We Have, and Are Trying, To Do Better
A Response and Update to the SAT/ACT Article
Maya Dickson, Ruth Berkun, Kevin Gauld
(SFC Core Chair, CCSC Undergrad Rep)
Op-Ed

On Friday, April 26th, a Tech article was released that took the undergraduate population by storm. Titled “You Can and Should Do Better, Faculty Members,” it revealed that the Faculty Board had come to reinstate the standardized testing requirement for undergraduate admissions. The author publicized an internal faculty petition criticizing current student performance in two sophomore-level Electrical Engineering courses: EE 44 “Circuits and Systems” and EE 55 “Mathematics of Electrical Engineering.”

The petition was scathing, to say the least. And the “Friend of the Students” who leaked it didn’t hesitate to point out its flaws. They pointed out that the data wasn’t representative. They theorized that the difference in grades most likely stemmed from educational gaps in the COVID years and core classes, not SAT/ACT material. Most of all, they were upset that faculty were discussing performance in such a deprecatory way behind the student’s backs. The writer expresses many opinions that many students who organized the silent sit-in, did not fully consider how releasing this petition would actually affect the students.

Students found the text of the petition was lifted than just “parroting back” as the author predicted. Some felt the petition writers were calling the current undergraduate population stupid. Some felt they were pointing out the absurdity of it. And bearing the brunt of all this commotion was a small group of 15-17 students – the majority being the EE sophomores – whose exam scores were the core data of the petition.

The Executive Officer and the option chair of the EE organized an office hour first with the EE sophomores, and then a larger meeting with more faculty present for all EE undergraduates, to hear the opinions of the students and tell their side of the story. The majority of what follows comes from discussions during those meetings and in separate encounters with these faculty members, and we appreciate the willingness of the EE faculty to make time for us and organize these.

Caltech Protests for Palestine
Lilia Arrizabalaga
News

On Monday, April 29th, there were two on campus demonstrations for Palestine. The first took the form of a silent sit-in on the lawn of the Center for Student Services (CSS) building in the morning from 10:30 to 12:00. The sit-in was set to coincide with the “Deans and Donuts” event which was scheduled for 11:00 am, however this event was canceled in an email to undergraduates at 10:59am with no explanation.

The protestors moved from the CSS lawn to outside the Red Door Cafe at around 11:20 am. According to the undergraduate students who organized the silent sit-in, the main goal is to “start a meaningful conversation about Caltech’s affiliation with the military industrial complex and its reaching impacts in Gaza.” Protesters covered their mouths with tape “in solidarity with Palestinians being silenced.” The protestors consisted of undergraduate students who organized the silent sit-in, as well as a handful of Caltech community members. At the peak of the protest there were around 60 people present. There was also a legal observer from the National Legal Guild present who was unable to talk to the press.

The sit-in was organized in response to many similar protests on other college campuses and the lack of protests at Caltech.

“I saw the protests going around multiple campuses around our nation. [It] inspired me to bring this human rights issue to the front of Caltech students’ consciousness. No undergraduate had organized a demonstration so I decided to take action,” the undergraduate student organizers’ email continued.

The second protest took place in the evening organized by Pasadenan for Palestine and other faith-based groups from local churches in conjunction with Caltech Students for Justice in Palestine (SFJ). The demonstration was part of a larger series of sit-ins in front of congressional Judy Chu’s office that take place every Monday organized by Pasadenan for Palestine. At 5-10pm, a group of around 20 Caltech students formed outside the Chen Neuroscience Building before joining the larger group of Pasadena residents already marching. The total group numbered around 100 according to eyewitness reports.

Protestors marched through the campus shouting slogans including “Your hands are bloody too.” “Caltech, Caltech, pick a side, justice for genocides,” “The students united will never be defeated”, and “The students united will never be divided.” A reporter for the Tech later caught up with the man leading the chants (who had been using a megaphone) and learned he was not Caltech affiliated. Some protestors held signs calling for Caltech to disclose any investments in or funding received by Israel. Protesters led an interfaith prayer for Palestine before dispersing at around 6:30pm.

Lilia Arrizabalaga

Make The Turtle Caltech’s New Mascot! Sign the petition here: or at tech.caltech.edu/turtle

Changes to Caltech’s Free Speech Policy Explained

Student Affairs Reorganization

Life with a Brain Implant

continued on page 6

continued on page 8
The Joys of Living Off Campus

Hannah Fish Opinion

Are you a Caltech undergraduate who is currently living on campus? Are you considering whether to move off campus for housing? Have you been living on campus for a while, but have grown tired of your dorm building or feel like you need more space to live comfortably? You may be considering if you need more space of your own. Is your roommate leaving and you want to move into a larger space? Are you tired of eating the same meals and looking for a change in your living situation? Are you interested in the possibility of living off campus with a higher quality of life? Then you should think about moving off campus.

One of the main reasons to move off campus could be for the flexibility and independence that comes with it. Living off campus gives you more freedom to choose where you want to live, how you want to live, and who you want to live with. You can choose a house or apartment that best fits your needs and preferences. You can also choose to live with friends or roommates that share your interests and values. Moving off campus can also give you more privacy and reduce distractions.

Another reason to move off campus could be for the lower cost of living. Living on campus can be expensive, especially when you consider the cost of meals, transportation, and entertainment. Off-campus living can be cheaper, allowing you to save money for other things, such as travel, experiences, or even a car. Moving off campus can also give you more control over your expenses and help you budget more effectively.

Finally, moving off campus can also give you more access to a variety of activities and experiences. Living on campus can be limiting, especially if you are interested in exploring the city or participating in extracurricular activities. Off-campus living can provide you with more opportunities to engage with the local community, attend concerts, and explore different dining options. Moving off campus can also give you more independence and freedom to pursue your interests and passions.

In conclusion, moving off campus can be a great option for Caltech students who are looking for more space, flexibility, cost savings, and access to a variety of activities and experiences. It can be a challenging decision, but it can also be a rewarding and fulfilling experience. If you are considering moving off campus, I highly encourage you to visit the Caltech Housing office and explore the options available.

The Joy of the Greenhouse Effect

Henry Lane

The world is changing, and the greenhouse effect is one of the key factors contributing to this change. The greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon that warms the Earth's surface. It occurs when certain gases in the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, trap heat from the sun and prevent it from escaping into space. This warming effect is essential for life on Earth, as it helps to maintain a comfortable temperature that is necessary for plants, animals, and humans to survive.

However, in recent years, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has increased significantly, primarily due to human activities such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation. This increase in greenhouse gases has led to a phenomenon known as the greenhouse effect, which is causing the Earth's temperature to rise at an unprecedented rate.

The consequences of this warming are already visible, with more frequent and severe weather events, rising sea levels, and increased risk of droughts and wildfires. To combat this problem, scientists and policymakers are developing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. However, the road ahead will be challenging, and we all must play our part in making a difference.

In conclusion, the greenhouse effect is a critical factor affecting our planet's temperature. We must work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect our planet for future generations. It's time to take action and create a sustainable future for all.
**New IHC Committee Chairs and ASCIT BoD**

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**Art and Photography Spotlight**

- “Sunset Road” by Audrey Wong
- “Cliffside Forest” by Juan Luchsinger
- “GDBG” by Sophie Gershaft, Albert Huang, and Toby Thomassen
- “Galaxy” by Sylvia Wang
- “Sunset Road” by Audrey Wong
- “Cliffside Forest” by Juan Luchsinger
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- “Galaxy” by Sylvia Wang

**Quantum Hype and the End of Half-Decent Writing in Media**

The frustration with the misuse and misapplication of the term “quantum” is palpable. Audiences crave narratives that transport them to new universes and provoke thought, rather than leaving them feeling disillusioned by the superficiality of lazy writing. It’s a call for writers to transcend the art of storytelling, where creativity reigns supreme and the constraints of reality are transcended through ingenuity, rather than obscured by the misuse of scientific terminology.

The issue extends beyond the realm of film, permeating other forms of media and even popular science discourse. The misuse of quantum buzzwords not only betrays a lack of originality but also undermines the audience’s intelligence by assuming they require such flimsy justifications for the tales of the story’s universe.

Genuine innovation in storytelling, reminiscent of classics like “2001: A Space Odyssey” and “Looper,” seems increasingly rare. Generic, formulaic plots bolstered by superficial scientific jargon, instead of delving into the inherent wonder and complexity of the universe, relies on a mere toolkit of overused tropes that diminish the impact of their narratives. Audiences expect more from the storytellers who challenge conventions and engage with themes on a deeper level, rather than relying on gimmicks and hand-waving justifications.

In this landscape, the longing for a return to storytelling that elevates the imagination without resorting to tired tropes is palpable. Audiences crave narratives that transport them to new worlds and provoke thought, rather than leaving them feeling disillusioned by the superficiality of lazy writing. It’s a call for writers to reclaim the art of storytelling, where creativity reigns supreme and the constraints of reality are transcended through ingenuity, rather than obscured by the misuse of scientific terminology.

The issue extends beyond the realm of film, permeating other forms of media and even popular science discourse. The misuse of quantum buzzwords not only betrays a lack of originality but also undermines the audience’s intelligence by assuming they require such flimsy justifications for the tales of the story’s universe. Genuine innovation in storytelling, reminiscent of classics like “2001: A Space Odyssey” and “Looper,” seems increasingly rare. Generic, formulaic plots bolstered by superficial scientific jargon, instead of delving into the inherent wonder and complexity of the universe, relies on a mere toolkit of overused tropes that diminish the impact of their narratives. Audiences expect more from the storytellers who challenge conventions and engage with themes on a deeper level, rather than relying on gimmicks and hand-waving justifications.

As consumers of media, it is essential to demand more from creators and readers alike. Today, quantum hype and half-decent writing have a hypnotic effect, leading writers and creators down a path of least resistance, where the semblance of scientific accuracy takes precedence over narrative integrity. This phenomenon reflects a broader trend in society, where complexity is often simplified and sensationalized to the detriment of genuine understanding.

Moreover, the misuse of scientific concepts like quantum mechanics, quantum entanglement, and even the term “quantum” itself can lead to a perversion of the intended purpose. Instead of inspiring and enlightening, transcending the limitations of buzzwords and clichés, it diminishes the impact of their narratives.

**A Cinema-Going Physicist**

**Culture**

The California Tech has enlisted some of the most promising and recent quantum physicists to help us explore the limits of the universe and its mysteries.

The dissatisfaction expressed by audiences reflects a desire for stories that are relatable but also aspirational. The human experience. Let us not settle for quantum hype and half-decent writing but instead aspire to narratives that inspire and enlighten, transcending the limitations of buzzwords and clichés.

**Contact tech@caltech.edu if you are interested in either position!**
This petition served as a dedicated to discussing exact-
Palestine Demonstrations

According to a representative of Caltech JSA, the main goal of the protest was to raise awareness of Caltech’s institutional complicity in Palestinian genocide. “It’s not for us to tell the students what to do. We’re just here to tell the administration what to do,” said the representative.

The protests were part of a broader campaign to pressure the Caltech administration to divest from companies that support Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories. The campaign was endorsed by the Student Assembly (SA), which passed a resolution expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people and urging the university to adopt a more robust divestment policy.

The protesters, who numbered in the hundreds, gathered outside the Caltech administration building to声 express their demands. The event drew the attention of local media outlets and sparked debates on social media.

The representative from Caltech JSA said that the protesters were committed to nonviolent direct action and had prepared for potential counter-protests by local right-wing groups. “We are here to make our voices heard,” said a student organizer. “We are not here to disrupt normal operations. We are here to make sure that the Caltech administration hears our call for divestment.”

The protest continued throughout the day, with talks, workshops, and cultural events aimed at raising awareness of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination.

Chances to Caltech’s Free Speech and Expression Policy Explained

Lynn Feng

News

On April 26th, an email from Francine Rosenbaum, a representative from the Caltech JSA, announced an update to the Caltech Free Speech and Expression Policy. The new policy is designed to provide clearer guidelines for the use of public spaces on campus and to promote a safe and inclusive environment for all members of the Caltech community.

The new policy includes several key changes:

- The policy now explicitly states that the free speech and expression rights of all members of the Caltech community are protected.
- The policy clarifies that public demonstrations are subject to certain regulations and guidelines.
- The policy includes new provisions for the use of public spaces during events, including a requirement for sponsors to have a Caltech-affiliated sponsor.
- The policy prohibits the use of amplification devices without a permit.
- The policy includes provisions for the use of written material, including guidelines for its placement and removal.

The policy update is a response to concerns raised by members of the Caltech community about the need for clearer guidelines and greater transparency in the application of the previous policy.

The policy update is now available on the Caltech website and is linked in the QR code provided.

NOTE: We have written these summaries for context and do not claim credit for organizing a protest or other related event. This summary should not be considered the official text of the policy, linked in the QR code provided.

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Life with a Brain Implant: Interview with clinical trial subject James Johnson

Samvi Pal - Edited bypersons
Richard Anderson, Kelly Kofod, James Johnson
Science & Tech

When I applied to Caltech, I applied because I was in awe of the research being done by the faculty. I ended up in the Andersen Lab, which is a group of researchers who work on brain-machine interfaces (BMI), devices that are able to both pick up neural activity and transmit signals to the brain.

The Andersen Lab is involved in invasive brain machine interfaces. An interface related to decoding electrical signals from the brain, decoding movements, taking in raw neural signals and converting them to commands that can be interpreted by the brain. This is done through the use of mathematical algorithms to map patterns in neural activity to signals that represent the subject’s goal.

The Andersen Lab uses linear decoders. Their continuous decoder is a computer controller that can record and untangle the neural firing patterns that correspond to control over voluntary movements. The decoder can be trained to do this by the discriminative signal it receives from motor commands in the brain. It is also able to provide feedback to the subject to improve their performance.

The Science Picture

BMI systems can be open-loop or closed-loop. Open-loop means that there is a preprogrammed pattern output that is sent to the computer. The computer then translates the signal to produce the movement. Closed-loop means that the subject is now integrated in the loop and can control the computer output. There are two kinds of BMI, "write-in" and "read-out". A "write-in" BMI transfers electrical pulses to send signals to parts of the brain. An example of a "write-in" BMI is Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) used for tremors. DBS uses ultrasound on the brain for tremors. "Read-out" BMIs can be used to stimulate motor neurons that are responsible for producing movements. For example, recording devices that are used to record electrical activity from the brain include EMG (Electromyography), EEG (Electroencephalography), ECoG (Electrocorticography), and fMRI (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging). Ultrasound can be used to stimulate or stop neural activity in the brain. Ultrasound can be used to stimulate motor neurons that are responsible for producing movements. For example, ultrasound can be used to stimulate muscle contractions in the brain.

In one class, we all got the opportunity to have an inspirational experience. I worked with many individuals who had brain injuries. I was familiar with their stories. I sometimes wanted to place the electrodes/actuators and have their input as the subject. That was one of the experiences that I had while working with the Andersen Lab.

The Human Picture

In the field of Neurotechnology there is a lot of work being done to develop new ways to help people with disabilities. When reading Professor Anderson’s papers in which he describes how he can help a lot of people. That’s why, in my second year of being an undergrad here, I jumped on the opportunity of taking CNS 35 with Professor Richard Andersen. It was a great experience. I learned a lot from him and I feel like I have made some progress in my career. I have also received a grant from the National Science Foundation to continue my research in this field.

In one class, all we got the opportunity to have an inspirational conversation with James Johnson, a clinical trial subject at the Andersen Lab. James Johnson is a 42-year-old tetraplegic who has received two implants of Blackrock’s Utah Array (an intracortical array) on the left posterior parietal cortex (region in the brain responsible for planning motor decisions). He has had two implants placed in the left posterior parietal cortex (region responsible for sending motor commands to the motor cortex). The Utah Array is a 4 mm x 12 mm rectangular array made by Blackrock that can record and untangle neural firing patterns that correspond to control over voluntary movements. The decoder can be trained to do this by the discriminative signal it receives from motor commands in the brain.

James has been a member of the Andersen Lab for 6 years. He has received two implants of Blackrock’s Utah Array (an intracortical array) on the left posterior parietal cortex (region in the brain responsible for planning motor decisions). He has had two implants placed in the left posterior parietal cortex (region responsible for sending motor commands to the motor cortex). The Utah Array is a 4 mm x 12 mm rectangular array made by Blackrock that can record and untangle neural firing patterns that correspond to control over voluntary movements.

The Andersen Lab - 34 days a week and participates in 3-hour sessions a day. The Andersen Lab uses the sessions to collect data and train new interfaces for James to test. In these sessions, the Andersen Lab does various tasks like play video games or move a cursor by thinking about the action. In this setup, he is able to control the cursor using the signals from his brain. It was truly inspiring to meet with James and hear first-hand experiences about the surprising scope of abilities unlocked from neural decoding.

Interview with James Johnson

Q1: Why did you join the study?
A: Before the injury, I was both a respiratory therapist and a registered nurse who’d worked in many hospitals throughout California. Working in healthcare gave me the opportunity to give back and help people. When the chance to participate in this study presented itself, I was hesitant to participate in the study. After I learned about the process, I no longer felt like it was an opportunity to give back again.

Q2: Did you have any reservations? What were they?
A: I worked with many individuals that had brain injuries. I was familiar with their stories. Sometimes I wanted to place the electrodes/actuators and have their input as the subject. That was one of the experiences that I had while working with the Andersen Lab.

Q3: What was the surgery process like?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q4: Describe the session logistics.
A: I learned to imagine moving my fingers and bending my fingers. When I try to use my fingers, it takes a lot of effort. Maybe it’s cause I’ve never had an amputation or done anything that required much physical effort.

Q5: How are sessions optimized to control robotic appendages?
A: In a session, I am able to move a cursor with my thumb. The cursor moves in a straight line. When I try to use my fingers, it takes a lot of effort. Maybe it’s cause I’ve never had an amputation or done anything that required much physical effort.

Q6: How do sessions optimize BMI strengths and weaknesses?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q7: What kind of things do you do in the future?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q8: Describe the session input.
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q9: What were your initial thoughts?
A: I thought I felt like a Jedi. I was helping to move things. I was helping to move the cursor. It is like typing or moving the joystick in a game.

Q10: Are there any tasks with which you are not good at?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q11: What kind of things do you do in the future?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q12: Are there any tasks with which you are not good at?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q13: What kind of tasks do you use your foot for?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q14: How do sessions optimize BMI strengths and weaknesses?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.

Q15: What kind of things do you do in the future?
A: I am able to go on for longer sessions now. Sessions are 3-4 hours. My mind does wander sometimes and I end up looking at my own reflection. For example, I see my reflection and think about what others might be thinking or what others might be doing. I found it cool to see my own reflection and appreciate her work.
Blacker House Hosts Gravity Falls-themed Interhouse Party

Maxwell Montemayor, Alia Zhang

Student Life

Last Saturday, Techers par-tied in the Mystery Shack during which many Moles con-sidered to be Blacker’s best inter-house since COVID. Themed after the cartoon, Gravity Falls, Moles were transported into the world of characters from the show and danced or played charades set-played by five DJs, on a platform with a unique top tag. Others took a break in the lounge or dining hall to part-take in the many food options or admire the decorations, prose, and mural.

Despite worries of low turn-out and Avery planning their beach trips on the same day, attendance was still high. “I think it turnout out well, especially seeing as a bunch of people from Livid and Avery returned early to come to Blitershouse,” says Blacker House President, Juan Luchsinger (ME ’27, Blacker).

“I left beach trip for Inter-house; worse,” says Gael Moran (CS ’27, Avery), who went back to beach and helped their beach trip early to attend Blitershouse.

This year, Blacker stepped up their DJ game. “It was hype, especially the trap session” says Jhons Kamus (CS ’25, Blacker).

“We had different approach-es to sets,” says Albert Huang (CSN ’27, Blacker), who helped set up the DJ booth and “were pre-mixed (with smooth, professional transitions) and some were fully on-the-fly (crea-tively whatever we thought of by vibes).”

That was my first time DJing…I really want to do it again, says Tyler Gatewood. “What a task of mixing… I really want to do it again.”

However, some Moles felt that one episode of Phineas and Ferb.

“Leaving this year is bit hard on the tree, that she had it great overall,” says Adam Krivka (CS ’24, Blacker).

Blacker senior Nico Adamo describes his Blitershouse experience. “Hit the floor, threw off a step I am at a 7:30pm x 10:30pm” while the DJs were partnering, and then stared wastefully into the night, contemplating the aging process.”

“Exiting this year is bit hard for a lot of reasons,” says Adamo. But his last Blacker house was something that made him feel incredible, “without doubting the hands of some of the most incredible and supportive people I’ve ever met.”

Dangers wing sets were made into diurnal hospital beds.

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