

## Accessing Buildings After Hours

**Sophie Elam**  
The Inside World

One of the projects ASCIT B.o.D. adopted in 2023 was to review the building accessibility policies for undergraduate students outside of normal operational hours. For context, following the pandemic, building access was understandably limited in order to prioritize the safety and health of the campus communities. Since then, many of the previous building accessibility policies have been reinstated. The following outlines what these policies are, and who to reach out to should you experience difficulties. Additionally, while there are buildings that all students have access to, students also have access to specific (and relevant) buildings based upon the division that their option is in. Thus, the following will outline the building policies for each division as well as campus-wide accessibility.

### All students:

- 24/7 access to North Mudd & the GPS Library by request
- 8 am to 7:30pm access to HSS buildings
- **BBE:** 24/7 access to Kerkhoff (please note, the ID scanners for this building are older and may not always be operational, however, they are in the process of being replaced).
- **CCE:** 24/7 access to Braun, Crellin, Church, Noyes, Schlinger, and Spaulding. All other

undergrad students are granted 24/7 access upon request (reach out to Anya Janowski) to buildings where after-hours classes are held for the term they are enrolled in those classes.

**EAS:** 24/7 access to the first floor of Annenberg

**PMA:** 24/7 access to Linde, Bridge, Downs Lauritsen, and Cahill

### Access granted by class enrollment:

- Moore (24/7)
- Gates Thomas (24/7)
- Chemistry labs (1 hour before lab class starts— for example, access starts at 7 am for an 8am lab section) during class time.

### Additional information:

- **For students in Me72:** request access to Spalding Lab from Anya Janowski ([janowski@caltech.edu](mailto:janowski@caltech.edu))
- SFL is open 24/5 from 8 am Monday to 8 pm on Friday and then 12 pm to 8 pm on Saturday and Sunday.
- During finals and mid-terms periods, SFL hours are extended to 24/7.
- Cahill Library is open to all from 8 am to 5 pm on weekdays and closed on weekends.
- Caltech Hall is open from 8 am to 11 pm on weekdays and closed on weekends.
- Dabney Library is open to all from 8 am to 5 pm on weekdays and closed on weekends.

## Off-Campus Report: SURF at MIT and Study Abroad at University of Edinburgh

**Jessie Gan**  
The Outside World

Few Caltech students will take advantage of the opportunity to study abroad during their undergraduate time here. Understandably, undergrads are some of the busiest people you will meet here: classes throughout the day, sports and house activities through the afternoon, problem sets throughout the night and well into the morning, sleep if you can afford it, rinse and repeat. Our four-year plans are often packed; graduating on time is important when your tuition is, to say the least, exorbitant. We are lucky if we have the sheer time management to fit in downtime, much less plan opportunities to exit the Caltech bubble, the boundaries of which are fortified by mediocre public transport and the expense of a car. Throughout my freshman to junior years, I struggled intensely with work-life balance, gradually setting goals to leave campus once a week to control the stress associated with this place.

I left Caltech over the summer and fall for new opportunities, but also because of an intensely needed break from Caltech. My junior year was riddled with many stress-exacerbated health conditions, and retrospectively I've been concerned with how normalized my experience is amongst upperclassmen who experienced prolonged academic stress



here. However, I am happy to say that upon my return to Caltech after leaving for about 6 months, I've arrived not only refreshed but with new appreciations for the Caltech experience.

Over the summer, I was lucky to arrange an off-campus SURF opportunity at an MIT Biology lab. Off-campus SURFs tend to be trickier to arrange than a Caltech SURF due to how proactive students have to be in both reaching out to faculty at other schools and informing faculty how SURF works and what monetary support they are expected to pay. I was fortunate to successfully arrange this opportunity and find myself in Cambridge for the summer.

Boston and Cambridge are

wonderfully different places from Los Angeles: there is a (mostly) functional public train, a community of colleges within a concentrated city center, and the beautiful Charles River splitting the cities. I lived in an MIT-associated co-op house known as Student House, which advertises the cheapest accommodations for students in Boston (They have free groceries?!). Being in Pasadena for the past two summers, I loved the newness of everything in the East: going out to new restaurants every week, backpacking and summiting Mount Washington, and exploring the city with the ease of cheap public transportation are only a few of the enriching opportunities I

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## Caltech Rugby Club SAVES Graduate Formal

**William Feasey**  
Featured Report

The Graduate Student formal has become the latest casualty of DOGE's sweeping budget cuts. Fear not, however: the Caltech Rugby Club will be hosting their Annual Ball at the Athenaeum, open to both the blossoming club membership and the wider Graduate Student body. Expect crowd-pleasing music, free flowing food and drink, all set amongst the grandeur of our very own Athenaeum Club.

**Save the date: Friday 30th May 2025** - tickets on sale w/c 14th April - follow @caltechruggers to find out how you can win a FREE ticket for you and your +1!

The Graduate Formal has long been the cornerstone of the Caltech social calendar: the Wimbledon of Grand Slams, the Beyoncé of the Grammys. The 2024 edition was undoubtedly a roaring success, fit for the decade, while inspiring the prehistoric at the LA Natural History museum. Students were therefore devastated to hear that formal would not be returning this year owing to a government crackdown on Abba's Dancing Queen being sung by grad students swapping lab coats for sharp suits and flowing dresses.

And yet for those at the Caltech Rugby Club, the show

must go on. As one of Caltech's fastest growing clubs, the CRC are no stranger to hosting a lively social scene, with their Wednesday socials attended by well over 50 students. Faced with their greatest ambition yet, the CRC will not dodge the DOGE and are set to host their inaugural, Annual Ball.

The Athenaeum's West Patio will play host to the initial reception and awards ceremony before live performances from Caltech's freshest bands get the ball rocking. Libations will be liberated as the Athenaeum sets out its campus-famous bar, all included in the outrageously good valued ticket price. The night will conclude in the esteemed, main dining room where DJ sets are poised to put the *tune* in Athenaeum. Get ready to hear the full lineup announced @caltechruggers!

Scott F Fitzgerald, poster child of the roaring 20s, is not known to have held much of an opinion on rugby. However, he sure as hell liked parties, especially 'large parties', famously quipping them 'so intimate'. The Caltech Rugby Club Annual Ball promises to be everything Fitzgerald heralded: a celebration of the extraordinarily talented Caltech community, held at Caltech's most iconic venue, fueled by spirit and by spirit. The stage is set, the ball is pumped, the only question remains when are you going to get your ticket!

**Caltech Rugby Club**

**Ball**

**FRIDAY MAY 30**  
**6:30-11:00PM**  
**ATHENAEUM,**  
**CATLECH**

**@CALTECHRUGGERS**



# KILL THE CUTS

RSVP



**SAVE LIFESAVING RESEARCH, HEALTHCARE,  
AND EDUCATION**

By cutting funds to lifesaving research and medical care, the Trump administration is **abandoning families who are suffering and costing taxpayers billions of dollars**. Join research, healthcare, and education workers across the country to demand **NO** cuts to education and research.

**APRIL 8TH, 2025**

 **Beckman Auditorium**

 **10:30 AM**

*Followed by a metro ride to the Federal Building in DTLA where we will join other local UAW unions and march to save our research.*



## Caltech Students Eligible for 2025 Student Academy Awards

Hollywood shines its spotlight on Caltech students

**Gregory Miller**  
News

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has opened submissions for the 2025 Student Academy Awards® (SAA), and Caltech students are now eligible to participate. Established in 1972, the SAAs recognize excellence in collegiate filmmaking and support the development of emerging talent in the cinematic arts.

Chris Roginski, assistant to Michael Benedict, Director of Academy Awards Events, confirmed this news, saying, “Caltech students are eligible to participate and submit a short film to be considered for a Student Academy Award.”

While Caltech is globally known for its scientific and engineering achievements, students are increasingly using digital storytelling and visual

media to document and communicate research. Filmmaking is now a valid methodological tool, helping researchers capture their process, contextualize findings, and share their work with broader audiences. This integration of research and narrative reflects Caltech’s long-standing tradition of blending science with creative expression—most notably through alumnus Frank Capra (BS, 1918), one of Hollywood’s most influential directors.

Eligible students may submit one film, up to 40 minutes in length, in one of four categories: Narrative, Documentary, Animation, or Alternative/Experimental. Films must be capstone, thesis, or intermediate-level projects completed between June 2, 2024, and May 18, 2025. The competition is open to undergraduate, graduate, and certificate program students.

Entries are free and must be submitted through FilmFreeWay, with faculty advisor verification required.

The judging process consists of Preliminary, Semifinal, and Final rounds overseen by Academy members. Winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on October 6, 2025, during the New York Film Festival. Final ballots will be tabulated by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Gold, Silver, and Bronze awards, including cash prizes of up to \$5,000, will be presented in each category. Winning films may also qualify for Oscar® consideration at the 98th Academy Awards in select short film categories.

For full eligibility requirements and submission details, visit [oscar.org/saa](https://oscar.org/saa). Students with further questions may contact [saa@oscar.org](mailto:saa@oscar.org)

## On Timeless Wisdom: Ninth-Century Japanese Culture Embedded in Dabney Garden

**Theodore Havel**  
News

In my time at Caltech, I have found that scientists love to both work hard and play hard. While preparing for a party and hanging decorations at Dabney Garden last Fall, I noticed a statue of the Japanese deity Tenjin, on which I placed an Earth-shaped lantern. This man sitting on a yak with a Japanese name was of particular interest to me, as I have studied the Japanese language for over 10 years. Why had this statue been placed in one of the most historic spaces on campus? Why is Tenjin important?

I found that the statue originally belonged to the Bernheimer Gardens, an Asian-inspired public space in the Pacific Palisades owned by Adolph L. Bernheimer in the first part of the 20th century. It was sold at auction when the garden closed due to landslides, and was later donated to Caltech by Dr. Edwin H. Schneider in 1967.

Tenjin, known during his lifetime as Sugawara no Michizane, was a scholar, politician, and philosopher in 9th-century Japan, and was recognized as one of the best poets of his era. After his death, he was honored as the Shinto deity Tenman Daijizai Tenjin (天満大自在天神) in Japan during the Edo period (c.1600-1850). He is also connected with good luck on exams, and many students pray to him for academic success.

This statue represents to us the importance of recognizing the role of a well-rounded education, and how our work in a technical environment can be enhanced by engaging the right hemisphere of our brain. In addition, how would it hurt to ask for a little extra luck during



A portrait of Sugawara no Michizane by Kikuchi Yōsai.

exam week?

Furthermore, science and religion do not have to be mutually exclusive; one great example of this is the Vatican observatory in Vatican City. I had the pleasure of attending a lecture and dinner two years

ago on Mount Wilson with Br. Guy Consolmagno, the director of the Vatican Observatory, and I learned a lot about the intersection and relationship between the two. This topic will be further explored in my next article.

## Caltech Must Protect Its Students

**Zarif Azher**  
Opinion

“All individuals, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, have civil and constitutional rights under U.S. law,” reads <https://international.caltech.edu/guidance>.

This idea that the Constitution guarantees basic rights to all—freedom of speech, religion, press, and more—has been fundamental to the American creed for centuries. Today, the current US administration is upending this national value by employing chilling tactics to silence speech deemed to “cause a ruckus”: in other words, political and social opinions they find unacceptable. Their first target? Non-citizen university students. Tufts University student Rumeysa Ozturk was whisked away by masked immigration officials and is pending deportation after she wrote an op-ed calling for her university to divest from supporting Israel’s actions in Gaza. Columbia University student Mahmoud Khalil was disappeared in front of his 8-month pregnant wife for participating in pro-Palestinian protests labeled by the government as “pro Hamas.” These are only two examples out of more than 300 and counting. Nationwide, the government is trampling over the 1st Amendment and deporting students whose views they disagree with. No immigration judges, no jury, no due process. Today, it’s non-citizens sup-

porting Palestine: tomorrow, it could be any American with any viewpoint.

Caltech claims to strive to “expand human knowledge and benefit society.” A necessary requisite to accomplish this mission is a community that values intellectual diversity. One where peers challenge the preconceived notions of others, and where all can speak freely. We thus have a vested interest in protecting free speech. Over the 24 presidential administrations that have come and gone from Washington DC since the Institute’s inception, Caltech has historically remained politically neutral. But this present crisis transcends politics. It challenges the core assumptions that students make when choosing to entrust the Institute with their time, intellect, energy, and safety. Simply put, this is not a moment in history when Caltech can remain silent.

I call on President Rosenbaum and the Caltech administration to firmly and publicly state that they will not cooperate with unconstitutional federal deportations. They should instead offer legal support to international students, assurance to the community that they recognize what’s at stake, and declare that the Institute stands in favor of free speech. To support its mission as well as the founding promise of America, Caltech must protect its students.

Zarif Azher, Class of 2028

## Applications Open for 2025 Wolfram Summer School

**Gregory Miller**  
The Outside World

Applications are now open for the 23rd annual Wolfram Summer School, taking place June 22–July 11, 2025, at Bentley University in Waltham, Massachusetts.

The three-week program offers students, researchers, and innovators the opportunity to work on real-world projects alongside leading technologists, researchers, and physicists. Participants will collaborate directly with Stephen

Wolfram to shape and refine their project goals.

The program includes specialized tracks such as Science and Technology, Wolfram Physics and Foundational Science, Philosophy and Strategy, NKS and Ruliology, and Educational Innovation. Participants will also have the opportunity to publish their results on Wolfram Community.

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. For more information and to apply, visit <https://education.wolfram.com/summer-school>.

Do you like keeping up with sports?  
Do you live for the game winner,  
the epic comeback, or the roar of  
the crowd? Do you love my only  
sunshine LeBron James?

If you said yes to any of  
these questions...

**The Tech**

needs YOU!!!

We’re on the hunt for sports fanatics with a flair for  
storytelling to join our team of writers.

Are you in? [tech.caltech.edu/write](https://tech.caltech.edu/write)



# The Underrated and Underexplored World of South Indian Cuisine

**Shrishti Kulkarni**  
The Outside World

The Caltech Y regularly organizes Cultural Cuisine Tours across L.A., allowing people to try out new cuisines for a subsidized rate in the presence of a cultural leader, who understands the cuisine and can provide additional information about the food options. Recently, I helped them organize a Cultural Cuisine Tour to Annapurna Grill, specifically to explore South Indian cuisine. And in so doing, I found out just how little people actually knew about South Indian cuisine.

To answer a question I got very often on the trip, I don't think there's a blanket difference between South Indian food and other Indian food. Ostensibly, I am not creating the dichotomy in Indian food of all dishes falling neatly within the category of South Indian or North Indian. In fact, there is a plethora of Northeast Indian food that uses entirely different spices and ingredients, coastal food from middle-Indian regions like Goa and Maharashtra that have Portuguese influence and also use local ingredients, and basically every Indian state has its own sub-cuisine that is unique and local to the region. Point is, even saying South Indian cuisine is a bit of a generalization, but it does include similar dishes from the 5 South Indian states: Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. But that is not to say at all that each state—even down to the granularity of each city—has the same food.

Now, I also want to lay the context for both the Cultural Cuisine tour and this article. I think most people when they think of Indian food think of butter chicken, paneer tikka masala, saag paneer, or chana masala. And no hate to these, these are all incredibly delicious dishes from the Indian subcontinent. However, these

largely do derive from North Indian states, which means sub-cuisines like South Indian remain relatively undiscovered.

I'm here to talk about just a few of the most popular dishes in South Indian cuisine, especially dishes that you can find right here in Pasadena! There's a couple of restaurants whose dishes I will refer to repeatedly, namely Annapurna (929 E Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91106) and Bhanu's (7246 Rosemead Blvd, San Gabriel, CA 91775), and I can personally attest to the (relatively higher levels of) authenticity of these restaurants.

One of the perhaps more well-known South Indian dishes is the *dosa*. The closest analogy to it is a crepe made from fermented rice and/or lentils. *Dosas* are usually served with a side "dipping sauce" (?) called *sambar* (usually like a tomato soup ish), and a ground dip (?) called *chutney* (usually made of either mint or coconut or even sometimes tomato). Now one thing to note about almost all Indian food is that there are an enormous number of variations for each type of food. Increasing the thickness of the *dosa* and the steaming technique makes it a *set dosa*. Making the *dosa* batter with green gram makes it a *pesarattu*. Making it with semolina makes it a *rava dosa*. Making it with finger millet makes it a *ragi dosa*. And so on and so forth. Adding toppings such as vegetables to the *dosa* makes it an *uttapam*. Including a spicy almost-mashed potato filling makes it a *masala dosa*. In fact, the innumerable combinations for the toppings of the *dosa* has led to the common roadside "99 variety dosa" stalls that have some of the most surprisingly (and impressively) cohesive constructions of *dosas* that you will ever see — including dessert *dosas* with chocolate and sugar!

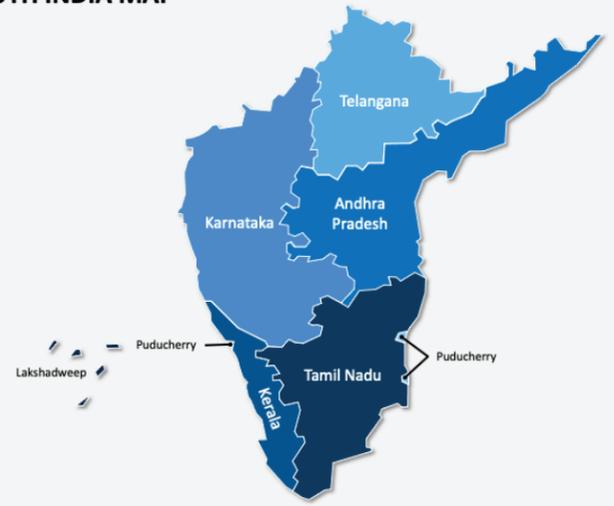
A similar staple in South Indian breakfasts is the *idli*. *Idli* is made from a batter similar to that of the *dosa*, which is fermented rice. It's a fluffy

almost-cake-like item that is also served with *sambar* and *chutney*. Sometimes, *idlis* are also served with a fried snack called a *vada*, which is kind of a savoury doughnut. *Idlis* are just as versatile as *dosas*, in terms of the shapes (look up *thatte idli*), their batter ingredients (there's a *rava idli* too!) and the sides they're served with.

Perhaps another South Indian dish you have probably heard of is *biryani*, a spicy rice dish with origins in various parts of India including Andhra Pradesh/Telangana. Now, *biryani* is not to be confused with *pulao*, another rice-based Indian dish (and there will actually be people coming after you if you confuse them). *Biryani* prides itself on being slow-cooked, essentially allowing the rice and vegetables (and usually, meat) to marinate in the spices. If you're looking for deep rich spices, *biryanis* are the way to go. The history of *biryani* is extremely interesting. It is believed to have originated in Persia, and then was brought to India as a royal delicacy. It is largely believed to have become popular in the reign of the Mughal Empire in India, which is why Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh (which was historically ruled by Nizams) has its own eponymous *biryani*. *Biryani* is usually served with side sauces *mirchi ka salan* (a spicy sauce) and *raita* (yogurt with cucumber, onions and tomatoes).

And there is so much I haven't even mentioned. I also want to clarify that I have classified these dishes as "South Indian", but they really can be found across the Indian subcontinent. There is so much to discover, and so much unique history and folklore that is tied to each dish. I hope you found something interesting in this article, and next time you go to an Indian restaurant, I urge you to step out of your comfort zone and try one of the dishes I've mentioned! I can (almost) guarantee you won't regret it.

SOUTH INDIA MAP



A map of South India (Sketchbubble).



A1 99 Variety Dosa Corner in Bangalore. Image uploaded to Justdial by Rajita.



Dosa (bottom left) and idli (top right). Image from "At the Corner of Happy & Harried."

## Caltech Faculty Named Laureates of the 2025 Wolf Prize

**Troy Zhang**  
News

Two members of the Caltech faculty have been named 2025 Wolf Prize laureates in recognition of their distinguished scientific accomplishments; the David Baltimore Professor of Biology and Bioengineering, Pamela Björkman, received the accolade in medicine, whereas the Frank J. Roshek Professor of Physics and Applied Physics, emeritus, Jim Eisenstein, received the prize in physics.

The Wolf Prize is a prestigious award that recognizes "outstanding achievements in advancing science and the arts for the betterment of humanity," and many of its laureates have continued to receive the Nobel Prize. Professors Björkman and Eisenstein join a list of illustrious Caltech faculty in receiving the Wolf Prize, including Benoit Mandelbrot, discoverer of the well-renowned Mandelbrot set,

and Rudy Marcus, who went on to receive the 1992 Nobel Prize in Chemistry seven years afterward.

Professor Björkman's research has primarily centered around viral proteins. From deducing the 3D structure of major histocompatibility complex (MHC) molecules, which facilitate T lymphocyte (or white blood cell) recognition of pathogens and are integral to the vertebrate immune system, to the study of various viral proteins and interactions, the Prize lauds Björkman for "pioneering innovative strategies to overcome viral defenses through novel antibody-focused approaches." In this direction, Björkman made breakthrough contributions to developing an effective immune response to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), as well as in outlining antigen-antibody interactions on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus spike protein, which in

turn played a significant role in developing effective immunizations against SARS-CoV-2.

Eisenstein's award cites his contribution to "advancing our understanding of the surprising properties of two-dimensional electron systems in strong magnetic fields." In addition to co-discovering the fractional quantum Hall state at filling fraction  $5/2$ , Professor Eisenstein's work in 2D electron systems and electron binding to cross-layer vacancies in bilayer electron systems also helped lead to the observation of Bose-Einstein condensation of excitons, bound states of electrons and electron holes.

Professor Eisenstein formally assumed emeritus status in 2018 but continues to actively support the undergraduate physics curriculum. Professor Björkman, meanwhile, continues to maintain a robust research program on important questions in viral immunology.

# Today in *Tech* History

## Student-Faculty Conference Still Showing Signs of Life

by Flora Ho

After all the hoopla, it may seem to y'all that the 1994 Student-Faculty Conference has just fizzled out, doomed to the same ineffective fate as many of its predecessors. NOT SO! Work continues to be done on redefining and refining the proposals presented at the conference, utilizing the many, many ideas and opinions that were voiced by the participants.

Just to keep you updated, here is a synopsis of the proposals that were presented, along with some general opinions that were expressed concerning these proposals.

### IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

The results of the survey handed out at registration second term revealed several important trends: 1) most of the students who had done research at either Caltech or JPL, which increased from 38% in the sophomore class to 86% in the senior class, found their jobs through independent search; 2) while students apparently pay visits to their advisors and professors primarily for administrative purposes (e.g. recommendations and drop/add cards), they refrain from additional interactions because they think that advisors/professors are too busy for them and that they might be imposing, or they felt intimidated. These are attitudes which, fortunately, can be changed. finally, 3) students definitely would be interested in participating in extra-academic activities with faculty, albeit admittedly responding YES is easier said than done. Using these (and additional) survey data, the committee proposed: 1) that there be instituted a freshman research seminar series offered by each division, in which faculty members speak to freshman at an introductory level about available research opportunities, thereby reducing the number of students who feel unprepared for, or unable to find, a research job; 2) a campus-wide "Caltech company picnic", a food- and activity-filled event to which all members of the Caltech community would be invited; 3) enhancing relations with advisors, first by bringing the conference results to the attention of division chairs, and perhaps later with proposing more concrete solutions, like advisee (or advisor) information sheets and prescribed per-term meetings between an advisors and their advisees, or perhaps altering the procedure of add/drop so that advisors could take on more than just a "rubber stamp" role. The general feeling was an accord that relations between faculty and students (particularly advisors/advisees) need to be brought to a more meaningful level; on this note, several committee members will be presenting the survey results and ideas generated in the conference to the faculty board.

### CORE CURRICULUM

Although a number of core curriculum revisions were considered by the Academic Policies Committee, one specific proposal was chosen as the most probable route for change. The "Fundamentals" proposal's basic philosophy stated that the "core

curriculum should provide a broad education with an emphasis in the sciences, allowing students to address the complex, interdisciplinary issues that are critical to future advances in science and technology." As such, "the core should be revised to include material from the life and earth/space sciences, revise core mathematics to better coordinate with other core courses, and include an independent project course." Consistent with these objectives, students would be encouraged not to specialize during their first two years at Caltech, with the ramification that each option would be structured such that no more than two years would be required to complete its program. The most far-reaching changes in the core would be the addition of a full year of lab (to expose students to basic laboratory techniques, as well as the use of computers for data acquisition, simulation, and analysis), courses to develop communication skills (culminating in "preparation of a literature review and proposal for an independent project"), and freshman seminar (in which researchers describe some aspect of their research to freshmen). While there was enthusiastic support for many of these proposed changes and the needs that the proposal addressed were recognized, virtually all the student responses from the audience reflected a reluctance to expand the core further. Ultimately, the faculty will make a decision as to how to implement the ideas that were presented in the Fundamentals proposal; students are encouraged to give input!

### QUALITY OF TEACHING

The Quality of Teaching committee presented a new teaching quality questionnaire that it hoped would standardize the teaching quality feedback procedure among the divisions, since currently each division hands out its own questionnaires and deals with returned questionnaires in different ways, from filing them away to be given to professors at their request, to making division chairs responsible for personally discussing the questionnaire results with each faculty member. This disparity obviously creates a high degree of variability with respect to the attention that teaching quality questionnaires receive among the different departments, and hence to the significance attached to them. Standardization of questionnaires would provide for a more reliable method of tabulating teaching quality feedback data. The committee also presented a "mid-term" questionnaire that would hopefully encourage a better response turnout by facilitating changes that would affect those filling out the questionnaires, rather than next year's students. While there was a good deal of support for the new questionnaires, there was also concern that the forms were too lengthy and detailed, and perhaps not specific enough in terms of addressing issues within a department. The questionnaires will be further investigated; the exploration of additional means of generating feedback by promoting student-faculty interactions may involve cooperation with the Improving Communications committee as well. Additionally, the committee will be looking at ways in which the CLUE might be improved.

April 8,  
1994

### HONOR SYSTEM

Six primary proposals were presented by this committee. First was the issue of confidentiality of student grades - since exams and homeworks are often easily accessible, removing the problem of students looking at others' work and scores can be as simple as writing scores in less obvious pages or returning papers individually. Second, it was agreed that oft-used areas of campus buildings should be open to students after-hours; to prevent access by unauthorized persons, a master key system should be created to allow access to hallways, reading rooms and classrooms, whereby students would receive a key upon entry into the institute that would be collected upon their departure. Third, honor system education of the community, from undergrads to grad students to faculty, and throughout the community, needs to be improved, for example through reevaluation of material taught to freshman (at frosh camp, BoC talks), more extensive presentation of information to TAs and other grads, annual Honor System presentations to new and visiting faculty, and publication of expanded Board of Control statistics. A fourth area of concern addressed the respective responsibilities of students, faculty, and TAs regarding collaboration policies - these include: students needing to seek clarification of vague collaboration policies, professors trying to be as clear and consistent as possible and considering several specific criteria (e.g., time limits, extent of collaboration, use of other texts, size of collaboration groups, etc.), and TAs making certain they are familiar with the policy, as well as the Honor System and the Board of Control. The last two recommendations included the institution of an Ethics class that would be required for all incoming students, and a survey among students (and possibly faculty) to determine the efficacy of the Honor System. Additional discussion and clarification will be necessary for all of the proposals, but significant support was voiced for most of the committee's ideas.

While it is true that many of these proposals will require a great deal of time and effort before any effects can be seen, the committees and I are hopeful that progress will be made. If you would like to follow up on any of these ideas, contact me at 683-9623 or floho@cco, and I'll put you in touch with the people who are really in charge! Thanks to everyone who supported and participated in the conference!

April 8, 1977



"I think by hiring me back, Caltech has shown that it is willing to proceed toward more fair treatment toward women."

Photo-Kevin Drum

## LaBelle Accepts Offer Of Humanities Position

by Kevin Drum

Dr. Jenijoy LaBelle has signed an agreement with Caltech and will resume teaching here next year it was announced Friday. Under the terms of the agreement, LaBelle will be given a Associate Professorship in the English Department for three years, at which time she will come up for tenure review.

She will have the option of going through either the ordinary tenure review process or a process specifically designed for her case. This process consists of a committee, selected by the provost, the faculty chairman, the head of the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, the division chairman, and her, which will choose her tenure review committee from among the tenured faculty of the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences.

In return, LaBelle has agreed not to pursue her case against Caltech which she had previously taken to the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The agreement came after two months of negotiations with the institute following the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on the Tenure/Promotion Case of Dr. Jenijoy LaBelle that she be offered a three-year position with tenure to be considered during the third year.

There was substantial feeling among the faculty that Caltech should have fought the case in court. However, according to Dr. R.E. Vogt, the chairman of the committee, none of the committee members, who studied the case intensively, felt that that would be a feasible course of action. The committee report said that court actions would be inadvisable because of "negative statistics regarding the employment of minorities at Caltech." Although the report stressed that Caltech is not guilty of sex discrimination, it noted that it might be difficult to persuade a jury that this was the case.

## "Justice Has Been Done, We Are Both Winners"

Dr. Jenijoy LaBelle issued the following statement upon her acceptance of a faculty position in the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences:

"I can think of no greater happiness than returning to Caltech. It has been a lengthy process, but because of my belief in the basic probity of the Institute, I never doubted that ultimately I would be re-instated. I bear no rancor toward the school or any individual, and I trust that the faculty and administration hold no resentment against me. I think we all wish to consign the controversy to oblivion and turn back to our true interests—teaching and research.

"I feel that both Caltech and I have won. Justice has been done and we are both winners.

"I am not going to pursue the whole issue of equal opportunity for women at Caltech. I hope that the government and Caltech can come to a just understanding so that both federal law and the high standards of Caltech are preserved. I stand ready to help either Caltech or any individual on this issue, but I am not going to be waving banners. Caltech seems ready to take positive steps for equal rights for women."

Acting President and Provost Robert Christy said that Caltech was "pleased to have signed an agreement with Dr. LaBelle," and was "looking forward to her return."

However, there was substantial feeling that the primary reason for avoiding court action was the fear of losing federal funds if Caltech were to lose. In addition, many people felt that the case posed serious questions of Caltech's self-determination and urged that the case be brought to court.

# The science of thought: philosophical insights into scientific practice

## Epicurus at Caltech: The Garden of Serenity and Science

### In Search of Meaning Beyond the Microscope

Camilla Fezzi  
Column

There is a question pulsing quietly beneath the surface of every lab bench, every line of code, every equation scribbled onto a whiteboard: Why are we doing this? Is it for discovery, for prestige, for the betterment of humanity—or something more elusive? At Caltech, we pride ourselves on pushing the boundaries of what is knowable, and we do, no one says the opposite. We decode the stars, manipulate the quantum, edit genes and simulate the brain. But in a world full of complexity, speed, and ambition, can knowledge make us wise? Can science teach us how to live well?

In the fourth century BCE, a Greek philosopher named Epicurus offered a radical answer. He did not build a temple to logic or a shrine to mathematics. He built a garden—a quiet, inclusive space where the pursuit of truth was not an end, but a path to serenity, freedom, and joy, like the one near Dabney Hall. In that garden, knowledge was not divorced from life but intricately woven into it. And philosophy was not an ivory-tower exercise, but a medicine for the soul.

Today, as we confront the challenges of a hyperconnected, hypercompetitive academic world, perhaps the Garden of Epicurus has something to teach us still. Perhaps, in a way, Caltech is its modern incarnation—a place where brilliance and solitude, ambition and stillness, knowledge and meaning, coexist.

#### The Garden: A New Philosophy of Living and Learning

When Epicurus opened his school in 306 BCE, he did something unheard of: he closed his back on the elitist schools of the Academy and the Lyceum and opened an inclusive space to all—women, slaves, foreigners, and the disenfranchised. The Garden was not a setting for argument or political power; it was a refuge of thought and friendship, a sanctuary for individuals who sought not glory, but peace of mind. His students did not just study—they lived together, sharing meals, ideas, and emotions in a kind of philosophical community. They read, wrote, and thought. They celebrated friendship. They sought wisdom not for its own sake, but because wisdom made for happiness.

At Caltech, where collaboration routinely trumps competition, where small classes forge intense intellectual intimacy, and where the pursuit of fundamental truths can be intensely personal, we can sense whispers of that ancient Garden. The lab is a kind of sanctuary, the relationship between advisor and advisee a philosophical dialogue, the late-night coding session a meditation on the meaning of life. Of course, unlike the tranquil Garden of Ep-

icurus, at Caltech the pursuit of happiness regularly involves sleep deprivation, subsisting on vending machine fare, and convincing yourself that debugging at 3 a.m. is just another form of "philosophical contemplation."

#### Philosophy as Therapy: The Fourfold Cure

For Epicurus, philosophy was not about abstract speculation—it was about healing. He believed humans suffer because they cling to false beliefs: fear of gods, fear of death, anxiety about pain, and the illusion that happiness is unreachable. To counter these, he proposed the tetrapharmakos (tetra=four) or fourfold remedy:

1. Don't fear the gods—they don't interfere with human affairs.
2. Don't fear death—it is simply the end of sensation.
3. Pain is manageable—either it is brief, or it is mild.
4. Happiness is attainable—if we live wisely and simply.

It's a kind of philosophical inoculation, a vaccine against existential despair. It invites us, even today, to reframe our fears. Although let's be honest, if Epicurus had ever tried debugging a finicky codebase at 4 a.m., he might have added a fifth remedy: "Don't fear the compiler—it just doesn't like you." It invites us, even today, to reframe our fears. How many students, researchers, postdocs, faculty—even Nobel laureates—are secretly burdened by the anxieties named by this philosopher? Epicurus' reminder is timely: true excellence requires inner peace. The mind cannot flourish in turmoil. The best science may come not from ambition, but from clarity, calm, and freedom from fear.

#### Clinamen and the Physics of Freedom

Epicurus borrowed atomism, the idea that the universe is made up of indivisible particles moving in a void. But he supplemented it with something brilliant: the clinamen, a nondeterministic deflection from the course of the atoms. The tiny, unguided swerve offers the opening to free will in an otherwise determined universe. This concept is not metaphorical. It hits very close to modern physics—specifically, quantum indeterminacy. Like Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the clinamen breaks the chain of necessity. The world is not a machine—it is a field of possibilities. Of course, if Epicurus had to deal with particle accelerators perpetually in need of repair, he might have just called the clinamen "equipment failure." Here at Caltech, we are taught uncertainty not just in quantum mechanics, but in neuroscience, in computation, and in climate science. We build models, but we know their limits. Epicurus instructs us that freedom—human freedom—lies in those limits. That the uncertainty of nature is not a flaw, but a feature that makes

agency, creativity, and moral responsibility possible.

#### Pleasure Redefined: The Science of Joy

Epicurus has often been mischaracterized as a hedonist. But his concept of pleasure was not sensual. His ideal pleasure was serenity, not thrills, relief from pain, not overindulgence. He distinguished between:

- Natural and necessary pleasures — the necessities like food, water, shelter, and friendship.
- Natural but unnecessary pleasures — luxuries like fine food or expensive clothes.
- Vacant and hollow pleasures — wealth, power, fame.

The first one alone leads to permanent joy. The rest, he warned, leads to dependency, anxiety, and pain. The judicious person chooses pleasures that bring harmony, not disturb it. This is particularly relevant to Caltech life. With a high-performance environment, it is simple to fall into over-working, over-achieving, and over-consumption. How many of us have worked all night to try to capture the "vain and empty pleasure" of a perfect dataset, or sacrificed a natural and necessary pleasure (such as sleep) on the altar of productivity? Epicurus offers a different model: a life of simplicity, reflection, and sustainable joy. One where happiness is not measured in accolades, but in moments of quiet fulfillment. Maybe, just maybe, the next time you're tempted to skip lunch to squeeze in another hour in the lab, you'll pause and think: What would Epicurus do? (Spoiler: He'd eat the sandwich. And probably take a nap afterward.)

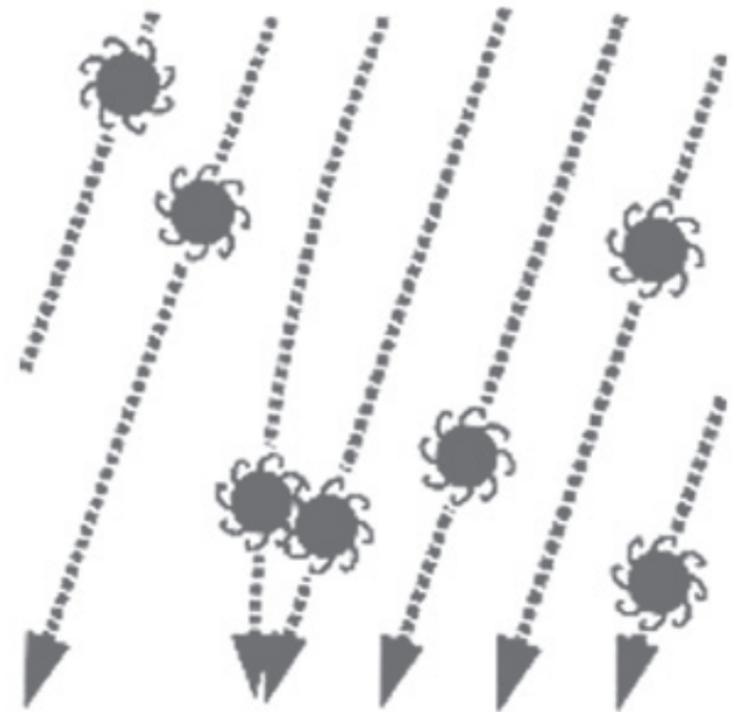
#### Friendship Over Fame: A Different Kind of Community

Epicurus believed friendship to be the highest good. Unlike romantic love or fame, friendship brings pleasure without fear, closeness without loss of autonomy. At his Garden, relations were egalitarian, not hierarchical or transactional. At Caltech, where teamwork is everything, where friendships are forged in the crucible of shared discovery, this ideal has resonance. The bonds we form in research groups, dorms, and seminars persist longer than our experiments. These are the true legacy of our stay here. Face it, nobody's going to be recalling that single problem set you aced, but they'll recall the time you and your classmates liberated the fire alarm with some "creative" lab experiment.

Epicurus would argue that friendship in and of itself is a practice of philosophy—a living of our ideals. In a world that prizes achievement, he reminds us that being good to one another is itself a kind of excellence. So maybe the next time a friend shows up at your door at 2 a.m. with a crisis over their thesis, you'll think of Epicurus, open the door, and offer them



The Philosopher's Garden, Athens, 1834 by Antal Strohmayer (1834).



A representation of clinamen, by Petra Tomljanovic.

a snack. Because, let's face it, snacks are the cornerstone of all great friendships.

#### Against Fear, Toward Wonder

Epicurus rejected superstition. He believed that knowledge of the natural world frees us from irrational fears. Thunderstorms, earthquakes, eclipses—these were not omens or punishments from the gods, but material happenings. Knowledge, he believed, frees us. This is perhaps where the comparison with Caltech is most fitting. Here, we want to know so that we can rid ourselves of ignorance, not so that we can cling to control. We don't fear the unknown—we go out there to explore it. Though let's get real, if Epicurus had ever sat through a 3-hour quantum mechanics lecture, he might have been somewhat intimidated by the unknown too. Epicurus encourages us to do more than merely explain phenomena. He asks us to take back our emotional lives from fear, to leave space for wonder without terror, for awe without anxiety. So, the next time your experiment goes wrong—or your code spews out an error message in what appears to be ancient Greek—call upon your inner

Epicurus. Don't panic. Instead, let curiosity drive. Who knows? Maybe the "error" is the beginning of a breakthrough (or, at the very least, a good joke to chuckle over later).

#### The Garden Is Still Alive

Epicurus was maligned for centuries. Christians called him heretic. Dante placed him in Hell. The Stoics dismissed him. But quietly, persistently, his ideas survived—in fragments, in letters, in the quiet corners of philosophy. And perhaps, without knowing it, we are living out his vision here at Caltech.

Not because we quote him or build gardens in his name. But because we pursue knowledge in a spirit of humility. Because we value collaboration over conquest, depth over display, meaning over noise.

"We are mortal by nature, but infinite through reason." — Epicurus

In a world chasing speed, scale, and spectacle, Epicurus offers a slower, saner horizon. One where science and serenity walk hand in hand. One where we are not just brilliant minds—but flourishing human beings. And perhaps, just perhaps, this is the most revolutionary idea of all.



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# Student Faculty Conference (SFC) and Inaugural Student Life & Experience Conference (SLEC) This Week

Jonathan Booker  
SLEC Chair

Two major conferences to shape student life at Caltech taking place this week aimed at enhancing both academic and non-academic aspects of student life. The biennial Student-Faculty Conference (SFC) will take place on **Thursday, April 10, 2025**, followed by the inaugural Student Life and Experience Conference (SLEC) on **Friday, April 11, 2025**. Both conferences will be held in Ramo Auditorium and are open to all members of the Caltech community.

## Student-Faculty Conference (SFC)

Held every two years, the SFC reviews and shapes Caltech's academic policies and curriculum. Planning begins a year prior, when the undergraduate Academics and Research Committee (ARC) appoints committees composed of students and faculty members. These committees evaluate current academic practices and present their findings during the conference. Following the SFC, each committee works to implement recommended changes and compiles their efforts into summary reports. This year, special topics include the **State of the Honor Code** and **Prerequisites and How Core Prepares Students for Major-specific Coursework**.

## SFC Schedule Thursday, April 10, 2025

### Morning Session

**9:30 am**  
Doors Open  
(Breakfast available outside Ramo Auditorium)

**9:45 am**  
Opening Remarks by Prof. Jennifer Jahner,  
Dean of Undergraduate Students

**10:00 am**  
State of the Honor Code

**11:00 am**  
Prerequisites and How Core Prepares  
Students for Major-specific Coursework

**12:00 pm**  
Conclusion of Morning Session

**12:30–1:30 pm**  
Lunch (served outside Ramo Auditorium)

### Afternoon Session

Option-specific discussions scheduled hourly between 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm. Visit [sfc.caltech.edu](https://sfc.caltech.edu) for specific times and locations.

## Student Life and Experience Conference (SLEC)

Inspired by insights from the *2022 Caltech Co-Curricular Group (C3) Final Report*, the Associated Students of the California Institute of Technology (ASCIT) Board of Directors established the SLEC to address the non-academic facets of student life. The inaugural conference aims to foster collaboration among students, faculty, and staff, emphasizing key areas such as student well-being, extracurricular activities, diversity and inclusion, mental health services, and campus relations. The ultimate goal is to formulate actionable recommendations that strengthen the Caltech community and improve the overall student experience.

## SLEC Schedule – Friday, April 11, 2025

### Morning Session

**8:30–9:00 am**  
Doors Open & Breakfast (outside Ramo Auditorium)

**9:00–9:30 am**  
Opening Remarks by Mason Smith (BS '09, Page), Alumnus, Trustee, and Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees Student Experience Committee

**9:30–10:15 am**  
Extracurriculars: Supporting student organizations, leadership development, and current state of extracurricular activities

**10:15–10:45 am**  
Experiential Learning & Professional Development: Aligning experiential programs with Caltech's educational mission

**10:45–11:00 am**  
Coffee Break

**11:00–11:30 am**  
Events: Streamlining support for student-led events

**11:30am–12:00 pm**  
Food: Improving sustainability, accessibility, and quality of dining services

**12:00–1:00 pm**  
Lunch Break (outside Ramo Auditorium)

### Afternoon Session

**1:00–1:30 pm**  
Admissions: Clarifying recent changes in admissions decisions and outreach strategies

**1:30–2:00 pm**  
Athletics & Recreation: Supporting athletes and enhancing community involvement

**2:00–2:30 pm**  
Health & Wellness: Increasing quality and accessibility of health services

**2:30–3:00 pm**  
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Accessibility: Facilitating student advocacy and improving campus climate

**3:00–3:15 pm**  
Coffee Break

**3:15–3:45 pm**  
First-Year Experience: Strengthening orientation programs and support systems for new students

**3:45–4:15 pm**  
Housing & Residential Life: Examining and improving aspects of residential life and the house system.

**4:15–5:00 pm**  
Campus Relations: Enhancing relationships and trust between students, faculty, and staff

**5:00–5:30 pm**  
Closing Remarks: Summary of next steps, acknowledgments, and conclusion

**5:00–7:30 pm**  
SFC/SLEC Community Dinner: All students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests are invited to a celebratory dinner on Olive Walk, organized in collaboration with CDS and Tom Mannion, to acknowledge everyone's contributions to these important conferences.

Additional information can be found at [slec.caltech.edu](https://slec.caltech.edu)

# Caltech Wildlife: The Migrators

Jieyu Zheng  
Column

Spring at Caltech is a season of rapid transformation. Step away for just a few days, and you'll return to a campus bursting with changes: the once-bare branches are now decorated with colorful flowers. The drastic changes aren't limited to flora – migrating wildlife also contributes to the seasonal dynamics.

Migration is one of nature's greatest mysteries. California lies in the heart of a major migration corridor through the Americas, making Caltech a special stopover for many migrators. Take the monarch butterfly, America's national butterfly, which passes through Caltech on its long journey. The monarchs we see are just one of the many generations completing a migration that spans thousands of miles—a relay race across vast time and space.

As students return from spring break, some of Pasadena's winter bird residents prepare for their own departure. For example, the cheerful chirps of yellow-rumped warblers, a familiar winter

soundtrack on campus, will trickle out as they head north for the breeding season.

One day, while walking past the shrubs near Broad Café, I noticed a sparrow darting in and out. I casually snapped a few photos and shared them on a local birding forum by the Pasadena Audubon Society, which, to my surprise, triggered puzzled discussion among even the most experienced birders. Eventually they identified it as a clay-colored sparrow—a species well outside its usual range (the Midwest). For a moment, this little bird had made Caltech a stop on its long journey. Who would have thought that a random bush in the city could host such rare travelers?

Yet, migration could be filled with sad accidents, as one of the biggest threats birds face in cities is window collisions. Birds traveling at high speeds might mistake reflective glass for the sky, and such mistakes could have devastating consequences.

Last spring, as I was walking past the Red Door Café around lunchtime, I nearly stepped on a small brown bird lying in the middle of the busy courtyard. It lay belly-up on the hot pave-



ment and was unnoticed by the stream of passerbys. I rushed inside the Cafe for a brown sandwich bag and some tissue paper. As I wrapped the bird in my hands, its tiny black eyes flickered open for a second and shut tight, and it slipped into unconsciousness.

With the help of my friends in the biology lab, I got a pair of latex gloves and placed the bird in a quiet and dark space—a mixing bowl covered with a piece of cardboard—to give it time to recover. As I looked at it closely, I gasped at its deli-

cate feathers, fine as threads from a miniature harp. It was a Swainson's Thrush, an immigrant from South America making its way north for the breeding season. Imagine traveling thousands of miles only to be knocked out by an invisible wall!

Fortunately, after a few hours of rest, my thrush patient regained its strength, fluttered its wings, and continued its journey. But many birds aren't so lucky. Window collisions kill more than **a billion** birds each year in the United States

alone. I have personally witnessed at least four such incidents on campus, and friends have reached out after finding stunned birds lying on the ground. Each time I picked up a tiny fragile body—light as if it was a sigh of nature—I felt a heavy weight in my heart.

If you ever come across a stunned bird on campus, you can help. Contact the Pasadena Humane Society's Wildlife Hotline at (626) 792-7151 for instructions and resources. A simple intervention could save a life.



Oct 19 2024 ScrubT



Oct 06 2024 ScrubT



Oct 06 2024 ScrubT

All photos courtesy of Jieyu Zheng.

## Study Abroad

continued from page 1

took over the summer.

Beyond the idyllic summer weekends, I worked in a new lab that had a refreshingly different environment from my Caltech lab. I enjoyed many aspects of the academic community at MIT, such as attending local talks at the Boston Protein Design and Modeling Club, which is open to academics and industry people alike. I attended group meetings across labs and learned so much from members of my own lab, who were often co-advised with faculty in different departments. I loved the project I was working on and felt that my technical and communication skills were growing as the product of trying out a new research environment.

Many Caltech students already pursue internships off-campus, so I don't think I have to do much to convince my fellow students that doing a summer away from Caltech is not only fun but valuable for career growth. For students who are interested in research opportunities, I would highly encourage you to take advantage of an off-campus SURF.

Many Caltech students don't appreciate the fact that SURF is one of the most well-funded and broad undergraduate research programs in the country - Student Faculty Programs funds hundreds of Caltech and non-Caltech students to do research over the summer, while other universities have much more competitive programs that can only fund a handful of students. As a Caltech student, you have a much higher chance of receiving funding for a SURF than for an NSF REU or Amgen Scholarship, which are geared towards students at non-research universities. Even equivalent programs like MIT UROP limit their students to only research at MIT, and won't fund research at other institutions. So in short, if you aren't already applying to an internship off-campus, consider doing an off-campus SURF to gain a fresh perspective on your field.

After the summer, I took a huge leap and flew to Europe to start my study abroad experience. I applied to study at the University of Edinburgh in early January last year because I wanted to try this unique opportunity that I knew would be difficult to replicate in graduate school or working life. I had never been to Scotland before and was vastly surprised by the rich culture, complex history,

and vibrant city life. Studying in Edinburgh was a profoundly reorienting and eye-opening experience in my undergraduate time.

First, while the course load is much lighter than at Caltech, there are still many enriching academic opportunities. The classes I took pertaining to my major were Biological Chemistry 2 and Data-Driven Chemistry. At Caltech, I have a concentration in biochemistry, so I thought I would know most of the topics in Biological Chemistry 2, but I was surprised to find that the Edinburgh system of teaching chemistry is so divergent from the Chemistry core at Caltech. For example, I was able to learn the basics of inorganic chemistry and ligand field theory applied to enzymes. While I haven't taken inorganic chemistry at Caltech because I was intimidated by its distance from my interests, this class reframed this essential chemistry material in the context of proteins, making it much more accessible to me. Overall, I found the pace of the courses to highly emphasize self-study, and because there is more free time, I found many opportunities to delve into topics independently.

I also took two humanities/social sciences courses, which were Pre-modern East Asian History and Creating Edinburgh. Both classes were unique from anything that is offered at Caltech. Pre-modern East Asian History allowed me to engage critically with a central piece of my Chinese heritage that is not offered at Caltech. For my final project, I explored the historical role and critical accounts of women authors in medieval China and Japan.

Creating Edinburgh is a multimedia, interdisciplinary course that explores different aspects of the city through walking tours and discussions. I had very eye-opening experiences with the "Decolonising Edinburgh" topic, which discussed the history of slavery in Scotland. I found these perspectives to be profoundly different from those I was exposed to growing up in the US. I even attended the Minister's Questions session in the Scottish Parliament, where I was able to get a glimpse into the structure of a multi-partisan government and the complex relationship between Scotland, the greater UK, and the EU. These experiences and discussions were deeply enriching for my understanding of European politics.

Next, student accommodation in Edinburgh was also a

refreshing experience. We lived in Kincaid's Court, a flat-based dorm with no meal plan. This was an excellent practice in managing my time and meals just like if I was living in my own apartment, all good experience for graduate school and beyond. My flat was very friendly and fun; I held a flat Thanksgiving dinner to introduce them to an American tradition. Speaking with and understanding the experiences of UK students, other study abroad students, and students of many majors has taken me far outside the Caltech bubble.

By far, the most fulfilling thing about my study abroad experience is living in a new city. Because of the relatively lighter workload, I got the chance to explore new and old hobbies such as hiking, climbing, and cooking. Every weekend I did something different: a day trip to Sterling Castle, window shopping on Princes Street, hiking in the Pentlands, walking along Portobello Beach, or even taking a trip to Isle of Skye. Scotland had so much to offer that I didn't expect, and I loved the serene countryside and living in the heart of the old city, everything accessible by foot or bus. I always found the car-centric component of Los Angeles to be the limiting factor in my ability to explore. But in Edinburgh, I was always finding novel things to do every week, whether it was visiting a craft or farmers market next to Edinburgh Castle or finding an exclusive live music pub. Compared to Los Angeles and SoCal (of which I am a native), it was a literal breath of fresh air with low air pollution and frequent rains.

Studying abroad is very different from being at Caltech. I have highlighted some of the things that have been fun about being abroad, but not everything is easy. For example, I found it more difficult to find friends beyond my flat in the broader Edinburgh community. It is not typical to work together to create study groups in Edinburgh, and it took special effort to join clubs to find social groups. I've become grateful for the close-knit house community we have at Caltech, outfitted with constant social events, regular dinners, and house resources.

As I alluded to before, the lighter course load was a welcome reprieve at first, but I had to adjust to doing practice problems on my own without the pressure of grades to keep up with the material. Slacking off too much would lead to severe under-preparedness for

the final exam in December. I felt that I learned better under constant feedback so that I understood my weaknesses in the material as the course progressed, over unsupervised learning with my grades only counting on one final. So in some crazy way, I also missed the learning style employed at Caltech - I found that you get what you put in, and the more effort I put into my learning, the more I would grow and thrive in my classes.

My six months away from Caltech were an adventure. The work-life balance I attained abroad not only increased the quantity of my new experiences but the enjoyment and excite-

ment I brought to my studies and research. Living abroad and away from Caltech has also given me a much-needed perspective on my senior year: on the one hand, I've gained eye-opening experiences outside of the Los Angeles bubble, and on the other, I've learned to appreciate the community and curriculum that I have here. As I approach the end of my time at Caltech, I've been able to reflect on the things I've built in my community and my personal and academic growth. I have only been able to gain this refreshed perspective on my time here, due to my time away, and would highly recommend it to any Caltech student.



## Tuberculosis Is the World's Deadliest Disease

Winter Pearson  
News

### Tuberculosis Is the World's Deadliest Disease

Every year, a million people die of a curable disease. Why haven't you heard about it?

Last year, tuberculosis killed more people than malaria, war, and murder combined. More people than COVID-19 or HIV/AIDS. One-quarter of all people alive today currently have tuberculosis, and every twenty seconds, someone dies from it.

Tuberculosis is the most deadly disease in the world. It is also curable. So, why haven't you heard of it, and why do people keep dying from it?

### Living With Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is one of the oldest human infectious diseases we know of—it has been with us for as long as we have been humans. We have called it White Death, consumption, phthisis, and dozens more names besides. It is in our bones; in our history.

Pasadena, California, where Caltech is situated, was first founded as a tuberculosis colony, where the warm climate was thought to provide a reprieve. At the time, in the late 1800s, it was estimated that 90% of people in Europe had tuberculosis. There was no cure. It was a terrifying, emaciating disease that killed with abandon. Airborne, it initially resembles the flu before evolving to consume and emaciate the body with terrifying effectiveness.

Today, California still has twice the national rate of infection: 2,000 people will die this year in our state from tuberculosis. But internationally, more than a million people will die this year. This is not a disease

of the past. Why do we treat it like one?

### Dying From Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is an unusual disease.

It is incredibly difficult to treat due to its uniquely complex outer coating of fatty acids (which the *M.* in the name of *M. tuberculosis* bacteria refers to: "mycobacterium" are those coated with mycolic acids). Without help, your immune system is able to isolate and contain the bacteria, but not kill them, forming clumps of immune cells and bacteria called granulomas. This is a latent tuberculosis infection, which doesn't produce symptoms but remains carefully balanced on a knife's edge.

However, if your immune system falters, this latent infection can spiral rapidly out of control into an active tuberculosis infection. Today, about 10% of people with latent infections will eventually develop active infections. The people most susceptible to this are those with weakened immune systems: think malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, or cancer treatment.

Therefore, tuberculosis is—by its very nature—a disease of inequality. When someone is already struggling, when their immune system can no longer handle the situation it is in: that is the moment where tuberculosis strikes. Worse yet, tuberculosis treatment is a much more difficult endeavor than with a typical bacterial infection. Even in the best case, it requires at least 4-6 months of ongoing antibiotic treatment to resolve. Not only does poverty make you more likely to get tuberculosis, it then also makes it more likely that you cannot afford consistent access to medi-

cal care to treat it—another layer of inequality.

Adding to the horror has been the modern boom of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), which is unable to be treated with the standard cocktail of antibiotics. Access to these treatments is much more difficult and expensive, and these illnesses can take years to treat. Above all, they are haunted by the simple possibility of the development of a tuberculosis strain that cannot be treated by any of our antibiotics.

Finally, we still do not have a fully effective tuberculosis vaccine. What we do have was developed a hundred years ago, and unless you were born in or have traveled to a country with high rates of tuberculosis, you almost certainly have not received it due to those same concerns about its inefficacy. Inadequate investment has been put towards replacing it with a better one.

Tuberculosis, therefore, currently ravages the Global South while being almost forgotten in the Global North. More than 95% of tuberculosis deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries worldwide. But diseases know nothing about our borders, and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis is a looming threat to us all.

### Treating Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis in the US did not disappear by accident. Rather, in the 1950s, the US began pioneering a highly effective form of tuberculosis management called STP: Search, Treat, and Prevent. If you were to wander down the streets, you would have seen doctors driving vans with signs reading: "Stop Two Minutes To Save Your Life: Free Chest X-Rays for Tuberculosis."

This is Step 1, Search. If you were diagnosed with tuberculosis, you would have received free treatment: Step 2, Treat. Finally, your friends, family, and close contacts would be given the same opportunity as well: Step 3, Prevent. This system is so effective that, in a single year in the 1970s, implementation of Search, Treat, and Prevent programs cut tuberculosis rates by 70% in a town in Alaska.

This is the answer to why you no longer have to worry about tuberculosis in the US: because we lowered the number of cases with Search, Treat, and Prevent programs, and we treated the remaining cases with cocktails of antibiotics. There is no reason this same program cannot be taken globally.

It took effort and money, certainly, but much less than many other comparable programs, and its effectiveness has been definitively proven: simply look at how quickly Americans have forgotten tuberculosis. Now, we have to commit to bringing this work worldwide: to living in a world where nobody has to die from this preventable, curable disease.

### Ending Tuberculosis

The United Nations has set the ambitious goal of ending tuberculosis by 2030, requiring an estimated \$250 billion of funding committed worldwide. Due to the intensive nature of tuberculosis treatment and research, most of this funding must come from the governmental level, not nonprofits. Unfortunately, current funding levels are woefully inadequate, with only 26% of the necessary funding committed by countries worldwide.

This is despite the fact that tuberculosis treatment is a re-

markably effective financial investment. For every dollar put into tuberculosis treatment, an estimated \$31 is saved, considered by researchers to be "exceptional value-for-money."

Indeed, even at the current level of insufficient funding, over the past two decades, global tuberculosis prevention efforts have saved 79 million lives. For the average American family that pays about \$20,000 in taxes each year, your contribution to this has been a mere five dollars per year. And yet, even with so little, you have personally helped with saving those lives. Imagine what we could do with slightly more.

However, as I write this, those same aid programs are not gaining funding; in fact, they are in severe jeopardy. It is estimated that the cuts to USAID since January 24th have already caused the death of more than 10,000 people from tuberculosis. If funding is not restored, in the next five years, we expect to see two million unnecessary, preventable deaths from tuberculosis.

If you find this horrifying, you are not alone. Personally, I endorse the work done by the non-profit organization Partners In Health, whose website provides templates for phone calls and emails to your congress members, as well as opportunities to donate to their advocacy work. Not only have they received Charity Navigator's highest rating for 18 years in a row, but they are also traveling to Washington D.C. on April 9th to advocate in person for greater tuberculosis funding. I will be in D.C. with them.

Tuberculosis is not a disease of the past. It is a disease of our shared present. Join me in ending it.

## A Retrospective of a Hollywood Portrait Legend

Emily Yu  
Culture

"For stars from Bette Davis to Angelina Jolie, the ultimate rite of passage since the 1950s has been sitting for the legendary Don Bachardy," Michael Slenkske wrote for *The Hollywood Reporter*. On Saturday, over 100 works of art and archival materials from Bachardy's life and career will be on display at The Huntington's MaryLou and George Boone Gallery.

One of L.A.'s most acclaimed portraitists, Bachardy's works convey a sense of intimacy and capture his subjects with remarkable likeness. While his work includes portraits of celebrated figures from art, literature, and entertainment, Bachardy also drew people important to his life, including his lovers.

Born in 1934 in Los Angeles, Bachardy developed a love for Hollywood glamor through his mother Glade, who regularly took him and his older brother, Ted, to the movies. This early captivation with celebrities, and Bachardy's attentive observation of their faces, would later shape the direction of his artistic career. In his book, *Stars in My Eyes*, Bachardy stated,

"I'm convinced that my interest in looking at people came directly from gazing, when I was very young and impressionable, at closeups of movie actors several hundred times larger than life."

Bachardy was 18 when his brother Ted introduced him to Christopher Isherwood. Despite a 30-year age gap, Bachardy and Isherwood bonded quickly and were a couple until Isherwood's death in 1986. Isherwood, both an artistic muse and a steadfast supporter of Bachardy's work, is featured in thousands of portraits made during their 33-year relationship.

Reflecting on his support, Bachardy stated: "With [Isherwood's] encouragement and support, emotional as well as financial, I gained enough confidence in my talent to become a dedicated full-time artist." His relationship with Isherwood, a screenwriter with deep connections in Hollywood, gave him access to a distinguished circle of artists and entertainers. As a result, Bachardy's early fascination with Hollywood icons came full circle when stars he admired began visiting his studio. In 1973, Bette Davis—whose image Bachardy had once copied from magazines—

sat for a portrait. Upon seeing the portrait, Davis quipped, "Yup, that's the old bag."

"My work with well-known people is only a small percentage of my total output, but I tend to write more about those sittings because they are much more likely to be demanding, even frustrating," wrote Bachardy. "I am often under pressure from insufficient working time and a variety of obstacles, including my own awe of the sitter."

Bachardy generally completes his portraits in a single session lasting two to six hours, working in close proximity to his subjects with an intense gaze. "The experience of a sitting, of being alone with another person while looking intently at him or her, often for several hours, is like no other I know," stated Bachardy. "That experience is the real subject of my work." Utilizing graphic and ink wash, and later acrylic, his works are created with quick, expressive lines and shading. He often leaves parts of the body only loosely rendered. "The departure of my sitter is like the breaking of a spell. I never alter any detail of the work I've done once the sitting has ended."

Covering over seven decades,

"Don Bachardy: A Life in Portraits" will present the artist's work chronologically and thematically, highlighting pieces

from each decade of his career. The exhibition will be on view through August 4, 2025.



Marilyn Monroe and Don Bachardy, 1951. Credit: The Huntington.

# ASCIT 2025 Spring Elections: Candidate Statements

## ASCIT PRESIDENT (1 CANDIDATE)



ASHLYN ROICE

Hey, everyone!

I'm Ashlyn Roice, a current junior and Lloydie studying Computer Science and Information & Data Science. You may know me as the current Social Director of ASCIT. This year, I am honored to be running for the ASCIT presidency.

The role of the ASCIT President is a huge one, and its significance is not lost on me. I see the role of the presidency as one that is for the students, by a student. As the next ASCIT President, I hope to be your advocate and your biggest supporter for anything you might need, from requesting more snacks at Red Door's C-Store to expanding wellness services on campus.

I have served on ASCIT for the past two years - one year ago as Social Media Manager and this year as Social Director.

- During my sophomore year, I was ASCIT Social Media Manager, where I created a multitude of posts and posters for various ASCIT events, increasing student engagement with ASCIT. I also went above and beyond my position and created the annual ASCIT Valentines event, creating and organizing every station, finalizing the budget, creating promotional material, and setting up and taking down the event. I continued this event this year as well to great success, and will continue to ensure its facilitation in future years.
- This year, I was ASCIT Social Director, and have been dedicated to ideating unique and exciting events to celebrate our students and provide an escape from the intensity of Caltech.
  - I organized this year's ASCIT Halloween alongside our first-ever Resource Fair, inviting offices such as CCID, Title IX, and SWS to participate in distributing candy and talking about their services. Along with the Halloween event, I completed a small collaboration with the Caltech Hispanic and Latino Association (CHLA) educating people about Día de los Muertos through educational pamphlets and by serving Pan de Muerto.
  - I created a new event this year - the Global Holiday Celebration, where the CHLA; Caltech Chabad Club; Caltech Asian-American, Pacific Islander, and Desi American Club; and Caltech Christian Fellowship clubs created booths on the Olive

Walk to teach others about cultural holiday celebrations such as Three Kings' Day, Christmas, Lunar New Year, and Hanukkah. This event fostered cross-cultural understanding amongst students as they experienced various holiday traditions through food and activities.

- Currently, I'm organizing ASCIT Formal at the Madame Tussauds' Hollywood Rooftop and Bar. I initiated the creation of a collaborative playlist for the event and am working to create a playlist to ensure everyone feels represented in what is played at Formal.
- My work as ASCIT Social Director and ASCIT Social Media Manager has allowed me to connect with offices including Title IX, CCID, OSE, and CALE.

As your president, I want to prioritize student needs, especially concerning cultural competency and inclusion, in all facets of student life, from Rotation to the variety of classes offered. Here are some of the platforms I wish to pursue.

- **Creating a more inclusive Rotation and developing new protocols to handle Rotation violations.** Our current system of Rotation tends to exclude international students and students of color who are more susceptible to judgement and bias. With the IHC, I will work to create a more inclusive system for Rotation. I will also work to create a centralized system to better handle Rotation violations through the CCID, Title IX, and Conduct Affairs offices.
- **Ensuring professors follow CASS recommendations and guidelines.** Students with disabilities are often not heard by their professors and not given the accommodations they need to succeed at Caltech. With the ARC, I will work to remediate these issues, advocating for these students along with the CASS and Title IX offices to ensure every student receives their necessary accommodations. I will also work to ensure that all lectures for all classes are recorded or posted in some way to ensure every student, no matter what, can attain the education they need to succeed in their classes.
- **Diversifying course offerings at Caltech.** Our English department is severely lacking in a diverse curriculum, our CS department deprioritizes project-based courses, and our EE department lacks a course on antennas. These are just a few examples of where Caltech is lacking in various educational aspects. I'll work with next year's ARC Chair and department heads to ensure that Caltech works to offer a more well-rounded educational experience for all. I will put special focus on the lack of cultural representation in the English classes offered. Caltech is beginning to offer more diverse

classes, even offering an African-American literature class, Asian-American literature class, and Native American history class this term. I will work to ensure that this progress is continued into the next year.

- **Enhancing student wellness services at Caltech.** Student wellness is intrinsically tied to academic performance, but Caltech lacks infrastructure to provide academic support for students undergoing mental health struggles. Therefore, I will work with the ARC, SWS, and CASS offices to create a centralized platform for students who might be struggling with mental health, so they might receive Care Team referrals and discuss accommodations for professors. Additionally, I will endeavour to improve current wellness services at Caltech, taking feedback on our virtual healthcare systems and implementing improvements as seen fit. Finally, I will continue our line of work with the SWS to hire more diverse therapists and create new events for midterms and finals distressing.
- **Building up existing programs of support for athletes.** Athletics is an integral component of our school spirit, yet the department is consistently losing funding and student athletes are lacking in support systems. I will work with SWS and Athletics to build up student committees which ensure that student athletes are well supported in terms of respect for accommodations for injuries and treatment on teams.
- **Obtaining company grants to hold larger events (e.g. Techstock).** This year, ASCIT could not hold Techstock due to a lack of funding. However, other schools hold concerts through corporate sponsorships. I will work with next year's Treasurer and the CALE office to create company sponsorship guides for ASCIT and all clubs on campus. Through these efforts, I will work my hardest to bring Techstock back next year.
- **Creating the most transparent ASCIT BoD possible.** While we have our meeting minutes and town halls, I want to make more efforts to make ASCIT as transparent as possible. I will release monthly reports of progress and more detailed meeting notes, both published in the Tech, during my tenure as president. Additionally, I will host office hours where anyone in the student body is invited to discuss issues they are facing on campus or something they would like to see changed on campus.

As a student leader, I take immense pride in my ability to be able to listen to the student population and try to create what they want to see. Caltech is home to some of the brightest and most interesting people on the planet, and it brings me joy to be able to make your student experience a little more vibrant.

I have been incredibly honored to serve on ASCIT for the last 2 years. Being your Social Director has been one of the most fulfilling experiences I've ever had. I promise that as your ASCIT President, I will be your fiercest advocate and supporter. I hope that you will put your trust in me for the next year to take on this role.

If you have any questions or even just want to chat, feel free to email me at aroice@caltech.edu, or message me on Instagram (@ash.roice) or on Messenger. I look forward to hopefully serving you all next year.

Love,

Ash "third time's the charm" - lyn Roi" or i guess it's third year's the charm?" ce

## ASCIT SOCIAL DIRECTOR (1 CANDIDATE)



IVY BRAINARD

My name is Ivy Brainard, and I am running to be your next ASCIT Social Director. A little bit about myself: I'm a full member of Fleming House and a sophomore majoring in Computer Science and Business, Economics, and Management (BEM). I'm also a sprinter on the track team, where my main events are the 100m and 200m dash. Outside of Caltech, I love to travel and hangout with my friends.

I chose to run for this position because I want to help plan events for the student body. Caltech is a challenging school, and I want to give others the opportunity to relax, socialize, and get to know one another. The close-knit community here at Caltech—especially with our current strong ASCIT student body—has helped me balance the demanding environment, and I want to extend that same support to other students.

Recently, I've had the opportunity to work closely with our current Social Director, Ashlyn Roice. Through this experience, I've been involved in planning several key campus events, including ASCIT Valentines, Alternative Interhouse, ASCIT Formal, and more. These experiences have given me firsthand insight into the level of detail, coordination, and effort required to bring these events to life. The skills I've gained so far have definitely prepared me to successfully plan future events.

In addition to my involvement with ASCIT, I have experience planning and organizing events through other roles. At Caltech, I've been part of the Fleming Ath Team, where I helped coordinate Ath events for Fleming House, organize interhouse sports, and recruit participants for various activities. In high school, I served on student government, where I was responsible for planning all of our major social events.

Outside of school, I also vol-

unteer at Kitten Rescue, a local cat shelter in Los Angeles. There, I not only help care for the cats on a monthly basis, but I also assist with organizing monthly adoption events. These experiences have helped me develop strong organizational, communication, and leadership skills, all of which have prepared me to take on the role of Social Director.

Lastly, as Social Director, I have many new ideas for future events. These include student de-stressing events such as wellness nights, as well as more interactive social events like additional cultural celebration nights to help build stronger connections across the student body. Additionally, I want to ensure that I represent all of you. To do that, I will regularly share feedback forms for upcoming events and provide many opportunities for students to share their perspectives. I want to hear all ideas and feedback so I can continually improve and help create a more inclusive, enjoyable environment for everyone.

I would be honored to serve as your ASCIT Social Director next year. I am super excited for what is next! If you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to reach out to me! My email is ibrainar@caltech.edu. My Insta is @ivy.brainard. Additionally, feel free to reach out to me in Messenger or come up to me in person! Thank you!!

## ASCIT DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS (1 CANDIDATE)



HANNAH ROSE

Hey Caltech,

I'm Hannah Rose, a current junior in Ricketts / Venerable & Dabney House studying Physics (and any side quests I can fit into my schedule), and I'm running to be your next ASCIT Director of Operations.

During my time at Caltech, I've worked in a variety of roles across campus. As a member of the PMA Student Advisory Board and a Ricketts House Social VP, I've worked on events planning and reinforcing alumni engagement. Working with the CubeSat Club / CAOS, I've helped secure funding and strengthen professor involvement in student-led projects, broadening the range of opportunities available to our creative student body. On the Food Committee, I've helped relay student feedback to CDS to ensure students are better supported during their time here (I hope everyone had fun at *Hannah's Diner* last Midnight Madness). I've also worked to resurrect the Cheese Society to promote the campus's culture of unique and fun events and traditions. I want to bring this experience to ASCIT to help lower the barriers preventing students from manifesting their ideas in the real world.

As for my priorities as Director of Operations, a few points

come to mind:

- Supporting student access to campus maker spaces to bolster student creativity. Many peer institutions have much more extensive resources for prototyping and building small student projects. I would work to expand these resources on our campus, such as continuing efforts to create the screen-printing room and supporting the reopening of the student shop.
- Improving resources for student clubs to connect with sources of funding. I would work to streamline the process for groups to explore on-campus sources of funding as well as support their search for off-campus resources.
- Supporting student publications. Of course, we love our student newspaper, *The California Tech*, but I would love to also increase the emphasis on the other student publications: helping the yearbook, *The Big T*, catch up from the post-COVID backlog, refining *the little t* to help new students adjust and succeed on campus, and revitalizing student creative writing such as *the Totem*.

Caltech students have a wonderful variety of talents, and I believe that providing the space for them to share these with others is what makes this Institute so special. Accordingly, I'd also love to hear from all of you about what you would like to see for Caltech student life—my Messenger and email [hrose@caltech.edu](mailto:hrose@caltech.edu) are always open for questions or feedback.

Best,  
Hannah Rose

## BOC SECRETARY (2 CANDIDATES)



JUSTIN LEE

Hello everyone! My name is Justin Lee, and I am a sophomore in Dabney Hovse studying mathematics. It is my privilege and honor to run for BoC secretary for the upcoming year. As a BoC representative, I have witnessed firsthand how critical of a role the BoC and its leadership play in upholding the honor code. The chair and the secretaries perform an integral part of the process that moves cases forwards, ensures a judicious procedure, and serves to protect the Caltech community. As a BoC secretary, I pledge to do my utmost to preserve the sanctity of the student-run process. During this time where we have witnessed an erosion in trust in the community's affirmation of the honor code, particularly between faculty and students, and during a time where major changes have been implemented to the BoC at the behest of the faculty, I believe that building trust in the BoC's operations and upholding its independence ought to be our top priorities.

I believe that I have the experience and the temperament

to serve in the leadership of the BoC. During my time on the BoC, I have been one of the most active representatives and have sat on many cases. I feel that I am motivated to step up and shoulder the responsibilities of the secretary. I am also mindful of the obligations towards confidentiality and professionalism that members of the BoC are expected to respect. Finally, I believe that I would work well with administrators to help advance the goals of the BoC and educate the student body about the honor code while ensuring that honor code violation cases are managed adequately. It is my honor to ask you to entrust me with your vote.



AURELIA KUESTER

Hello everyone! My name is Aurelia Kuester, and I'm a sophomore running to be your next BoC Secretary. Over the past year, I've served as an At-Large BoC rep, during which I've sat on a number of cases, gaining valuable insight into the BoC process and demonstrating my fairness, impartiality, and integrity.

I believe the Honor Code is a critical cornerstone of the Caltech identity as it fosters a collaborative environment and allows for many important privileges, such as take-home exams, collaboration on sets, and after-hours building access. However, in recent years, we've seen a decline in faculty trust in the Honor Code, leading to more in-person exams and stricter collaboration policies. As BoC Secretary, I will work to rebuild faculty confidence in the Honor Code while continuing to ensure that students have a strong voice in the BoC process.

Through my involvement with the BoC, ARC, SAAC, and several other campus committees, I've gained extensive experience working with both faculty and campus administration. I believe this experience, combined with my dedication, fairness, and integrity, uniquely qualifies me to serve as secretary. As BoC Secretary, I will be committed to protecting and upholding the Honor Code and the integrity of the BoC process. I would be grateful for the opportunity to serve as BoC Secretary and would truly appreciate your support.

## BOC UNAFFILIATED REP (1 CANDIDATE)



CAMILLA FEZZI

CAMILLA FEZZI

I am honored to be nominated for the position of BoC Unaffiliated Representative. The BoC plays a crucial role in upholding the Honor Code and fostering a fair academic environment. If elected, I will work to represent the student body with integrity and impartiality, ensuring transparency and trust in all proceedings. Thank you for this opportunity to serve the community.

## ASCIT TREASURER (3 CANDIDATES)



BISRAT KASSAHUN

Hi! I'm Bisrat Kassahun, a sophomore studying Physics, and I'm running to be your ASCIT Treasurer next year.

Previously, I've served on Page's excomm, where I interacted with administrators and worked jointly to organize events. As a SFP ambassador for the past summer, our team worked to put on a campus wide summer bash for all students, where we stretched our finances and put on the event while staying within budget.

As the school year goes on, houses host an array of events and their pool of money grows smaller and smaller. I want to extend the Treasurer's charge and work with houses as needed to source funding for events and ensure they find the money to host what students desire. Additionally, I want to solicit donations from alumni using ASCIT's nonprofit status and cordon this money for funding more events and clubs. Alumni would love to donate, but want to know that their money would specifically go to improving student life, so I want to grow the ASCIT Fund started by the previous Treasurer Jonathan and organize events where alumni can engage with students and support us.

After the changes made to Orange Watch this year, I'd love to spearhead an initiative to fund the program and get members paid for their work. OW is a crucial program on campus for keeping students safe, and

I'd hate to see it decline due to a lack of administrative support. Additionally, I'd like to work closer with the houses and be more open about ASCIT finances, so that more members are aware its current state. I believe full transparency is important, so I'd be continuing on Jonathan's legacy and keeping finances transparent.

If you have any concerns or would like to chat, please feel free to reach out to me at [bkassahu@caltech.edu](mailto:bkassahu@caltech.edu). Thanks for your time!

Best,  
Bisrat



LAUREN PRYOR

Hi! I'm Lauren Pryor, a junior studying Computer Science and Economics and a member of Ricketts Hovse and the Caltech Track and Field team, and a Peer Advocate, running for election as ASCIT Treasurer.

I am running for ASCIT Treasurer to further the initiatives that I currently work on and have made progress towards. I am also running to continue the work that has made a significant impact on our community, some of which was started by the current treasurer, Jonathan Booker. These are further outlined below:

- 1. Improve monetary transparency for clubs and organizations.** This past year, I served as the president of the ColorStack at Caltech club, where I raised \$24,000 to send 18 students to the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) conference in Chicago, IL. This included booking hotels and flights, coordinating transportation, and buying tickets. Throughout this process, it was difficult to know exactly how much was in the club's bursar account, when money from different sponsors had arrived and when I could access it, and I never had direct access to my club's own account. I would have loved to have a dashboard that could show me transactions, balances, incoming money, and user permissions on my bursar account. As ASCIT treasurer, I would work with both SFE (formerly OSE), Student Financial Hub, and Club Steering Committee to begin development of an online platform so that students could have centralized and easy access to this information.

- 2. Increase pathways for direct funding from alumni to students.** While Jonathan oversaw the start of the ASCIT Fund, I would use my time as treasurer to bring this project to life, with a strategic kick-off of the ASCIT Fund and more direct places for alumni to specify their donations during the 2026 Alumni weekend. To support this, I also plan to implement a matching platform for students to request funding and for alumni to have access to and donate to, so that they can make a direct and immediate impact on campus. Students would be able to describe their funding needs, and alumni would have access to these requests and specify what they are donating towards. Towards this goal, I have already started working with Caltech Board of Trustees members and Caltech professors, as well as the Caltech alumni office.

- 3. Obtain company grants to hold larger events and support bigger campus projects** (like TechStock, new / renovated study spaces, better environmental practices, and monetary support for conferences and academic travel). This year, ASCIT could not hold TechStock (deciding between artists like Zedd, Waka Flocka Flame, Between Friends, Del Water Gap) due to a lack of funding. This event would have been similar to the Sun

God Festival at UCSD or Dillo Day at Northwestern. Similar to these schools, I would work with the ASCIT President and OSE to create and send corporate sponsorship packets, as well as lead initiatives for clubs to obtain these sponsorships.

To give a little bit more context about me, I have served as a student leader in multiple spaces on campus. I'm a peer advocate, I am the current president of ColorStack at Caltech, as well as the marketing director / social chair for the Black Student Union.

As President for ColorStack at Caltech, in addition to fully sponsoring 18 students to go to the NSBE Convention through applying to external grants, Caltech funding, and working with several Caltech departments and offices, I have also hosted successful events centered around career development. This included a conference prep workshop with a professional clothing drive with the help of CALE, a New Year's vision board making event, and a resume/cover letter/LinkedIn workshop.

As the Marketing Director for the BSU, I helped plan and advertise the most attended events in BSU history, including an off-campus pool party, a beach trip, a Valentines party, a graduation formal, a winter holiday party, and several decompression events including an ice cream bar and game nights.

As a Peer Advocate for Ricketts, I've had the privilege of supporting students during some of their most vulnerable moments of academic stress, social challenges, or mental health struggles. This role taught me how to listen deeply, communicate with compassion, and build genuine trust within our community. I've learned how to advocate for others, not just through words, but through action, specifically by connecting people to the right resources and making sure they felt heard and cared for. These interpersonal skills are essential for a Treasurer too. Managing student funds isn't just about numbers—it's about understanding the real needs behind budget requests, collaborating with different groups, and making sure every student feels that their voice matters.

What I have learned from these positions is this: good experiences on campus rely on institutional memory. This means that transparency and access to data (especially financial) is paramount, having records of what has happened matters so that we can either replicate or know how to do better. Connections with alumni and the ability for alumni to interact with the campus are also extremely important; it keeps our traditions alive and turns the Caltech experience into a community with a sense of pride and belonging. Finally, through the work of the ASCIT Fund and a student-led system for funding, we get to command how money is spent on campus. By strengthening these things, we give ourselves more agency to shape our experience during our time here. All of the initiatives I outline align with this insight. Towards this point, my bottom line is that the respect and dignified treatment of students by faculty and administration is fundamental, and I commit to take on the position of Treasurer as one of advocacy for all student voices.

Love, Laur<sup>o</sup>promise not to embezzle<sup>o</sup>en Pry<sup>o</sup>not even a little :)"or



SAM MATHEWS

Hello! My name is Sam Mathews, and I am very excited to run to be your next ASCIT Treasurer. Just so you know a little about me, I am a current sophomore, and I am studying Applied and Computational Math with a concentration in Business & Finance. I am also a full member in Fleming and a goalie for the Caltech men's soccer team.

I firmly believe that Caltech has an amazing undergraduate culture, and I want to do everything in my power to support student life. The best way that I think that I can contribute to the undergraduate culture is by supporting students through the position of ASCIT Treasurer. Jonathan has done an immensely great job as ASCIT Treasurer these past two years. He has actively campaigned, and successfully so, to provide more direct funding to the houses and student organizations.

If elected as ASCIT Treasurer I hope to follow a similar path as Jonathan to use my position to aid student life. I plan to do so by focusing on three key things: continued financial transparency and communication, funding student desired social events and activities, and acquiring more funding. First, since ASCIT's purpose is to benefit student life at Caltech I want to make sure that there is continued financial transparency and communications, so students understand where ASCIT is spending money and how it is actively aiding their student life.

Additionally, I want to continue to advocate for student desired social events such as the ASCIT formal and destressing events like midnight donuts. I want to make sure that all social events get adequate funding. Furthermore, I want to emphasize funding to houses, so they can continue to provide support and a social life to students. I am also open to listening to any students and their ideas for activities to work with the rest of ASCIT.

Lastly, I want to find ways to increase and aid ASCIT's funding, so more student activities can be funded in the future. Jonathan oversaw the start of the ASCIT Fund that allows alumni to donate directly to ASCIT and therefore the students. I plan to grow this fund and create more initiatives to increase ASCIT funding from both alumni and other Caltech sources.

I believe that I am fit for the role of ASCIT Treasurer because of my background in business. In high school I started my own company where I helped students get easy access to textbooks and school supplies. Through this company I learned valuable lessons about how to manage finances and work with different administrations (my school adminis-

tration). I believe that these skills will help me keep track of ASCIT's finances as well as work with the ASCIT Board of Directors, and Caltech administration to implement the best policies possible to aid student life.

Additionally, my focus and interest in business at Caltech via taking different BEM and EC courses, conducting economic research as a SURF, and actively pursuing a career in business, will aid my enthusiasm for the ASCIT Treasury role. I want to learn more and if elected ASCIT Treasurer, I would use the skills and enthusiasm I have learned here at Caltech to support all students. Additionally, I am a part of several clubs, and I volunteer and tutored veterans at PCC, which have helped me develop the personal skills to work with others, which will benefit me with working with the ASCIT board and Caltech administration. I hope that all of my experience will help me be an ASCIT Treasurer that supports you, the student body.

Overall, I am very excited to run for ASCIT Treasurer and am happy to answer any questions via email at smathews@caltech.edu. Thank you!

**ARC CHAIR  
(1 CANDIDATE)**



ANGELICA MOUSSAMBOTE

Hi, my name is Angelica Moussambote, and I am running for the upcoming year Academics & Research Committee (ARC) Chair position. I am a Mechanical Engineer undergrad that resides in Venerable House. Prior to running for this position, I was Venerable's ARC Rep for a year. During that year, I learned how important the ARC truly is, and that with clear communication between students, professors, the Center for Teaching, Learning, & Outreach (CTLO), and other ARC Reps, how student life can be changed for the better. When I was running for Venerable's ARC Rep my freshman year, I believed that this committee didn't make a big difference to student life as much as the upperclassmen kept saying it did (big rookie mistake). I thought it was just a closer liaison for course concerns and schedule concerns, which was false. ARC truly is what better the academic life on Caltech campus. We have multiple conversations with various parties to fix concerns, and in addition to that, we host a variety of student and faculty events. These range from student-faculty lunches, games, option advising, how to survive on grade for third term freshmen, and more. After seeing these events' impact on students and faculty, it made me realize that this committee does make a big

difference on campus.

Throughout this year of being Venerable's ARC Rep, the position has pushed me to become more comfortable to have hard conversations that before this role, I would avoid. A perfect example of hard conversations that I used to avoid were conversations that required me to be face to face with professors. Last term, I had to have a hard conversation with a professor about concerns that were being addressed to me from peers. Greatly, the conversation didn't end as bad as I thought it would have, but it wasn't perfect either. After this, I thought "this was so uncomfortable." In the end, some concerns were fixed, and to see and hear how the class changed drastically for my peers by just one conversation gave me an "ahh" moment, and I told myself, "this is what those upperclassmen meant." When I had that "ahh" moment, I then decided that ARC Chair is the position that I want to hold.

If I am appointed ARC Chair, I will initiate a discussion of trying to diversify the selection in the humanities courses, so there is a more variety of topics to select from. Thus, undergrads do not have to fight for a spot in a humanities course. I want to become ARC Chair because I have been Venerable's ARC Rep for a year, so I wouldn't be going into the position clueless of what entails. I believe that the ARC and all the other ARC Reps care about the ARC's goal to improve Caltech undergraduate academic experiences, and lastly, being a chair of anything requires a tremendous amount of communication. I believe now that I can have hard conversations and work through the uncomfortability of having them so that I can use the same approach for future professors and meetings to come.

**BOC CHAIR  
(2 CANDIDATES)**



BELLE CHEN

Hi, I'm Belle and I'll be running to be your next Board of Control Chair. I've spent the previous year serving as a BoC secretary and co-chair of the Honor Code SFC committee. As such, I have been uniquely positioned to understand the motivations and methodology behind honor code violations as well as both the real and perceived strengths and shortcomings of the BoC itself. Over the next year, I hope to not only streamline and improve the BoC and its processes, but also to greatly increase communication between the BoC, students, and faculty to rebuild the currently eroding trust. This will involve transparent statistics and policies, outreach to frosh, and open lines of communication with faculty. Ultimately, just as my predecessors, I will

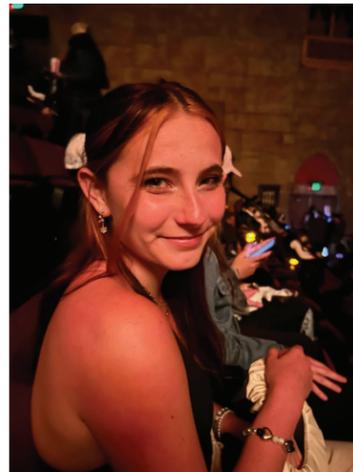
work to reverse the culture of cheating that has been spreading across campus. It is a difficult task, but I am sure there is no one better to undertake it. Thank you for your time, consideration, and vote.



CAMILLA FEZZI

I am grateful for the nomination to serve as Chair of the Board of Control (BoC). The BoC's mission to uphold the Honor Code is vital to our community's integrity, and I am committed to ensuring fair and transparent processes while fostering trust and accountability. Thank you for this opportunity to contribute and I will do my best.

**IHC CHAIR  
(2 CANDIDATES)**



ELISA GRILLO

Hi everyone! Instead of spamming your emails about public meetings, I have decided to spam your feeds about my candidacy. For those of you that don't know, my name's Elisa Grillo. I'm currently a junior BioE major, and I'm running for IHC chair. Any time I talk to prospective students, I say that the Housing system is one of the best things that Caltech has to offer. Rotation, Discotech, and House events are some of the highlights of my years, and as IHC Chair, I hope to uphold what makes the Houses so great while also helping advocate for them whenever needed.

During my time here, I've taken on a variety of roles that have helped me build the skills and experience to feel confident in my ability to serve as IHC Chair. Most notably, I am the current IHC secretary, which has given direct experience in planning Rotation, interfacing with administration, and communicating with the new and old presidents. This would help me carry on all prior projects without interruption and serve as a better resource for current presidents. I'm also working on SLEC as one of the First-Year Residential Experience Committee Co-Chairs (shout out to my co-chair Arjun!) where I've led meetings with admin and students and discussed how best to support and shape everyone's first year at Caltech. Also, as a Venerable Griffin, I've had hands-on involvement in planning interhouses and similar events. Through these roles, I've built strong

relationships with administrators across different settings, collaborated with house leadership, and strengthened my leadership and organizational skills. These experiences have given me a solid foundation to take on the role of IHC Chair.

Because of this, I am excited about the possibility of serving in this position. The Housing system gave me such a vital support network and great memories, and even though I'm currently unaffiliated, I still maintain close connections with the houses. Now, I want to use this chance to give back to my peers and help the House presidents/chancellor continue to make the Houses the unique spaces that they are. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or want to talk! I'm easily accessible through email (egrillo@caltech.edu) or Messenger!

TLDR: Current IHC Secretary has Stockholm syndrome and thinks being chair would be fun

All the best,  
Eli"why is the last comma hyperlinked"sa Gri"n all of my messages?"

THANH THANH NGUYEN

(Editor's note: no statement or photo were received before the deadline. Materials will be posted online when they are received.)

**TECH EDITOR  
(1 CANDIDATE)**



DAMIAN WILSON

I'm honored to be considered for Tech Editor! Community journalism is vital to the Caltech culture, and I shall to the best of my ability uphold its signature publication with honesty and humility. In particular, I aim to strengthen ties with the Hixon Writing Center to better promote both student engagement with the *Tech* and journalism as a literary craft.

(Not to mention that I effectively possess this position at present: I've already been doing much of the work associated with it, and just so happen to be responsible for these words existing on these pages to be so beheld by your glorious eyeballs.)

Thank you all for the opportunity to run (nominally) unopposed. Still, democracy prevails—at this journalistic institution, anyway. If the people shall nonetheless go the extra mile to somehow and for some reason obviate me from the running, so be it. But keep in mind that physics/English double majors with a penchant for time traveler chic, according to my single data point, do have a special facility for technical institute editor-in-chief-hood.

Thanks once again!



# REPORTERS & COLUMNISTS WANTED

Calling ALL members of the Caltech community – not just undergrads. *The California Tech* is the voice of the people, and we need you to speak!

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and effective  
manner

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and effective  
manner

?



# 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 publication. In other words, no second-hand information or hearsay shall stand on its own.

### 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 by 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](http://tech.caltech.edu). If appropriate, corrections will also be published in the following Tech print issue.

### Honor Code Applies

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

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# The California Tech #21 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 **maybe win a fabulous prize???**

*"On campus" is defined as the convex hull of the buildings shown on [caltech.edu/map/campus](http://caltech.edu/map/campus).*

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

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