talk about Avery grill nights?  
**PS:** I don't think we need VPSA, I'll just bother Jaime about it.  
**ADP:** What happened?  
**PS:** It just hasn't happened despite our grillers being ready and talking to Jaime.  
**SE:** Gotcha.  
**TW:** Will Steven be there?  
**SE:** Yeah. I met with Steven Friday. Some of the things I emailed today came up on that meeting. Anything else with VPSA?

**SE:** Anything we think he should know about? We're trying to do the advocacy convention thing. Steven and I have a date set and a plan for that. But honestly 3 things on the agenda is good so we can push Bechtel.  
**SE:** Ok, next thing, IHC do we want to meet with Steven on Friday?  
**IHC:** Yes  
**MR:** Free food  
**TW:** We've never met with him yet, so yes  
**MR:** Can we ask him if he wants it in Hammett room so we don't have to walk?  
**IHC:** Yes  
**SE:** Ok, updates from Rik, someone broke a sign in Page. Got confirmation that Pasadena Fire Dept is fixing Caltech for the signs, about \$2k per sign.  
**AN:** They're trying to charge it to person, but otherwise it's coming out of house budget. A lot of signs are broken but I don't think they're broken by people in the house  
**CC:** How many signs have been broken?  
**MR:** This year in Rix o, in Page many. Last year in Rix many.  
**TW:** With interhouses coming up tell people not to smash exit signs!!  
**SE:** Everything going ok with Boc reps and elections for all presidents?  
**IHC:** Yes  
**PS:** Question, should we put something in place to get 2 upperclassmen, is it ok to just put in 3?  
**MR:** It's always been a suggestion for them to be upperclassmen, but as long as there are 3 reps it's up to our discretion.  
**SE:** What they're asking for is important, but obviously it's a short term change so as long as we try that's great.  
**TW:** We're saying one must be an upperclassman but the other two can be either.  
**SE:** Parul, can you send me the link to cards for RA appreciation?  
**PS:** Will do tonight  
**TW:** I have heard nothing about our new RA  
**SE:** Steven said it's RA hiring season. They're doing interviews. There's also the RA surveys, so please tell people from your houses to fill it out. Emily mentioned that there were issues with the form and I have no control over that, but I'll tell Steven and ORE.  
**JB:** Are they letting houses interview candidates still?  
**SE:** Yeah they'll be reaching out to leadership soon. That's all I had for this meeting. There's more I have related to ASCIT about how IHC wants to spend their money.  
**AVB:** Should we wait for Twombly?  
**?:** If it's not Twombly specific we can start  
**SE:** Can we use the rest of IHC budget to get stuff to do sound checks on our own? Also, back in October, Bram asked if we could use IHC budget to get communal sound mixing equipment.  
**JB:** We did get it  
**AN:** The Jam room has the good one and we have a light mixer somewhere but I don't know where.  
**JB:** When we applied for SIF funding we used part of it to buy the nice sound mixer.  
**AN:** The jam room has one and people are checking it out and Ramzi is managing it. Then there's also the one we've been using for inhouse there.  
**PS:** For the decimeter, should we send it to Felicia to confirm it's the same one?  
**SE:** Sure so it's standardized.  
**MR:** I had a meeting with her about the Ath stuff. They're going to do an M&D and they're going to do it based on what the houses want. I have a meeting with Mahlet to discuss what that is and so anyone who wants can come. It's going to be focused on wedding permis-

**GT:** Are you sending out communications about the Y?  
**MR:** What they're doing right now is they're giving us info and we're forwarding it.  
**GT:** Could house presidents ensure that reps are actually doing that? I want to make sure the reps are actually doing their job.  
**MR:** For the rep position right now, their only job is pushing information out.  
**GT:** The only question I've gotten from the Y is if houses are getting communications. Notes and reminders on house policies, make sure that your house excomm meetings you are holding at least a couple public meetings. Make sure changes to house policies and notes and concerns are public. Make sure to be transparent with people in your house. I've gotten a couple concerns about not trusting house leadership that's been coming up through different channels, which is odd. Make sure you have accessible meetings, that you've read your bylaws and are following procedure. Brief warning just in case something comes up, I can say I warned you. Feedback, we hosted new events over the last term, any feedback or concerns?  
**GT:** We'll send up more info later, but just a heads up.  
**GT:** The 22nd will be our VPSA meeting with Gilmartin so if you have questions or concerns lmk. Anything post your meeting you want us to follow up on we can. SAC updates, this is cool, it's been a project four years in the making but we're finally making progress. We have a new staff for ASCIT screening room. Anika and I have done like 6 walks to document issues with the rooms belonging to ASCIT and to get codes. We also have a new student government office there so if you want to store records and stuff like that we can. Study rooms are also hopefully going to be fixed. We're asking housing to fix the broken room and book lockers. Unsure if they will, but we're working on it. And then thank you everyone who helped move stuff. Jim Barry is so nice and offered to donate a bunch of screen printing supplies and screenprinter  
**AVB:** We got the old room near the laundry room and are going to get a shower added to wash the screens and better ventilation. People will be trained and then you can screenprint house shirts, ditch day shirts, and many other things. Hopefully that'll be done by the end of the year but progress is being made and I'll let soc teams know.  
**CC:** I heard last year the study rooms would be renovated?  
**GT:** We tried, but our grant requests were denied.  
**TW:** I remember last year and Kayva did a thing about giving them to OSE?  
**GT:** We didn't go through with it. I think ideally we want to return the SAC to a student activities center space and make sure things are relevant to activities Caltech students are pursuing and better students and community. There used to be a game room so we could have that count as an advanced HISS? This chart says explicitly for every class if it counts so please report people to that, link is in the ASCIT agenda. Other things to discuss, the ARC has many meetings coming up. If you think of anything else we should bring up let me know. That's all for me.  
**SE:** I already went.  
**AN:** We can push midtime to next week.  
**GT:** It's been brought up before that the houses are too much like frats or sororities when they're intended to be student learning and living spaces. One of the things they brought up was that students at Caltech don't participate enough in our community so the houses should be providing a connection between the community and community. I suggested to the Y that we should have student representatives. I know it's new so it'll have to go through iterations. That being said but I think it's good for house excomms to serve as an example to do outreach. It can be collaboration with the Y but we could ask you to require pre-encourage a certain number of sign ups for the house pres on MAD day. It used to be a much bigger thing so that's what we're aiming for and maybe a more subdued charity event. Someone brought up a cans for mans. It was introduced as a way to integrate the new IHC. You would basically bring in as many nonperishables as you could and then whoever brought the most in they could take their house presidents to do whatever activity. We'll see, it's a work in progress. Does that sound like something we'd be interested in at least for MAD Day. Do you think you could encourage sign ups from your house?  
**IHC:** Yes  
**GT:** Any questions?  
**TW:** When is MAD day?  
**GT:** I think it's third term. It should be on the calendar. So speaking of house reps, does everyone know their Caltech Y house rep?  
**IHC:** Yes

**JB:** Math club  
**AN:** Could you send me that?  
**JB:** Yeah  
**GT:** Also houses, please submit requests for joint funding requests. We increased the budget for houses a lot  
**JB:** Yeah, over a third of our dues go toward yell.  
**SE:** Curious, since BDR is all here. Is it happening?  
**MR:** It's certainly not happening from Rix.  
**ADP:** We were supposed to submit a proposal 3 weeks in advance and we still haven't done anything.  
**GT:** If you want to do a small lowkey thing you can  
**ADP:** Yeah Lily wanted to do a small thing with no construction. Just order pizza and vibe.  
**[redacted]**  
**SS:** TLDR but we're trying to find an event for this term. No one liked Winter Carnival so we scrapped that. We're thinking something for Valentines day and we don't want it to just be me and Jonathan running around at 5 am with candy grams. We're considering pancake day or something, so ASCIT people please vote on that.  
**GT:** For context a lot of these were based on events back on the day. They used to make a massive table on the olive walk and people would come out and eat pancakes and we're just trying to make more events during term where people can hang out. Ideas are appreciated.  
**SS:** We're also trying to create an off-campus newsletter to add to the Tech, so people can know what's going on in LA. Our social media manager Ashlyn will be working on that. If you hear about cool events you can put it in the ASCIT-IHC chat or you can let Sophie know but it'll be like student leaders recommend doing this thing.  
**GT:** On the note of instagram/social media, make sure you're using communication and house social media because that's how younger alumni seem to be keeping track of events.  
**SE:** Also IHC, after our meeting I tried to find the alumni association rather than the alumni office but I couldn't find it anywhere.  
**GT:** You should talk to Jasmine Bryant because she used to be the chair.  
**AB:** She also has an office in CSS 3rd floor so you can go find her.  
**SE:** IHC, this is something that won't be old IHC's problem but for new IHC, there is a class that will be having their 50th reunion soon and Felicia emailed me and it's not the current IHC's problem so I said sure. It should be chill, not like alumni weekend.  
**PS:** 50 years, rip avry  
**SE:** This is what the email said: Thursday May 16th, the alumni want to join the students for their normal house dinners. It should only be 10-20 people. Your house can opt-out, just let me know. They'll have RSVP tracking numbers. No alcohol will need to be served and house dinners can be done at the normal time. They will do all the legwork. It's really not your guys' problems, but for everyone else, whoa.  
**PS:** Avery has the tiniest endowment :( our alums are still making it in the world.  
**GT:** Well, there's a student fund that you can donate to now. You can also sponsor specific events. If houses wanted to do an event in exchange for a sponsorship that's a way to go.  
**[redacted]**  
**GT:** Questions, comments, concerns, anyone want to sing a song?  
**SS:** One last thing, there is an ASCIT feedback form on our linktree in social media and on the website so tell people to use it.  
**EI:** To everyone on the floor, please add your name to my laptop if you want to be recorded that you were here.

Meeting adjourned: 10:08 pm

# The California Tech Journalistic Principles

**The News-Opinion divide**  
All articles shall be clearly and explicitly labeled as either News or Opinion/Editorial. News articles report on topics that have been thoroughly researched by Tech staff writers, and should be impartial to any one point of view. In a News article, the writer shall not insert their own personal feelings on the matter; the purpose is to let the facts speak for themselves. The Tech assumes full responsibility for all content published as News. In contrast, Opinion articles (including Letters to the Editor) may be written and submitted by anyone on any topic; while the Tech will edit all published Opinions to ensure no wrong or misleading information, we do not otherwise interfere. Again, the role of the Tech here is to help the whole campus communicate their ideas and share their stories, not promote specific ones. Content published as Opinions do not necessarily represent the values of the Tech or our staff. An exception to this is Editorials, which are written by Tech staff and represent official opinions of the Tech. Any information and sources in Editorials shall be held to the same standard as News reports, but there is no promise or expectation of impartial coverage.

**Fair Reporting**  
All facts of major significance and relevance to an article shall be sought out and included. If an assertion is made by a source about a specific person or organization, they shall be contacted and given a reasonable amount of time to respond before the Tech will never be surprised to see their name published. Sources' opinions are just that — opinions. Expert opinions are certainly given more weight, as are witness opinions. But whenever possible, the Tech shall report facts, or at least corroborate the opinions. A reporter's observations at a scene are considered facts for the purposes of a story.

**Quotes and Attribution of Information**  
Facts and quotes that were not collected directly by Tech reporters shall be attributed. Articles shall clearly differentiate between what a reporter saw and heard first hand vs. what a reporter obtained from other sources. Sources' opinions are just that — opinions. Expert opinions are certainly given more weight, as are witness opinions. But whenever possible, the Tech shall report facts, or at least corroborate the opinions. A reporter's observations at a scene are considered facts for the purposes of a story.

**Sources**  
All sources shall be treated with respect and integrity. When speaking with sources, we shall identify ourselves as Tech reporters and clarify why we would like to hold an interview. Sources for the Tech will never be surprised to see their name published. In published content, we shall put our sources' quotes into context, and — as appropriate — clarify what question was being answered. We always ask that a source speak with us on the record for the sake of journalistic integrity. We want our audience to receive information that is credible and useful to them. Named sources are more trustworthy than unnamed sources because, by definition, unnamed sources will not publicly stand by their statements. That being said, we realize that some sources are unwilling to reveal their identities publicly when it could jeopardize their safety or livelihood. Even in those cases, it is essential that the Tech Editor-in-Chief knows the identity of the source in question. Otherwise, there can be no certainty about whether the source and their quotes were falsified. This also applies for Letters to the Editor and Opinion submissions to the Tech. If the author requests that their piece is published anonymously, they must provide a reason, and we shall consider it in appropriate circumstances. No truly anonymous submissions shall be published. Conversely, no submissions shall be published with the author's name without their consent. When we choose not to identify a source in their full name, the article shall explain to readers why.

**Corrections Policy**  
We strive for promptness in correcting all errors in all published content. We shall tell readers, as clearly and quickly as possible, what was wrong and what is correct. Corrections to articles will be immediately updated on the online version of the Tech at tech.caltech.edu. If appropriate, corrections will also be published in the following Tech print issue. In any remaining absence of clarity, the Honor Code is the guiding principle.

**Honor Code Applies**  
In any remaining absence of clarity, the Honor Code is the guiding principle.



### Faculty Advisory Committee

continued from page 1

The *Tech* was unable to obtain further primary information after ASCIT's invitation to yesterday's faculty board meeting was suddenly retracted. The organizers of the petition, as well as the Admissions Office, both declined to comment on the petition.

#### The Committee

Rosenbaum's January 30th email to faculty came just weeks after the petition. It also outlines a similar plan of action as was recommended in the petition. Seven professors were selected to form a Faculty Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions Policy, assisted by Caltech's Institutional Research Office.

The task of the committee is "to ensure that the Institute continues to effectively identify and admit the most talented and promising students," explained Vice President for Student Affairs Kevin Gilmartin in an email to the *Tech*. That is, students "who are deeply interested in science, engineering, and mathematics, with the ability to benefit from a challenging STEM-based academic program, and who can bring a diversity of experiences and perspective to our Institute community."

According to Gilmartin, the planning and work to form the newly-announced Faculty Advisory Committee predated the faculty petition.

#### What's Next

As per President Rosenbaum's letter, the Advisory Committee has been asked to "examine the most complete datasets" and consult with relevant groups at both Caltech and peer institutions to more fully understand and assess the effectiveness of current admissions processes.

Currently, the Advisory Committee is scheduled to report their findings about standardized testing by the end of March, while the recommendations about the role of extracurricular activities will not be

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oh god how did i get here i am not good at communicating thoughts and feelings in a healthy and effective manner



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released by the end of April. The goal is to have a complete report by the end of May for use in the Class of 2029 admissions cycle, but Rosenbaum and Gilmartin both emphasized that the work of the Committee should not be rushed.

Asimow indicated that the petitioning faculty do not expect any significant action to be taken until after the evaluation is complete and recommendations are presented.



### "Think Outside the Bachs" Crossword Solution

1	L	O	C	R	A	Z	Y	V	E		10	U	W	U					
13	E	N	L	I	S	T	E	E	S		14	N	A	N	C	16			
17	S	T	U	D	I	O	A	R	T		18	O	R	L	O	N			
19	S	E	E		20	D	A	R	D	I	21	C		22	R	I	K	S	
	23	E	D	G	E		24		25	T	I	M	E	26	T	I	M	E	
		27	U	S	A					29	P	O	O	I	N	G	30		
31	N	P	C	S		34	R	A	N	S	36	H	O	R	T	O	N		
38	E	R	O		39	L	I	T	E	R	A	L		40	E	S	A		
41	S	E	R	V	E	A	M	E	A	L		43	C	D	E	R			
44	T	Y	R	I	O	N					45	O	C	O					
	47	U	O	Y	T	N	48	A	W	I		51	E	M	52	M	53	A	
54	A	P	S	E		55	A	S	H	B	56	I	N		57	R	Z	58	A
59	B	O	I	L	S		61	D	E	A	D	T	62	I	R	E	D		
63	E	N	O	L	A		64	I	N	N	E	R	N	E	R	D			
	65	N	A	G			66	C	A	K	E	O	C	E	A	N			

Introducing...

#6

## The California Tech CalGuesser

Every issue we'll show you a different location on campus. Find the place and find the QR code hidden there to sign the log book and win a fabulous prize!!!!

("On campus" is defined by the bounds of the map on [caltech.edu/map/campus](https://caltech.edu/map/campus). The QR code will be hidden somewhere within the pictured area.)

These two photos are from the same location.



### CalGuesser #5 - January 16, 2024

Congrats, you found it!!!

Leave your name/pseudonym, year/department, and date found!

ejzhang x2 !!!!

john, g4, cce 12:48 1/18/24

they took the log book and repotted the plant!

Last issue's winners! >>>