Caltech’s Title IX Coordinator Hima Vatti Resigns

Maxwell Montemayor

After nearly 4 years and 8 months, Hima Vatti has stepped down from her position as Caltech’s Title IX Coordinator and Vice President for Equity and Equity Investigations and Affirmative Action Coordinator. Appointed on July 16, 2016, and stepping down on March 14, 2023, Vatti was Caltech’s longest serving Title IX Coordinator.

According to an email sent to the Caltech community by Julia McCann, the Chief Human Resource Officer, Ofelia Velazquez-Perez will serve as interim Title IX coordinator while a replacement is sought. Vatti had been on staff at the University of La Verne’s General Council before her tenure as Title IX coordinator, she spent nearly 10 years as Associate General Counsel, Litigation & Risk Management for Caltech and JPL, providing in-house legal counsel for these institutions. Caltech’s Title IX office does not publish an annual report on their work, unlike other colleges. Other colleges like MIT, Stanford, and the CSUs publish a Title IX report with information such as Title IX case numbers and outcomes. Because of this, the Tech cannot evaluate how the office is performing.

However, Caltech’s Annual Security and Fire Safety Report provides statistics for some Title IX actionable crimes (e.g. dating, domestic, sexual violence). No trends regarding the frequency of these crimes are provided. Vatti’s time as Title IX coordinator was characterized by a focus on Title IX action and handling complaints.

The Title IX office declined to comment on Vatti’s title IX action and facilitated investigations into Title IX actionable complaints. However, Vatti faced criticism regarding cases of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. In a conversation with Vatti, she noticed a change in Vatti’s demeanor.

Vatti seemed very composed and confident when discussing formal Title IX investigation, but after which it felt far more rigid... I think she couldn’t balance the compassion with the necessity.

Vatti is known for her professionalism and dedication to her position. She was a key figure in the Title IX office and worked closely with the Title IX coordinator to handle complaints effectively.

Caltech Trivia Team Returns to National Tournament After 14 Year Hiatus

Make The Turtle Caltech’s New Mascot! Sign the petition here:

Sign the petition here: caltech.caltech.edu/turtle

The truth about unaffiliation status

How is it determined whether or not students in a proposed Bechtel suite will unaffiliated or give their group a higher pick? Affiliation is ultimately managed and reported by each house’s executive board. The only way to change or drop a house membership is to speak to the house secretary.

The Office of Student Experience (OSE) does a Housing Affiliation survey last winter term. Despite the presence of conflicting information in the email shared by house caltech.edu, the IHC confirmed that this survey was for statistical purposes only. Responses to OSE’s Housing Affiliation survey are used by the Housing office’s membership roster. According to IHC Chair Evan Portman, students primarily unaffiliated, asking them to confirm their desire to unaffiliate. Anyone who did not respond or otherwise contact their house secretary remains a member.

What about the incoming frosh?

The situation last year was affected by Title IX investigations that delayed roompicks. High yield rate (66%) for the incoming frosh class of 2027, bringing the entire frosh class down to 230 were expected. Since unaffiliated students would be automatically added to a waitlist, remaining students who chose a guaranteed room or suite lottery, described in the unaffiliated-priority Bechtel suite, compared to 2 10's in the house that didn’t drop. In this year’s roompicks process is different from last year’s, Marks/Braun Suite Picks, which were unaffiliated next year. Even if the yield rate turns higher, the size of class of 2028 will still end up around the total size of 215-225.

Is there an advantage to unaffiliating?

This year’s roompicks process is different from last year’s Marks/Braun Suite Picks, which were unaffiliated next year. Even if the yield rate turns higher, the size of class of 2028 will still end up around the total size of 215-225. Remaining students who chose to drop their house memberships because (they believed) there would be a better chance for a guaranteed room or suite lottery, compared to last year’s action. Even if you don’t plan to participate, anyone who did not respond or otherwise contact their house secretary remains a member.

Continued on page 11

Tannay Gupta (Ph’24 ’Lloyd), a Title IX advocate who had been extensively interacted with Hima Vatti, was not there to cut you down. This is not an issue unique to Vatti, but applies to the office as a whole.

Continued on page 10

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North Houses Survive Encounter with “The Smell”

Last week, nostrils throughout Venereable House were greeted by the penetrating stench of sewage. Some feared that this was a new manifestation of “The Smell,” but South Lake Avenue farther south was also affected for several days, possibly even weeks. The cause of the smell was determined to be a clogged sewer line, which was successfully cleared. The smell is now dissipating, and residents can breathe freely once again.

National College Health Assessment: We Need Your Participation!

Every two years, Student Wellness Services surveys all currently enrolled Caltech students to determine the prevalence of self-reported health behaviors. The survey, which is anonymous and voluntary, covers a wide range of topics, including physical and emotional health, and asks about behaviors such as sleep habits, alcohol use, mental health, and more. Your participation is crucial to making the survey as comprehensive as possible.

Do you have thoughts about the survey? Contact Student Wellness Services to share your feedback.

CAR Artisan Chocolate

CAR Artisan Chocolate, located at 123 Main St, Cambridge, MA, offers a unique selection of handcrafted chocolates. They specialize in artisanal items, making each piece carefully and thoughtfully. Visit their website today for more information and to place your order.

Republic Coffee

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Dear faculty colleagues,

Our faculty have always prided themselves on the exceptional experience they provide for students, with college professors across campus having earned and maintained a strong reputation throughout the quantitative and qualitative standards. In the 2023-2024 annual report, there has been a concerning drop in the SAT/ACT scores of our students, particularly for those entering the STEM field. The core curriculum has significantly declined, with many students finding it difficult to meet the requirements of our high school courses. The team of faculty, including myself, have noticed in the past edition of the Tech Faculty Board had passed a resolution that the lack of the SAT/ACT requirement is the sole reason for the admissions office is admitting "B & B students".

While there are many more problems that can make the contents of the petition fall short, the students believe it is poorly thought. The public comments attached to this petition clearly show that many members of the faculty believe that the solution to this "problem" of students unprepared for the courses is to admit "B & B students" in future years. In the longer term, we ask the institute to:

Establish a faculty-led standing committee whose charge is to take the SAT/ACT test, which in the past was used as an indicator of students' ability to perform at the top schools like Stanford or Harvard. This is why the STEM skills of our undergraduate students.

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Hello! My name is Thiero Diallo, and I am running for the position of ASCIT President. A few years ago, I began my journey at Caltech before driving a car. Over the past three years, I have served in various leadership positions throughout campus.

One of my proudest accomplishments on campus has been serving as co-founder and president of the Caltech Black Student Union (BSU) for two years now to ensure a safer space for Black students on campus. As president, I organized and led weekly meetings with a clear agenda and followed up on these meetings by prioritizing leadership development, helping build leadership and team dynamic skills and also fostering diversity by building relationships, networking and creating leadership opportunities for students who stay on campus over the summer.

Outside of the BSU, I furthered my communications and leadership skills while expanding my campus network by working as a Resident tutor. I led monthly large group meetings to discuss upcoming events and parent-teacher conferences. I also serve as coordinator for the annual BSU retreat and took on other leadership roles and responsibilities. In my role as BSU president, I focused on ensuring students are respected in all aspects of their lives. I ensured that the BSU is managed by students and lost with the institute. Additionally, I’ve been working with Tom Mannion and ASCIT to ensure that our club funding is sustainable and that our students are supported.

I have truly enjoyed working with the ASCIT Board of Directors this year and I am excited to continue serving as ASCIT President. As president, I have worked to ensure that the ASCIT Board of Directors is inclusive and that all voices are heard. I have helped reform the Ma 6a course last year and also helped the team to navigate the challenges of the pandemic. I am an ASCIT board member and I have an understanding of the role of the ASCIT Board of Directors.

I have served on the ASCIT Board of Directors for the past three years. I am known as a leader who is always available to help and who is committed to the well-being of all students. I am also known for my strong communication skills and ability to work well with others.

Hi everyone! I’m Ava Barban, currently serving as the ASCIT President. I have been involved in numerous initiatives on campus and have helped to ensure that all students are included in the decision-making process. I have a strong sense of community and I am committed to making sure that all students are engaged in the activities on campus.

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Hi everyone! I’m Jonathan Booker, a junior studying Physics and Computer Science, and I am running for re-election as ASCIT Treasurer. Having served on the ASCIT Board of Directors for the past two years, I am eager to continue the work that has made a significant impact on our community.

During my time as a member of the Board of Directors, I have championed the revitalization of key project clubs like CAMS and Caltech Racing, facilitating their successful restart. In partnership with Claire Raleigh and Caltech Racing, I spearheaded a fundraising campaign for clubs to raise sponsorship funds for students, ensuring all students are funded for their projects and initiatives. In addition, I have also overseen communications and publications for the entire ASCIT board.

Revitalizing important projects with my leadership and help from the entire ASCIT board allowed for an unprecedented level of student engagement and impact in my two years in office.

Hi! My name is Michael Gutiérrez, and I am running for the position of ASCIT Corporate Relations Chair. As the current corporate relations chair for ASCIT, I have gained valuable experience in fundraising and working with corporate partners. I am confident that my current role will allow me to continue serving in this capacity.

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Enric Adillon and Madeline Hicks

Songs to Get Murdered To

Enric Adillon and Madeline Hicks

Culture

9

Get excited folks, there’s a new cowboy in Tech Town, and he’s here to bring you playlists. Moving forward, every edition of the Tech will have a themed playlist for your auditory pleasure, starting with the suitably appropriate theme of “Songs to Get Murdered To” (see <5 millenniums worth). That being said, you can always expect the unexpected when it comes to the playlists in the future. On top of all of that, “Songs to Get Murdered To” contains the following bangers, hits, and hits:

1. How Do You Feel - The Neighbourhood
2. Stressed Out - The Neighbourhood
3. Hi - Luke Combs
4. Don't Stop Me Now - Queen
5. We Don’t Have To Take Our Clothes Off - James Blunt
6. Dazed - OK Go
7. I Hope You See It Here - Taylor Swift

Hot taken from the creator. Alright kids, none of you asked, but here are my unordered opinions on some of the potentially noteworthy songs in this playlist.

Midsummer week or not, How Do You Feel? always hits. The warmth, the beat, the vocals...it’s all perfect. And if you’re into Andrew Scott, he even makes a quick cameo in the music video. So, if you’re a fan of the Netflix show Fleabag, you might want to check this out. As for the rest, the playlist is filled with hits that you probably know by heart, but I’m always here to remind you of the classics.

Follow us on Instagram to keep up with story updates and exclusive content! @thecaliforniatech

Science Showdown

ACROSS
1 Defining feature of an armadillo
6 Like “Jimmy Kimmel Live!”
11 Bird box producer
14 Home to Arcadia National Park
15 Like computer network or the lymphatic system
16 Marine Corp battle cry, after “HOO”
18 A magnet always has two
20 Frequency midpoint March Madness contender
22 Mascot of 38-Across
23 Schadenfreude, in other words
25 Who or what drives to success?
26 Petrochemical suffix
29 Dropped droplets in the rebranding of a popular community
33 Undress with one’s eyes
35 "From my point of view"
37 Defining feature of the feud between 38-Across and its rival
38 The *better* STEM school
39 Not-so-defining feature of the feud between 38-Across and its rival
40 Its usually shorter than a trailer
42 Have bad posture
43 British source of style: Abbr.
44 Pump purchase, in brief
45 Danielle Brooks’ character in “The New Black”
46 They often require lenses
48 Many a graduate of 38-Across
51 Khurshech, former leader of the Soviet Union
55 Inflationary suffix
57 Pablo Escobar or Joaquín Guzmán, e.g.
60 Genetic material, in brief
61 Hit the clubs
62 Type of olympic lift
63 Approved, in text lingo
64 Jaguar driven by James Bond
65 Emoj with many variations
66 Orange is the new blue
68 German brand when followed by- and maybe instead by-“das”
69 Italian babies
70 Aimless adverb
71 Maga
72 Antithesis of free will
73 First singer with a hit track using “The Odyssey”
74 "Because we put our trust in you"?
75 With 21-, down, once committed a crime
76 Performance enhancing drugs popular with cyclists
77 State that voted for 2016, familiarly
78 Man who once lived in a pig sty
79 Summer retreat for many New Yorkers
80 "Hear ___"
82 Greek witch who turned men into pigs in “The Odyssey"
83 "...end of the day...
84 With 21-, down, once committed a crime
85 Performance enhancing drugs popular with cyclists
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89 "Hear ___"
90 Greek witch who turned men into pigs in “The Odyssey"
91 "...end of the day...
92 With 21-, down, once committed a crime
93 Performance enhancing drugs popular with cyclists
94 State that voted for 2016, familiarly
95 Man who once lived in a pig sty
96 Summer retreat for many New Yorkers

DOWN
1 Current unit
2 Big name in pasta sauce
3 Fate of many nuts nowadays
4 Could be bills or coins
5 Musical pause
6 Roadside assistance in some cars
7 "Got it"
8 38-Across
9 38-Across
10 38-Across
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96 38-Across

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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.

Send submissions or contact the Tech editorial team at tech@caltech.edu

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

Enric Adillon and Madeline Hicks

Movie Review: Civil War

Emily Yu

Culture

What kind of American are you?

In this new film from Alex Garland and A24, that question takes on a different meaning. Since 2008, when Garland began writing “Civil War,” political polarization and violence have only increased. Despite its small trailer and release during an election year, “Civil War” does not address or pledge to a side. Instead, it gives voice to the country’s fraught political landscape, and Garland depicts unconventional divides among Americans. The United States has implicitly divided states have ventured into these separatist groups.

The Western Forces, an alliance between California and Texas, are chasing in on the nation’s capital with the help of the Florida Alliance. Their leader is the proprietorial president. The story revolves around four war correspondents. In one scene, it’s a photojournalist, famed for her photo shot in the “Arizona massacre.” She and Joel, a thrill-seeking reporter, work for Reuters. They are joined by Sam, who writes for what’s left of the New York Times. Joel is an aspiring photojournalist who reveres Lee. They are trying to reach the White House in order to photograph and interview the president, who is hostile to the war. They are forced to confront the paradox that their job requires them to be part of the conflict they want to live through.

Garland intentionally leaves out partisan politics with any power. The political affiliations of the young couple in the story are not emphasized because the story is about the couple’s relationship, not a political narrative. The war is a backdrop that serves as a metaphor for the war on terror and the current political climate. The war is also a metaphor for the media’s role in shaping public opinion. The war is a way to illustrate the idea that the media is not neutral, but rather has its own biases and agendas.

Civil War is a warning. Through the lens of journalism, viewers can watch what happens when moral order disintegrates and truth is obscured. Garland wants viewers to listen. 

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The California Tech
On Ranked Pairs Voting

Alexandro Lopez Letter to the Editor

Dear Editors,

A few months ago I learned that in the course of conducting its elections, Bechtel House at Caltech uses plurality voting, a system similar to that used by Colleges. A few weeks ago, I decided to learn more about this system and its benefits, and I discovered that it is used throughout the United States, particularly in the realm of higher education. I was intrigued by the idea of using this system in our campus elections, and I decided to write this letter to express my thoughts on the topic.

Plurality voting is a system in which candidates are ranked based on their preference. The candidate with the most votes wins, regardless of whether they received a majority of the votes or not. This system has several advantages over other voting systems, such as simplicity and transparency. However, it also has some disadvantages, such as the possibility of a candidate winning with a minority of the votes.

Despite these disadvantages, I believe that plurality voting is the most appropriate system for our campus elections. It is simple to understand and implement, and it ensures that the candidate with the most support wins. Additionally, it is fair to all students, regardless of their political affiliations.

I hope that the administration will consider implementing this system in our campus elections. It will not only simplify the process, but it will also ensure that the candidates who receive the most support win. I believe that this will be a positive change for our campus.

Sincerely,
Alexandro Lopez

The California Tech

The Article About Roompicks

Amazon Skylark Welcome back to Amazon Skylark! In this column, we hold a raffle where we give away one of our lucky readers and give them the item of their choice from three hand-picked selections!

Enter this week’s raffle by using the QR code or the link below:

The California Tech
President Thomas F. Rosenbaum and Professor Katherine T. Faber cordially invite you to the

Senior Celebrations 2024

May 13, 14, or 15
6:00–8:00 pm

President’s Residence
415 S. Hill Avenue | Pasadena, CA

Enjoy a festive evening
honoring the Class of 2024

Scan the QR Code
to RSVP by May 1

The California Tech

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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. The QR code will be hidden somewhere within the pictured area.

Last week’s winners!

CalGuesser #9 – April 12, 2024

Congrats, you found it!!!

Lore, 25, 4/12
Dhru, 2027, 12th
Alexi, 2027 April 12th
ton the baum, 27, 4/12
Potatoman, 25, 4/12
Zack H, 2020, April 13

Arabella, 2027, April 13
Lee C., April 15
HM, SA, April 15
Hank Peta, ESL, April 16
John, who knows, apr 24