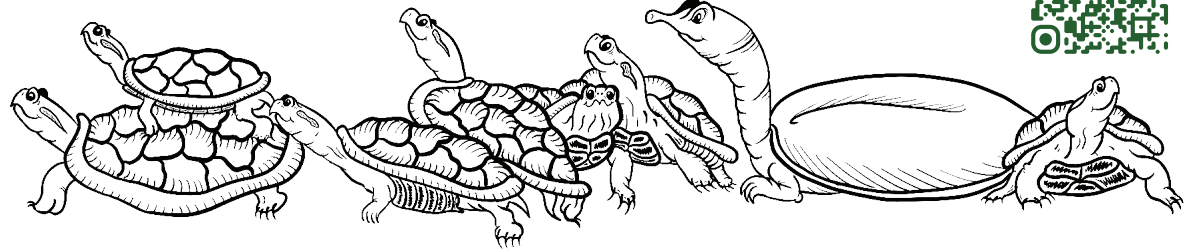


The Article About The Housing Lottery

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



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Michael Gutierrez
News

2. Bechtel Suite Picks

Remaining students who want to live in a Bechtel suite must organize themselves into groups of 4, 6, or 8 (the available suite sizes). Exactly one of the group members must submit an Unaffiliated Suite Lottery Application, due on Monday, May 13. (For groups who do not plan to participate in the unaffiliated-priority suite lottery, described in the next paragraph, it may not be necessary to fill out the application, since the pick order is determined only by the highest lottery number in the group. We have received conflicting information, and recommend submitting the application anyway.) The actual roompicks process for Bechtel suites will occur on May 15. Here is how the pick order will be determined:

The first 10 suites will be filled with a new unaffiliated-priority lottery system, as described in VPSA Kevin Gilmartin's email sent to undergraduates yesterday. Groups will be assigned 1 "point" per Newly Unaffiliated student, and 2 "points" per Historically Unaffiliated student. Historically Unaffiliated means the student dropped their house membership(s) during Winter Term 2024 or before. Newly Unaffiliated means the student dropped their house membership(s) during Spring Term 2024 (this term). The first 10 groups will pick in order of highest "point" total, with ties broken by the best lottery number out of the group. It is unclear from the email whether the groups will be ranked by total points or as a fraction out of 2*group size, where the former would give advantage to larger unaffiliated suites.

After the first 10 suites are picked, the remaining suites will pick in order determined only by their best lottery number (irrespective of group members' affiliation statuses).

JPL, providing in-house legal counsel for these institutions. Caltech's Title IX office does not publish an annual report on Title IX-related statistics. Other colleges like MIT, Stanford, and the CSUs publish such reports, which contain information such as Title IX case outcome or case length statistics. Because of this, the Tech cannot evaluate how the office performed under Vatti.

However, Caltech's Annual Security and Fire Safety Report provides statistics for some Title IX-actionable crimes (e.g. stalking, dating violence, rape). No trends regarding the frequency of these crimes during Vatti's time as Title IX coordinator could be confidently identified.

The Caltech Title IX office declined to comment on Vatti or the Title IX office during her time as the coordinator.

As the coordinator of the Title IX Office, Vatti helped train Title IX advocates and facili-

It is possible for a "partial group" to pick into a suite with more beds than members, though pick priority will be given to "full groups". It is unclear from the Housing Office website how the situation would be handled in the case that the last remaining suite is smaller than the next group in the pick order.

All standalone Bechtel singles will be reserved for students with CASS accommodations to pick in the next round.

3. Picks for Marks/Braun Suites, Marks/Braun Doubles, Marks/Braun Singles, and Bechtel Singles

Remaining groups of students who want to pick into a Marks/Braun double or suite (consisting of two double rooms), as well as individuals who have CASS accommodations for a single room, must submit an Unaffiliated Double Lottery Application, due on Friday, May 17. As with Bechtel Suite Picks, only one member of the suite/double (if applicable) should submit the form. The Housing Office website is unclear on whether students who chose a guaranteed Marks/Braun room during House Picks also need to submit an application, but in any case they will pick during this round also. The pick order will again be determined from the best lottery number in the group. The actual roompicks process will occur on Monday May 20 and Tuesday May 21.

4. Waitlist

Remaining students without a housing assignment will be automatically added to a waitlist in order of their lottery number.

The truth about unaffiliation status

How is it determined whether students in a proposed Bechtel group are unaffiliated, thus giving their group a higher pick?

Affiliation is ultimately managed and reported by each house's executive committee (Excomm). The only way to change or drop a house membership is to speak to the house secretary.

The Office of Student Experience (OSE) distributed a Housing Affiliation survey last winter term. Despite the presence of conflicting information in the emails and on housing.caltech.edu, the IHC confirmed that this survey was for statistical purposes only. Responses to OSE's Housing Affiliation survey are not reflected in any house's membership roster. According to IHC Chair Evan Portnoi, all house secretaries personally reached out to those students who identified as unaffiliated, asking them to confirm their desire to unaffiliate. Anyone who did not respond or otherwise contact their house secretary remains a member.

What about the incoming frosh?

The situation last year was exacerbated by the historically high yield rate (66%) for the incoming freshman class of 2027, bringing 271 (out of 412 admitted) students when only about 230 were expected. Since unaffiliated-priority Bechtel Suite Picks and House Picks had already happened, the only way to fit the 40 extra students was to remove 40 beds from the second round of Bechtel Picks.

Despite this, the Housing Office managed to offer a bed to all students who wanted one (though several people opted out of the lottery once the only beds remaining were in Marks/Braun).

This year, in contrast, there were only 315 frosh admitted to the class of 2028. Even if the yield rate turns out higher, the class of 2028 will still end up around the target size of 215-225.

Is there an advantage to unaffiliating? (No.)

This year's roompicks process is different from last year's chiefly because House Picks are now occurring before Bechtel Suite Picks.

Last year, the first round of Bechtel Suite Picks, which was exclusive to unaffiliated students, happened before House Picks. This led to a large wave of unaffiliations in the Spring, just before Fall roompicks. A significant portion of students chose to drop their house memberships because (they believed that) their lottery number would give them a better chance of picking into an unaffiliated-priority Bechtel suite, compared to a room in their house if they didn't drop.

This year, in contrast, house members will have a chance to pick into their house or a guaranteed Marks/Braun room before Bechtel Picks occur. For house members who do not get a room during House Picks, there is still a better chance of getting a Bechtel suite compared to last year, especially with the (in all likelihood) smaller incoming frosh class.

Continued on page 11

Caltech's Title IX Coordinator Hima Vatti Resigns

Maxwell Montemayor
News

After nearly 4 years and 8 months, Hima Vatti has stepped down from her position as Caltech's Assistant Vice President for Equity and Equity Investigations, and Title IX coordinator. Appointed on July 16, 2019 and stepping down on March 15, 2024, Vatti was Caltech's longest serving Title IX coordinator.

According to an email sent to the Caltech community by Julia McCallin, the Chief Human Resource Officer, Ofelia Velazquez-Perez will serve as interim Title IX coordinator while a replacement is sought. Vatti leaves Caltech to become the University of La Verne's General Counsel.

Before her tenure as Title IX coordinator, she spent nearly 10 years as Associate General Counsel, Litigation & Risk Management for Caltech and

tate investigations into Title IX-actionable incidents, which regarded cases of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or hostile working environments. As such, Vatti has personally engaged with much of the Caltech community, many of whom were going through tough situations. The Tech interviewed some of these students who have interacted with her.

"[Vatti] almost functioned like a counselor the first two months of my breakup and was extremely nice and accommodating," says Snigdha Saha (CS '24, Ricketts), who described to the Tech how Vatti helped guide her through her breakup.

However, when Saha's situation eventually became a formal Title IX investigation, she noticed a change in Vatti's demeanor. Saha notes, "[Vatti] seemed very compassionate until the case actually started, after which it felt far more rigid... I think she couldn't bal-

ance the compassion with the rigidity."

Title IX advocate and former Blacker president, Aditee Prabhutendolkar (CNS '24, Blacker), describes Vatti as "always very professional and straightforward." Prabhutendolkar had submitted a Title IX report and was disappointed by the lack of action resulting from the report. Though, she admits that Vatti had explained to her how hard it can be for the Title IX Office to pursue action, due to the amount of evidence needed.

But Prabhutendolkar was still disappointed with how slow Vatti communicated with her and other students involved with the report. "I don't think [Vatti] following up slowly is excusable. I don't understand why she couldn't just send emails more quickly. That's not something that policies limit her on," says Prabhutendolkar.

"I think she was always very approachable, she cares, I think she actually really cares," says

Tanmay Gupta (Ph 24' Lloyd), a Title IX advocate who had extensively interacted with Hima. "She was not there to cut you off or to even... invalidate your feelings"

Gupta's personal experiences with Vatti and the Title IX office have been positive, though he says that his "peers [who have interacted with the office] were very frustrated with her" due a lack of substantial action from the office and many delays. Vatti acknowledged complaints about the lack of action, and explained to him that "[the Title IX Office's] hands are tied," as "It takes a lot" for an incident to count as a Title IX offense, according to Title IX law.

Though, Gupta says the delays in communication between the office and students were a valid, inexcusable, issue. However, Gupta claims that this is not an issue unique to Vatti, but applies to the office as a whole.

Continued on page 10

Caltech Trivia Team Returns to National Tournament After 14 Year Hiatus

Carlos Del Angel Aguilar News

On April 6, 2024, Caltech's Quiz Bowl team competed at the National Academic Quiz-bowl Tournaments (NAQT) company's Intercollegiate Championship Tournament (ICT). This was Caltech's first time participating in the nationwide competition since it last qualified for ICT in 2010. Caltech competed, as it did last time, in Division II, the lower of the two divisions organized by NAQT. Caltech was represented at the ICT by Carlos Del Angel Aguilar (Chem., B.S. '24), Xander Koutsoukos (Geo., B.S. '24), Chase Blanchette (E.E., B.S. '23, M.S. '24), Alexis Herfurth (MechE., B.S. '26) and Justin Luo (C.S., B.S. '27). Caltech qualified for the ICT through its first-place finish in Division II at the prior sectional tournament hosted at USC in the fall.

Quiz Bowl is an academic decathlon style competition where a team of four partici-

pants is tested on their knowledge of a broad swath of content in disciplines of academic interest. Quiz Bowl participants are expected to be well-versed in literature, history, world religions, philosophy, world mythology, the social sciences, fine arts (painting, architecture, photography, sculpture), classical music, jazz standards, university math and science, and even popular culture and sports. Quiz Bowl members must be able to rapidly deduce for example, an author or historical battle, from very obscure to progressively more well-known information before the members of the other team. Getting the answer before the other team often comes down to seconds after hearing a key word in the question. Our all-around player, Chase, notes: "Nothing beats the feeling of recognizing something familiar in the first line of a question and nailing it with an early buzz, but I'd say making a lucky guess comes pretty close!" During rounds, team members can find answers to questions from surprising places. Our history specialist, Xander, was

able to correctly answer "vocalise" from a clue about vowel-only singing exercises due to his experience in Caltech's Glee Club. Caltech's team traveled to the Hyatt Regency hotel close to O'Hare Airport, where the competition was held. Caltech's Quiz Bowl team would like to give a heartfelt thank you to Club President Trinity Lee (BioE., B.S. '25) for her incredible effort in organizing the team's travel and financing of the event. Caltech Quiz Bowl would also like to thank Ankit Nandi and Jonathan Booker from ASCIT, as well as Miranda Huseh and Erica Crawford from OSE for their help in organizing the funding for Caltech's trip. Finally, Caltech Quiz Bowl also greatly thanks Eman Elsheikh, a former member of the team, for making a detour on a trip to Chicago with her younger brother to come spectate and support the team. Caltech was proud to place 14th out of 32 teams overall. Caltech advanced to a playoff bracket with a 4-3 record in preliminary rounds. During the tournament, Caltech finished with a 2-4 record for an overall 6-7



Caltech's ICT Team (from left to right: Chase, Eman, Carlos, Alexis, Justin, and Xander)

record. Regarding the team's performance, Trinity reports: "This was the first time in a decade that Caltech qualified for the ICT, so the team really exceeded expectations! I'm super excited to see how we do next year and if we can keep up the momentum!" Caltech Quiz Bowl is currently on a momentary pause due to the tournament, but is due to begin its typical Sunday morning practices soon. The team believes there may be

former high school Quiz Bowl players who may be unaware of the team's activity. We hope that this article reaches them, along with anyone else seeking to broaden their knowledge of the wider academic canon, and we invite them to join us in our Sunday morning practices. Please reach out to Trinity Lee (trinity@caltech.edu) for more information. We hope to see you at one of our practices soon!

Review of Cafes Around Campus

Umran Koca The Outside World

If you are a cafe enthusiast stuck living the hard cold truth of Caltech, I am here for you. I too am just a simple coffee loving gal trapped in a world of problem sets. Although I love red door, sometimes I just want to get out of the campus bubble. This is why I have compiled a list of my favorite cafes around campus rated by aesthetic, studyability, and the quality of coffee/pastries. The best part is that all of these are walkable so you do not have to experience the horrors of Los Angeles public transit.

The first two locations on our coffee journey are one of the closest coffee shops to campus located in Burlington Arcade on Lake Avenue: Float Coffee Shop and Mandarin Coffee Stand.

Float Coffee Shop
This is one of my go to study spots when I do not want to venture too far off campus.

The coffee is ok if you stick to classics like the iced mocha which is in the picture here. You should stay away from the sandwiches. The location of this cafe in the beautiful Burlington Arcade really sells it and

the availability of both indoor and outdoor seating is a bonus. The sad thing about this place is that the Mandarin Coffee Stand is outcompeting it, eroding away at much of its previous allure.

Studyability: 7
Coffee/Pastries: 4
Aesthetic: 9

Mandarin Coffee Stand
Located in Burlington Arcade, you can tell when Mandarin is open based on the huge lines that form. The lines are a testament to the unique and delicious coffee. While this place is on the pricier side and the servings are quite small, it is definitely worth it. The one downside to this cafe is the lack of indoor seating and limited outdoor seating.

Studyability: 5
Coffee/Pastries: 9
Aesthetic: 9

Pillow Talk
This is another shop on Lake that is really nice if you do not want to venture too far off campus. It is known not only for its creative coffee but also its adorable cakes.

I do not usually go to study here since the music is very loud. However, if you are looking for a girly pop study aesthetic this could be your place.

They have all sorts of lattes and cakes ranging from tiramisu to honeycomb and indulgent chocolate options.

Studyability: 4
Coffee/Pastries: 9
Aesthetic: 7

Republik Coffee
I go to Republik located close to the intersection of Colorado and South Lake Avenue fairly often to get some work done and enjoy criminally delicious coffee.

The environment both inside and outside this cafe is a work of art. With lots of tables alongside tasteful decor, it feels like cozy neighborhood coffee shop at the scale of a chain. I have liked almost all the drinks I have tried here with my favorite being the black vanilla latte as illustrated in the middle. For people who like their coffee on the sweeter side, the Vietnamese coffee as shown on the left is a must. It can get loud in the afternoons when they bring live music or a DJ and this cafe is always very crowded because it is so popular. Make sure to come during non peak hours if you can. Also, if you do not want to pay 6 dollars for mediocre pastries, just stick to the coffee (you will not be disappointed)

Studyability: 7

Coffee (not including pastries): 10
Aesthetic: 8

The Boy & The Bear

This place is such a gem and I probably should gatekeep and gaslight everyone, but I won't. It is located on Green Street close to South Lake Avenue. The inside is freaking ethereal. It truly feels like a wooden cabin inside a forest with the pleasant wood smell and the decor. The presentation and branding of coffee is on point. The taste of coffee here is also very agreeable and easy to tell that it is quality. Finding seating in this small shop is a bit hard especially at peak hours and the servings can be small if you are getting take out. However, if you go during the week and at a non peak hour, you are certain to have a surprisingly productive study session or an elegant and relaxing coffee break.

Studyability: 9
Coffee/Pastries: 8
Aesthetic: 9

CAR Artisan Chocolate

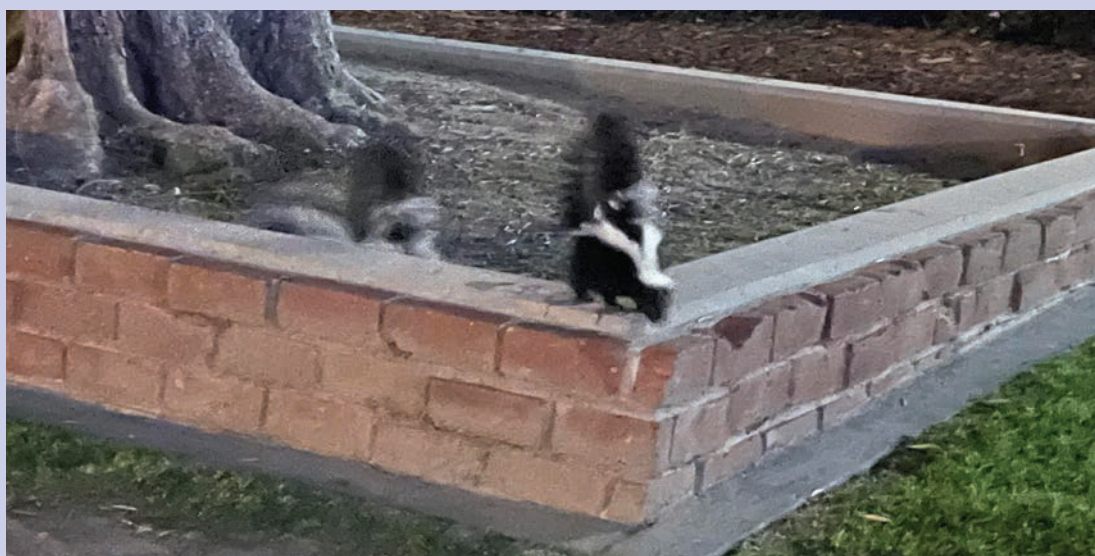
Now, I really should keep my mouth shut about this place because it is my number one absolute favorite cafe in the area. Located on Colorado, this place has the best croissants I have ever eaten. This is saying

something since I have tried croissants in Copenhagen, Paris, DC, Ankara, and many more places. Their pain au chocolat is detrimental to your health because you WILL be craving it like crack (I'm not sure if I have to censor that). They have a limited assortment of coffee but you cannot miss with their choco lattes. I can confidently say it is not too sweet. There is ample space and good wifi inside if you want to get a couple of hours of work in. However, you should beware as lines here can curl up to the end of the street beyond the entrance. If you do not go here at least once after reading this review, something is seriously wrong with you. On the other hand, if you keep going so much so that you are part of the crowd, I will have to find you and kill you.

Studyability: 8
Coffee/Pastries: 10
Aesthetic: 9

You can follow me along my journey of exploring cafes around campus, the greater LA area, and even other countries with my instagram account @cafestodiefor! If you visit any of these cafes feel free to DM me with your take on the study ability, coffee/pastries, and aesthetic.

North Houses Survive Encounter with "The Smell"



Blurry photo courtesy of Yi Lin

Last week, nostrils throughout Venerable House were greeted by the penetrating stench of sewage. Some feared that this was a new manifestation of "The Smell" which plagued the South Hoveses for several months last year. Fortunately, the cause was localized to a single plumbing leak, which was quickly fixed by Housing staff. According to Venerable House Steward Shrishti Kulkarni, Housing expects any residual odors to fully dissipate by the end of this week.

In unrelated news, a family of skunks was discovered living near Venerable. While indeed smelly, Shrishti confirmed that they were not responsible for The Smell.

—MICHAEL GUTIERREZ, THE CALIFORNIA TECH

THE TECH WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Tell us your opinions about things going on at Caltech with this new survey form on our website! You can submit any time, multiple times, about anything.

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!!

Do you have thoughts™ about...

- Caltech Accessibility Services (CASS)
- Experiences with Caltech's Title IX Office
- Paying for laundry/WASHConnect App
- The Turtle Mascot
- Anything else?

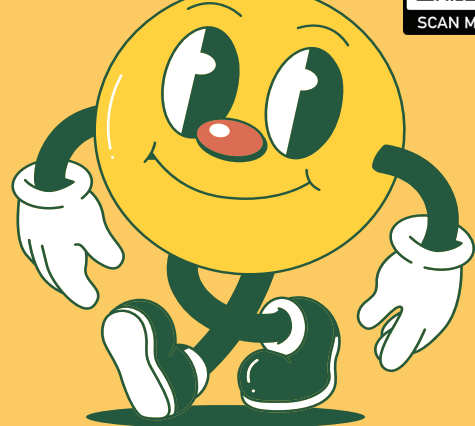


tech.caltech.edu/hello

\$1,000 WORTH OF GIVEAWAYS!!

TAKE THE CONFIDENTIAL

NCHA Survey



5.06.2024 - 5.26.2024

Look out for the email with subject line: "Time to Represent Caltech in the 2024 National College Health Assessment (NCHA)"

Student Wellness Services @caltechwellness

National College Health Assessment: We Need Your Participation!

Every two years, Student Wellness Services invites all currently enrolled Caltech students 18 and older to take the National College Health Assessment, or NCHA. It's a confidential national survey that asks about health behaviors such as exercise, sleep, alcohol use, mental health, and more. You should be done in less than 30 minutes.

The NCHA will be live from Monday, May 6th to Sunday, May 26th. You'll get your survey link on Monday, May 6th - watch for the subject line, "Time to represent Caltech in the 2024 National College Health Assessment (NCHA)"

The NCHA is Wellness Services' single most useful way to gauge how our students are doing overall in terms of their physical and

emotional health, and to see how we compare to other universities. Remember, your responses are confidential, and everyone who completes the NCHA will be entered into a drawing for \$1,000 worth of giveaways just for Caltech students! Keep your eyes open on Monday the 6th.

Prizes include:

- Nintendo Switch
- Bose noise-cancelling headphones
- North Face backpack
- Lululemon belt bag
- Kinto tumbler

Sponsored by Student Wellness Services

Float Coffee Shop



Pillow Talk



Left Image Credit: Steven B on Google Reviews

The Boy & The Bear



Left Image Credit: The Boy & The Bear Coffee Roastery on Google Reviews

Mandarin Coffee Stand



Right Image Credit: Julius Logan and Steven B on Google Reviews

Republik Coffee



Far Left Image Credit: Kevin Sewell on Google Reviews

CAR Artisan Chocolate



Far Left Image Credit: Melissa Escobar on Google Reviews

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 be published anonymously, they shall 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. 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.

Letter to the Community: On Reinstatement of the SAT Requirement

Friend of the Students
Opinion

Editors' Note: The author requested that this piece be published anonymously, for reasons described within. Given the sensitivity of the topic and the nature of the views expressed, we determined this to be acceptable in line with the Tech's Journalistic Principles.

Undergrads, you might have noticed in the past edition of The California Tech a small section on page 2 that the Faculty Board had passed a resolution reinstating the SAT/ACT requirement. Or in the February 27th edition, an article titled "Faculty Petition Speaks to Broader Implications for Undergraduate Admissions" describing a petition circulating amongst the faculty that the Tech editors report they were repeatedly denied a copy of. I would like to make public the text of the petition. You can find it in full below.

I expected better from the members of the faculty who signed this petition, who not only ignored the truth of the matter while writing this petition, but repeatedly denied current students access to it. In addition to the Tech editors being denied a copy of the petition, I have been told that members of ASCIT have been repeatedly uninvited from the monthly Faculty Board meetings where discussion of this is taking place and that undergraduate student leaders' direct lines of access to administrators and faculty members on campus have been uniformly shut off to any information about this petition. (If you don't believe my word on this, feel free to contact the current student leaders, whom I am certain would be happy to explain their side of the story better than I can). I also find myself disappointed in the Faculty Board, whose committee to collect and present evidence on this topic attempted to find a correlation between SAT math scores and first-year (shadow) grades. Attempting to use first-year (shadow) grades when those students are told to focus on their transition to college and not worry about grades, rather than say sophomore year grades or cumulative GPA, seems misguided to say the least. Perhaps more worryingly, despite this lack of conclusive evidence, the Faculty Board passed the resolution reinstating the SAT/ACT requirement almost unanimously.

As a University whose motto is, "The Truth Shall Make You Free", in what sense do the actions of the past few months live up to this? In what world does hiding the evidence and covering up the dialogue about current (and future) students help you, or them? Would it have been impossible for you to share your concerns with them directly as I have, instead of gossiping about them behind their backs? How does casting off entire classes of current students as effectively "too dumb to succeed at Caltech" encourage them to make up lost

ground and perform better in your classes? So students, in the spirit of our shared motto, I believe you should have access to this petition, even though you may find the text itself and the commentary surrounding it painful to hear. You should also know that not all members of the faculty believe in the spirit behind this petition, and hopefully you will be heartened to know that many refused to sign it.

I am choosing not to publish the names of the 150+ faculty members who signed this petition for a few reasons. First, I do not want this article to be used as a personal attack on any one person who signed the petition, but rather as an inspiration for reflection on the state of our campus community. Second, public comments attached to the petition reflect that some members of the faculty only signed the petition to encourage the Faculty Board to investigate the correlation between SAT/ACT scores and academic performance at Caltech, as a request for more evidence on this topic, without buying into the rest of the discourse surrounding this. While I disagree with their decision to sign this flawed document, I do not think that publishing their names alongside those who are fully buying into the idea that current students are fundamentally un- or under-prepared for Caltech academics will be productive.

I publish this anonymously for fear that this discussion will hurt my career and threaten my current employment. For a community that prides itself on freedom of intellectual thought and objective review of the available data, it is shameful that we cannot have an open dialogue about this. Faculty members, you can and should do better. I urge you to engage with and discuss this with the undergraduate community in a meaningful way, instead of continuing to deny them a seat at the table.

The text of the petition is printed on the opposite page of this issue of the Tech.

In addition to my rebuke of the actions taken by some faculty members in the past few months, I would like to provide a critical analysis of the petition and some context that it is lacking. First, the data from two electrical engineering courses (EE 44 and EE 55) are not representative of the entire student body, and certainly faculty members who pride themselves on their ability to carefully analyze data in their professional capacity should know better than to take a non-representative sample as proof of anything.

Second, even if you did take the data of the two electrical engineering courses to be representative of the student body as a whole, the analysis does not take into account that each year of students has had substantially different high school and core curriculum experiences. The core curriculum has undergone substantial revision between 2019 and now, and it is not inconceivable that different teaching styles and curricula for math and physics core courses could have impacted scores in EE 44 and EE 55. [I

might even suggest the Faculty Board investigate how well the core curriculum has prepared students for sophomore year courses and beyond during each iteration of the past few years]. Additionally, while the current undergraduate seniors had only their final few months of high school online, and presumably took calculus and other math and physics courses in person, a substantial portion of the current undergraduate juniors, sophomores, and first-year students took calculus, trigonometry, and physics online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous recent studies [1-4] have shown that students perform poorly on objective high school math standards when taking courses online compared to in person, despite their grades in those courses being comparable. I believe that the undergraduate Academics and Research Committee (ARC) went so far as to collect and present data on this very topic at last year's Student Faculty Conference and presented this data again at a Faculty Board meeting last spring. In conversations with undergraduate student leadership in the past few months, they have lamented the fact that the Faculty Board has not only failed to take these data into account when making decisions about current and future students, but has also denied them a seat at the table where they could have brought this up directly. Members of the faculty should know better than to conclude that this change in a non-representative sample was caused by the lack of SAT/ACT requirement, when differential math and physics preparation due to a worldwide pandemic could just as easily explain the effect.

Third, the brief paragraph within the petition on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on academics fails to take into account the reality of the situation. More than a few students lost parents and other close family members, lost regular access to school-provided meals, and lost access to academic support and extracurricular opportunities during the pandemic. To expect them to master calculus and other math topics that are tested by the electrical engineering "basic math test" during such a tumultuous period is almost absurd. Furthermore, the SAT and ACT do not test calculus or physics topics and thus are not indicators of whether students have mastered these topics. Additionally, AP tests were administered online in a shortened format over the pandemic and the reports from both students and high school teachers from that period indicate that they were not representative of students' true grasp of these concepts. Moreover, widespread high school grade inflation, especially during periods of online learning, makes it almost impossible for the admissions office to discern which students have actually mastered calculus and other math topics based on their transcripts. As none of these metrics can serve as appropriate measures of student learning over the pandemic, it would be worthwhile for the members of the faculty who signed this petition to take this into account when suggesting that the lack of the SAT/ACT

requirement is the sole reason the admissions office is admitting "D & F students" instead of "A & B students".

While there are many more points I could make about the contents of the petition, hopefully I have demonstrated that it is poorly thought through. **The public comments attached to this petition clearly show that many members of the faculty believe that the solution to this "problem" of students un- and under-prepared for their courses is to admit "better" students in future years. What, I ask, is your plan to support the current students whom you have an obligation to teach, to the best of your ability, right now? It is easy to point fingers at the admissions office and at students. It takes much more initiative to help the students you believe are not ready for your courses to succeed, or as an Institute, to not only notice there is a "problem" but actually help resolve it. Members of the faculty, I implore you to do better.**

[1] American Economic Association, 2023. The importance of in-person schooling.

[2] Binkley 2022. Associated Press. COVID grads face college

[3] Locke et al. 2021. Learning loss in reading and math in U.S. schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic

[4] National Assessment of Educational Progress 2022

Editors' Note on the faculty petition on the opposing page: This petition was written several months ago (dated January 16) and may not reflect anyone's current views or facts. It is provided only for context to this article. It was also written for an audience of only the President, Admissions, and other faculty – i.e., not the broader Caltech community. It has not been edited or abridged in any way, except as noted in the article.

Two examples: Student performance in EE44 and EE55

The drop in STEM skills has been observed by many faculty who teach first-year and sophomore courses.

A concrete example is provided by Ali Hajimiri, who analyzed grades in EE44 (Deterministic Analysis of Systems and Circuits). EE44 is the introductory circuits course taken by all EE sophomores, and it uses basic complex number, linear algebra, and calculus concepts. Ali has taught EE44 continuously for the past 12 years. Each year, he administers a basic math test on day 1 to get a baseline on the students' math competency. He also administers a midterm and final exam. This fall, he reused the 2020 final exam to create a control comparison.

Consider the scatter plots below, which show the relationship between the score in the initial math Quiz 0 and the midterm exam (red dots) and final exam (blue dots). Each dot represents one student. There is a stark difference between the grades of 2020 sophomores (left plot) and 2023 sophomores (right plot). Whereas the top of the class in 2023 (green ellipse) looks similar to the entirety of the class in 2020, the class of 2023 has a sizable cluster of students (the red ellipse) that did not exist in 2020 and who enter the class with weak math foundations and in turn performed poorly in the course.

Is it caused by changes in admissions practices? Our admission criteria have changed in the past few years and thus deserve scrutiny. Starting with the class entering in 2021 (today's juniors), as a response to Covid, we stopped requiring applicants to take the SAT/ACT test, which in the past was used as an indicator of math and verbal proficiency. Furthermore, we introduced a number of non-cognitive criteria alongside academic merit. In the process, we seem to have lost focus on the need to choose applicants who have acquired in high-school the skills needed to thrive in Caltech's rigorous and fast-paced academic training.

Why bring back the SAT/ACT as soon as possible?

The case for using the SAT/ACT in our admission process is that it provides a necessary, but not sufficient, signal for success in our challenging educational program. These test scores are unlikely to be predictive of outcome differences at Caltech among students who perform above a high-threshold, as has been the case for our historical student population. However, based on years of experience in the classroom and the lab, we believe students who are not able to score highly on the math sections of those tests are not likely to perform well at Caltech.

January 16, 2024

Dear faculty colleagues:

Over the past few years, faculty colleagues across campus have noticed and commented on a sharp decline in the quantitative skills of our undergraduate students. In particular, although many of our undergraduates are of the same caliber as in the past, there has been a concerning drop in preparedness at the low end of the distribution. This decline has worsened with recent changes in our admissions practices, and is particularly acute for the current sophomore class. An inordinate number of students are failing courses, honor code violations are on the rise, and requests for tutors and extensions have substantially increased. Some faculty report having to adjust grading practices, as well as course content, to the change in student population.

We fear that this decline will have disastrous consequences for our students' training and career outcomes, for Caltech's educational mission, and for Caltech's reputation at large.

The goal of this letter is to initiate discussion and action on this critical and urgent matter.

Below we consider possible causes for the decline. Based on these reasons, we believe that the problem requires both immediate action as well as longer term improvement and monitoring in admissions practices.

In the immediate term, we ask the institute to:

- Reinstate the SAT/ACT as an admissions requirement for the next cycle. This should be announced in March 2024, so students can start testing in the spring, preparing for applications in the Fall.
- Form a faculty-led committee to study the effectiveness of current admissions practices on student outcomes and to make recommendations about how to improve the process. Such a longitudinal study was promised to the faculty (see Faculty Board meeting of 6/7/2021), but no such report has been released. This committee should report its findings sometime in Fall 2024 so that it can help shape next year's admission cycle.

In the longer term, we ask the institute to:

- Establish a faculty-led standing committee whose charge is to regularly gather data on student learning outcomes and use them to evaluate and guide our admissions processes. This is important because so far our admission policies have not been informed by this essential exercise, in contrast to peer institutions like MIT.

Why do student STEM skills matter?

Many of us are committed to Caltech because of its unique place in the higher education landscape, as reflected by the "There is only one Caltech" campaign motto. We view our educational mission as recruiting, educating, motivating, and empowering the next generation of top scientific, engineering and mathematical talent. Our comparative social contribution is to provide a niche for individuals with an extreme passion and talent for these fields. We give those students a protected environment to develop their talent and passion at the highest levels of science and engineering. Then they go and establish the semiconductor industry or find a cure for AIDS. Historically, Caltech has produced one of the highest rates of future STEM PhDs and the highest rate of Nobel laureates. If we give up on the goal of educating students with this unusual intensity and talent, then we lose our raison d'être, our unique and essential educational contribution to society.

As faculty, we also need to acknowledge the limits to what we can do. The historical greatness of our undergraduates has been largely due to them, not to the faculty. To train top-flight scientists and engineers we have to start with top-flight high school graduates. Our skill is in designing a curriculum of courses and research that challenges these students beyond their comfort zone. But we have no special skills that would bring the median high-school graduate to that level. There is nothing magical about Caltech that turns someone into a successful scientist just because they spent 4 years here. Furthermore, unprepared students struggle here even though they would have thrived at other top schools like Stanford or Harvard. This is why the STEM skills of our entering first-years continues to be crucial to Caltech's unique educational mission.

Two examples: Student performance in EE44 and EE55

The drop in STEM skills has been observed by many faculty who teach first-year and sophomore courses.

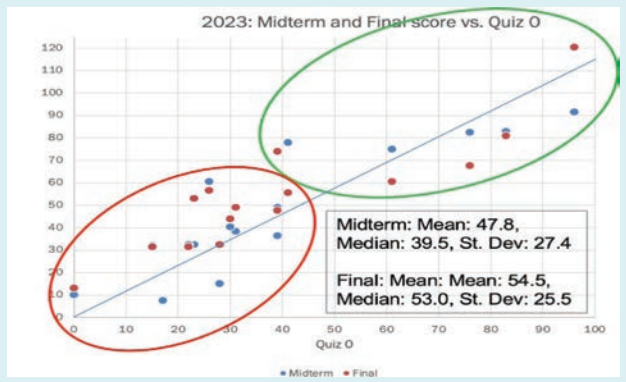
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Consider the scatter plots below, which show the relationship between the score in the initial math Quiz 0 and the midterm exam (red dots) and final exam (blue dots). Each dot represents one student. There is a stark difference between the grades of 2020 sophomores (left plot) and 2023 sophomores (right plot). Whereas the top of the class in 2023 (green ellipse) looks similar to the entirety of the class in 2020, the class of 2023 has a sizable cluster of students (the red ellipse) that did not exist in 2020 and who enter the class with weak math foundations and in turn performed poorly in the course.

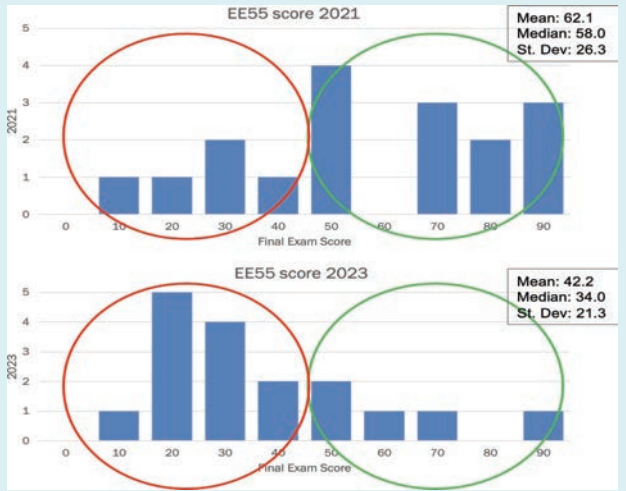
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The case for using the SAT/ACT in our admission process is that it provides a necessary, but not sufficient, signal for success in our challenging educational program. These test scores are unlikely to be predictive of outcome differences at Caltech among students who perform above a high-threshold, as has been the case for our historical student population. However, based on years of experience in the classroom and the lab, we believe students who are not able to score highly on the math sections of those tests are not likely to perform well at Caltech.



Another data set is from the EE55 class (Mathematics of EE) taught in alternative years by Victoria Kostina. This data compares the final exam scores of the students taking the exam in 2021 versus those taking it in the fall of 2023. It again shows a noticeable drop in the performance of the class.



Although this is data from only two courses, it is consistent with the classroom experiences of many other faculty at Caltech. If, as we suspect, the data from other classes at Caltech matches these observations, then we are facing a major challenge to our educational missions that requires urgent action. First, a substantial fraction of the current Caltech student population is not well matched to our educational program and not served well as a result. Second, the experience of all students is impacted, for example, by lowering the level of our course offerings. Third, our reputation, and thus our long-term ability to attract Caltech-caliber students are at risk. Eventually, this could affect recruitment of graduate students and faculty as well.

Decline of Caltech's performance in prestigious student competitions

Historically, our students have had an outsized presence at the Putnam math competition, with multiple Putnam Fellows (top 6 finishers), and topping the competition more than any school other than Harvard and MIT. But since 2010 there has been a steady decline in Caltech's showing. Over the past few years, Caltech's performance fell precipitously: since 2019 we have had zero students in the top 100. This is distressing for a school that outs itself on being a destination for top STEM talent. MIT, on the other hand, is sweeping the top spots.

A similar decline relative to other universities has been seen in coding competitions, such as the ACM-ICPC, where in the past few years Caltech has even failed to qualify for the international competition (before that it was a contender for the top spots).

While we are not suggesting all Caltech students should be top math or coding competitors, our performance in these competitions provides an informative signal about the quality of our student population, and gives us visibility to help attract top high school talent.

Potential causes for the decline in student STEM skills

Several hypothetical causes for the drop have been proposed. We hope that the faculty-led committee that we propose will carry out an immediate quantitative and systematic evaluation of these issues to inform our admission practices.

Here we provide an initial discussion of two of these causes.

Is it fully attributable to COVID? This explanation fails on two counts. First, the top half of our student population performs as well as the pre-pandemic students. Given our large pool of applicants (~16,000), and low admission rate (~2% for non-athletes), it defies reason to think that we cannot find more A & B students and have been forced to admit D & F students to fill the class. More likely, our admissions process is failing to spot the D & F students. Second, the COVID hypothesis does not explain the differences in top achievers across schools. COVID or not, top Putnam performers still exist. They are just not at Caltech.

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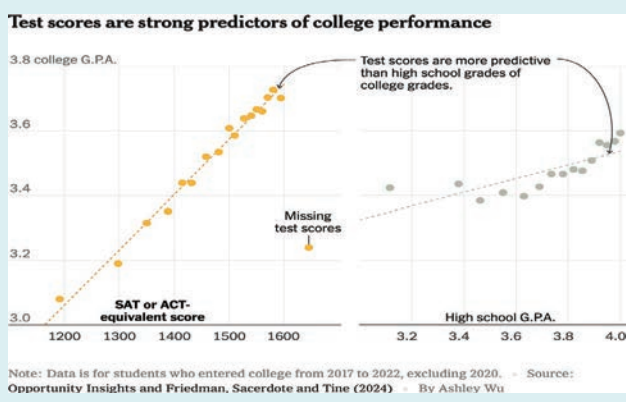
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Consistent with this view, in March 2022, MIT brought back the SAT/ACT as a requirement [ref1,ref2,ref3]. The report from the MIT dean of admissions is well sourced, and – given the similarity of MIT's mission to our own – makes for useful reading. Here are some relevant quotes:

- "Our research has shown that, in most cases, we cannot reliably predict students will do well at MIT unless we consider standardized test results alongside grades, coursework, and other factors. These findings are statistically robust and stable over time, and hold when you control for socioeconomic factors and look across demographic groups. And the math component of the testing turns out to be most important."
- "It turns out the shortest path for many students to demonstrate sufficient preparation – particularly for students with less access to educational capital – is through the SAT/ACT, because most students can study for these exams using free tools at Khan Academy, but they (usually) can't force their high school to offer advanced calculus courses, for example. So, the SAT/ACT can actually open the door to MIT for these students, too."
- "[T]here is no pathway through MIT that does not include a rigorous foundation in mathematics, mediated by many quantitative exams along the way. So, in a way, it is not surprising that the SAT/ACT math exams are predictive of success at MIT; it would be more surprising if they weren't."

Similar results have been found by several recent studies at other institutions [ref4,ref5,ref6,ref7]. For example, a study by Opportunity Insights looked at admissions records and student outcomes at multiple college Ivy-Plus colleges between 2017 and 2022 and found that "[e]ven among otherwise similar students with the same high school grades, we find that SAT and ACT scores have substantial predictive power for academic success in college," even after controlling for high school grades. As shown in the figure below, "[s]tudents opting to not submit an SAT/ACT score achieve relatively lower college GPAs." A related earlier study by Opportunity Insights also found that SAT/ACT scores are substantially more predictive than high-school grades of the likelihood of attending an elite graduate school or working at a prestigious firm.



Note: Data is for students who entered college from 2017 to 2022, excluding 2020. Source: Opportunity Insights and Friedman, Sacerdote and Tine (2024). By Ashley Wu

In stark contrast, three months after the MIT announcement, Caltech announced that we would extend the moratorium by three years. In fact, the press release from admissions making this announcement stated: "...standardized test scores have little to no power in predicting students' performance in the first-term mathematics and physics classes that first-year students must take as part of Caltech's core curriculum. Further, the predictive power of standardized test scores appears to dissipate as students progress through the first-year core curriculum." This claim refers to an internal report that has never been released to the faculty for evaluation and discussion.

In fact, the predictive value of the SAT on Caltech student performance had been studied in the 1990s by Dave Rutledge and colleagues. They found that students with a Math score below 700 have a high chance (larger than 50%) of dropping out. In the wake of that study, the admissions office set 700 as the minimum Math score for admissions.

As recently as 2019, all of our admitted students had an SAT Math score above 700, with the 25/75 percentiles at 790/800. In fact, historically, Caltech students had the highest SAT scores of any university. Now our admission process dismisses the SAT as a useless metric. One of the tenets of empiricism is that extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence to support them. Given that this claim goes against a practice that has served Caltech and MIT well for decades, that MIT recently looked carefully into this issue and brought back the SAT/ACT, that recent studies have found that SAT/ACT are predictive of student outcomes at Ivy-Plus colleges, that the 1990s Rutledge study found similar conclusions at Caltech, and that the report cited by the Admissions Committee Chair has not been shared with the faculty for evaluation, we are skeptical of the claim that it is not a useful metric on admissions.

Sincerely,

[..]

[ref1] <https://mitadmissions.org/blogs/entry/we-are-reinstating-our-sat-act-requirement-for-future-admissions-cycles/>

[ref2] <https://news.mit.edu/2022/stuart-schmill-sat-act-requirement-0328>

[ref3] <https://www.caltech.edu/about/news/caltech-announces-updates-to-admissions-practices>

[ref4] https://opportunityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/SAT_ACT_on_Grades.pdf

[ref5] https://opportunityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Appendix_SAT_ACT_on_Grades.pdf

[ref6] https://opportunityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/CollegeAdmissions_Paper.pdf

[ref7] <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/07/briefing/the-misguided-war-on-the-sat.html>

ASCIT 2024 Spring Elections: Candidate Statements

ASCIT PRESIDENT (2 CANDIDATES)

SOPHIE ELAM (FLEMING ESE '25)



Hello!
I'm Sophie Elam, a current junior in Fleming studying Environmental Science & Engineering.

I'm going to start by keeping it entirely real with you. It's not very often that I'm entirely confident I'm qualified for a lot of the things I do at Caltech (two whoops for all my party people in the impostor syndrome club!). However, ASCIT president is a position I feel not only abundantly qualified to hold, but one I know I can fulfill with the dedication, diplomacy, and commitment necessary to have a genuinely positive impact on our community at Caltech.

If you share this confidence with me, feel free to stop reading here. If you have any hesitations, or want further convincing as to what on Earth could inspire me to be so sure of myself, I invite you to read on!

To start, I've spent the previous year serving on ASCIT as the Vice President of Non-Academic Affairs (aka, IHC Chair). During this time, I've had a number of opportunities to observe and get involved with the inner workings of our institute's student leadership. This has given me a thorough understanding of how ASCIT's many operations currently run and can be improved to achieve maximum efficiency. I know how ASCIT events are planned and executed, and can serve as a point of guidance for others involved in these processes during the year ahead. Given this experience, my familiarity with my fellow student leaders, and my understanding of the framework under which student leadership operates, I'm excited to hit the ground running and support ASCIT, the Houses, and student leaders in their endeavors!

I've had the privilege of being mentored by current and past student leaders who have helped me develop communication, organizational, and interpersonal skills. These qualities have enabled me to establish healthy working relationships across the Houses and among various administrative offices. Specifically, I have established relationships with Caltech President Tom Rosenbaum, VPSA Kevin Gilmartin & Felicia Hunt, VP of Equity and Inclusion Lindsey Malcom-Piqueux, various Caltech Alumni & Trustees as well as members of our Faculty Board, and additional administrators/officers. I have also had the honor of working closely with current ASCIT president, Gabi Twombly and ASCIT advisor, Tom Mannion, and I am actively collaborating with unopposed candidates for additional ASCIT positions including ARC Chair, Director of Operations and Social Director.

Through these relationships, I've led planning for the first entirely "normal" Rotation since 2019, hosting an Advocacy Appreciation event, and coordinating with the Caltech Y and Athletics to promote MAD Day. I've also been involved

in the planning and execution of various ASCIT events (Formal, Valentine's Decompression Event, etc.) and have cooperated with administrators to address campus-wide issues. Some of my work has included navigating issues related to accessibility, housing, noise complaints, relations with the Athenaeum, rotation violations, and more.

I'm quite proud to say that after being involved in these projects as well as a handful of side quests, I've maintained an enthusiasm for working with fellow students and administrators at Caltech, and am excited for the potential projects and events possible in the year to come. Hopes that I have (many of which I've already started laying the groundwork for) are:

- Continuing, enhancing, and expanding current ASCIT operations such as: Formal, Techstock, Multicultural Week/Show, SAC renovations, creating community outreach and service opportunities, streamlining club and leadership documentation, and promoting off-campus activities, for example.
- Reviving historic Caltech events like: Arts programs (guest performances from international groups!? Already in the works :)), Student Experience Conference, and Mudeo.
- Beginning new initiatives to better student life: Advocacy Conference, resource fairs, personal development conferences for advocates, support for students who stay on campus over breaks, and environmental consciousness promotion, to name a few.
- Introducing new social events, for example: Orange Out tailgates, field day, food trucks, cross-campus events, contributing to a rose parade float, on-campus pop ups, and more!

I know these will not be the defining aspects of the position. Rather, as ASCIT president, my responsibility and priority will always be advocating for and serving the undergraduate community.

I will continue ASCIT's commitment to transparency and open communication, and encourage adherence to these values across campus. In addition to this, I strive to enhance inclusion, accessibility and promote a generally welcoming atmosphere at Caltech. I recognize that not every problem can be solved during a single presidential term, but this will not prevent me from initiating change and driving progress. I feel I have demonstrated this through my commitment to various projects through the duration of and beyond my time as the Vice President of Non-Academic Affairs. Despite my temporary break from ASCIT the last few weeks, I have still been actively working with Housing, CASS, CCID, Title IX, and Athletics offices to continue ongoing projects and initiate new ones.

In addition to these projects, I have persisted my efforts to support the student body both within and outside of my work with ASCIT. Aside from ASCIT, I have made efforts to serve our campus through my participation as a BoC rep, Title IX Ad, Health Ad, PA, and as the Campus Orange Watch Coordinator. I also helped with Hacktech, SCUBA club, and various athletic events. I am hopeful that this helps exemplify my willingness to serve our community in any way I can as well as the dedication with which I will see to the responsibilities of ASCIT president.

I've been incredibly fortunate and honored to serve on ASCIT for the past year, and am extremely grateful for the trust you put in me to act as IHC Chair. I ask that you extend this trust another year and allow me the chance to continue serving Caltech as ASCIT President.

It's truly been a pleasure, and if you have any questions or want to talk, I invite you to reach out to me at selam@caltech.edu or find me on Messenger.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sophie Elam

Every sign off is an opportunity. Just not this one.

THIERNO DIALLO (BLACKER CS '25)



My name is Thierno H. Diallo, and I am a junior from The Bronx, New York running for ASCIT president. A fun fact about me is that I flew a plane before driving a car. Over the past three years, I have served in various leadership positions throughout campus.

One of my proudest leadership roles on campus has been serving as co-founder and president of the Caltech Black Student Union (BSU) for two years now to nurture a safe space for Black students on campus. As president, I organized and led weekly meetings with a clear agenda and followed up these meetings by setting goals for the leadership team to work on before the next meeting helping hone leadership and time management skills. I also connected with alumni and other Caltech offices to further build the BSU's network and secure funding for our events. In times of conflicts, both internally and with administration, my team looked to me to mitigate and lead them through these hardships contributing to my leadership development. Moreover, I have experience organizing events on the scale of ASCIT with over 500 attendees. I am also a skilled public speaker developed through giving speeches and presentations at BSU events.

Outside of the BSU, I furthered my communications and time management skills while expanding my campus network by serving as a RISE tutor, Teaching Assistant, and course ombud, where I helped reform the Ma 6a course last year by gathering and effectively implementing student feedback with the professor. Outside of the classroom, I am a Peer Advocate, an active member of the Muslim Student Union, a sprinter for the Caltech Track team, and a former research assistant with the Sea Ice MURI project. Furthermore, I am an admissions ambassador where I nurtured my public skills and represented Caltech through discussions with prospective students. These positions showcase my involvement in every aspect of Caltech and the network I developed along the way which will allow me to serve all students in every step or phase of the Caltech journey. My leadership and impact were recognized last year when I was presented with both the CMS & IST Gradient for Change Award and the OSE's Emerging Leader Award.

I mention my leadership and experience to showcase my commitment to student life and my qualifications which are essential for serving as your next ASCIT president. As your ASCIT president, I hope to leverage connections with alumni and other offices to increase funding to better support the numerous clubs under ASCIT. Alongside running normal events, I plan to work with the IHC to better connect the eight houses through non-athletic events such as hosting inter-house game nights alongside more informal events. Furthermore, as your ASCIT president, I plan to incorporate student voices into our yearly event planning by sending out interest forms at the end of the spring and start of the fall terms asking students for events they want to see in the upcoming year. Through this initiative alongside many others, I plan to augment student life at Caltech for all students.

With your vote, I will support your Caltech journey as you all strive for your best selves and serve the common good inside and outside the classroom.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS (1 CANDIDATE)

AVA BARBANO (RICKETTS CNS '26)



Hi everyone! I'm Ava Barbano, current sophomore in Ricketts Hovse, studying Computation and Neural Systems. You may recognize me from ASCIT Secretary spam in your inbox... I have so many more sign-offs in mind, so I'm running for the position of Director of Operations for the upcoming 2024-25 term.

I have truly enjoyed working with the ASCIT Board of Directors this year and supporting the student body. As secretary, I managed ASCIT communications, meeting minutes, agendas, bylaws, met with administration and faculty, and took on whatever miscellaneous tasks and projects were needed for our events and initiatives. I feel confident I have the experience and knowledge of ASCIT and its operations necessary to thrive in this position next year.

Screen printing room: A particular project that I've spearheaded that I'm excited to continue next year is the creation of a student screen printing space. Throughout the year, I've worked with our art professor, Jim Barry, to approve the project, obtain a space, work with the physics department to move the Physics 8 classroom out of the SAC, procure SIF funding, coordinate facilities updates to plumbing and ventilation, and plan logistics for the final floor plan and move. By next year, I hope to have the space fully functional, and begin training house social directors, club leaders, and interested students on screen printing procedures. House, club, ditch day, and personal projects could all be completed in the space. As Director of Operations, I would be in a position to ensure this new student space is established and successful for years to come.

Club management: During my time as ASCIT secretary, I have received many an email from clubs, and interacted with a wide range of leadership on campus. I've worked closely with this year's wonderful Treasurer and Director of Operations during club allocation and running advertising events and club fairs. I am eager to work with the organizations on campus and support them however I can.

Equipment: I have been on both sides of returning equipment— as part of Ricketts social team and as a loyal member of ASCIT. Organizing our supplies, distributing sound equipment, setting up the stage, and even moving scaffolding. I know the layout of the SAC far too well. I am looking forward to optimizing the organization systems and making sure students have easy access to the equipment they need to make their events a success.

Publications: This year, I also plan to continue the post-pandemic support of campus publications. Anika set a fantastic English-major precedent to managing them, and I will do my best to keep up the momentum of their efforts and set up our publications to thrive.

I am truly looking forward to working with the ASCIT BoD again this year to serve the student body. Please reach out if you have any questions via Messenger or at abarbano@caltech.edu.

TREASURE (1 CANDIDATE)

JONATHAN BOOKER (RICKETTS PH/CS '25)



Hello! I'm Jonathan Booker, a junior studying Physics and Computer Science and a member of Ricketts Hovse, running for reelection as ASCIT Treasurer. Having served on the ASCIT Board of Directors for the past two years, I am eager to continue the work that has made a significant impact on our community.

During my time as a member of the Board of Directors, I have championed the revitalization of key project clubs like CAOS and Caltech Racing, facilitating their successful restart post-pandemic. In collaboration with Claire Ralph and CALE, I've also streamlined the process for clubs to secure sponsorships, ensuring they retain the full financial benefits. Further, I have also oversaw a comprehensive restructuring of the California Tech's finances, guaranteeing regular publication and fair compensation for its contributors. Additionally, I've been committed to ensuring financial transparency by publishing the budget and directly emailing club financial processes to every member of ASCIT.

As ASCIT Treasurer, I've oversaw the start of the ASCIT Fund so that Alumni can directly donate to student life and where that the money is donated is managed by students and lost within the institute. Additionally, I've been working with Tom Mannion and AAR to make it so that ASCIT can fundraise money that will go directly to the houses and student organizations. I've attempted to organize events to where alumni can give support to student activities as well as interact and connect with students. While these attempts did have not worked out this year, it has revealed that there are alumni that are eager to support students but no way of doing it. As ASCIT Treasurer, I will work with the IHC and AAR to make sure that these events happen.

In my role as ASCIT Treasurer, I have introduced a higher level of budgetary transparency by making our finances publicly accessible in the Tech, a practice I intend to maintain if reelected. I have also made significant strides in enhancing cross-house funding, successfully allocating 35% of this year's ASCIT dues to the houses. My goal is to continue expanding support for the IHC and the house system in every possible way. Additionally, I played a key role in reducing formal ticket costs, culminating in the hosting of the most affordable formal since the pandemic at SoFi Stadium. Looking forward, I aim to collaborate with Kevin Gilmartin and Student Affairs to assess financial allocations within the institute, ensuring that the funds we contribute as students are directed towards initiatives that truly resonate with our desires and needs.

If reelected, I am committed to collaborating with the ASCIT President and the Office of Strategy and Implementation to establish committees dedicated to evaluating the institute's response to the C3 report released in April 2022. My aim is to ensure that the recommendations are implemented effectively. I plan to involve both faculty and administration members in these efforts to foster a comprehensive approach. Furthermore, I firmly believe that the respect and dignified treatment of students by faculty and administration is paramount, and I will continue to advocate for this fundamental principle.

I have really enjoyed serving this school for the past two years by having the opportunity to serve as ASCIT Secretary and Treasurer. I have done the best I could to make life easier, fairer, and less stressful for everyone involved in the Caltech community. I care about the students in this and there is more work to be continued. I have nothing else to say other than to ask that you vote for me for Treasurer so I can continue to serve everyone. Finally, I'm glad that this is my final candidate statement and election.

UNAFFILIATED CRC REP (1 CANDIDATE)

MICHAEL GUTIERREZ (DABNEY/RICKETTS AY'25)



Hi friends. Some of you may know me from the Tech; or from my frequent ridiculous wardrobes consisting of a "PRESS" fedora, a colorful lab coat, and outside socks; or else from my alarming degree of omnipresence across disparate corners of campus. If I had enough funny left to make a quantum mechanics joke, it would go here. Anyway, this time I'm running to be your Unaffiliated Conduct Review Committee (CRC) Representative. Why? For the same reason I always end up picking up more responsibilities: *no one else was going to do it.*

I'm qualified for this position because I previously acted as Ricketts House's CRC Rep for two years, and I was actually involved in a couple of cases as acting co-chair. So... vote for me, I guess. Or don't. Maybe I shouldn't be given any more power on top of my existing monopoly on the media. (Did I mention I also run the Admissions Blog?)

I yield my remaining seconds of your attention to say, sending you good vibes! And hey — you're a pretty dang awesome human :)

P.S.— For f*cks sake, don't break the Honor Code. That would be incredibly cringe of you. If you do end up in front of the CRC (and it's a legitimate offense, not just technicalities scraped together by an RLC), I will be judging you extremely hard.

ARC CHAIR (1 CANDIDATE)

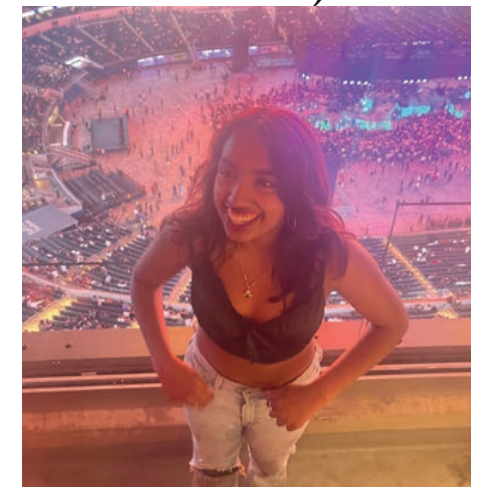
JEB BRYSA CZ (PAGE CS '25)



For the past two years, I have served on the ARC, first as the rep for Page House, then as a campus-wide At-Large rep. Across these two years, I have gotten exposure to the breadth of events that the ARC puts on, as well as having represented undergraduate students at the Core Curriculum Steering Committee of the Faculty Board Committee. This past year, I organized two successful Student Faculty Games, and am currently planning a third (May 21st, please come!), acted as a CS option rep at both option advising events, and have been an ARC liaison for a few course complaints. Currently, I am in the process of implementing a computing-specific PAC tutoring program with the Deans and the current ARC Chair, Alex. This program will be tailored towards non-computing options and will offer course-agnostic tutoring and workshops for learning the basics of scientific computing and associated languages and libraries. If I am elected, I plan to carry this program through to completion. Last year, I co-chaired the Student Faculty Committee special topic, revising the core curriculum. Among other changes, we successfully added CS 1 as a core requirement, and decreased the HSS course requirement from 12 to 11. Both of these changes will be reflected in the newest course catalog. As part of this SFC special topics committee, I developed a professional connection with Dr. Jennifer Jahner, who will soon be the undergraduate Dean. Needless to say, I have both the experience with ARC events and relationships with administrators to represent the undergraduate population in our efforts to improve the academic and research environments at Caltech. If I am elected to ARC Chair, I will be able to utilize my experience and relationships to carry out my duties to the highest of standards and develop new programs and committees to benefit the undergraduate community.

SOCIAL DIRECTOR (1 CANDIDATE)

ASHLYN ROICE (PAGE/LLOYD CS '26)



Ashlyn's statement is available at <https://tech.caltech.edu/2024/04/26/ascit-spring-candidate-statements/#social-director---ashlyn-roice>

VOTE HERE!!!

Election Day is Monday, April 29, 2024

Voting Opens at
10:00 AM

Voting Closes at
11:59 PM

<https://donut.caltech.edu/1/surveys>

“Vote Early, Vote Often, Vote NO!”

Corporate
Democracy

Songs to Get Murdered To

Sophie Elam
Culture

Get excited folks, there's a new cowboy in Tech Town, and he's here to bring you playlists. Moving forward, every edition of the Tech will have a themed playlist for your auditory pleasure, starting with the seasonally appropriate theme of "Songs to Get Murdered To" (we <3 midterms week). That being said, you can listen to the playlist on Spotify or Apple Music with the respective QR code. "Songs to Get Murdered To" contains the following bangers, bops, and hits:

1. How Do You Feel - The Maine
2. Stressed Out - Rex Orange County
3. Afraid - The Neighborhood
4. Shook - Cautious Clay
5. Batshit - Dominic Fike
6. Spite - Omar Apollo
7. Crazy - Gnarles Barkley
8. I feel bad - blackbear
9. Why do you feel so down? - Declan McKenna
10. Hell of a week - lovelytheband
11. Violence to the Spirit - Sundara Karma
12. We're f*****, it's fine - Jeremy Zucker
13. I'm So Tired - Troye Sivan & Lauv
14. Insomnia - The Moss
15. I Hate it Here - Taylor Swift

Hot takes from the creator:

Alright kids, none of you asked, but here are my unsolicited opinions on some of the particularly noteworthy songs in this playlist.

Midterms week or not, *How Do You Feel?* always hits. The Maine is one of my personal favorite bands, and the longevity of their ability to put out diverse, yet high quality music is impressive. *How Do You Feel?* is a great example of this, coming off their 2017 album, which was released 10 years after the band's forming in 2007.

Next, I just want to take a second to recognize the fact that Omar Apollo struck gold with his latest single, *Spite*. In my head cannon it doesn't matter how many years it's been, every Omar Apollo song is about Frank Ocean, which makes every Omar Apollo song 20x better, *Spite* included.

*We're f*****, it's fine* may just be one of the most underrated songs in my library. It's definitely a different vibe from most songs, but in case you haven't listened to the playlist yet, I'll just tell you: this playlist has no congruence outside of titles. Usually, I'm the type to spend hours crafting a very specific amalgamation of vibes for a playlist, but with midterms coming up, I saw an opportunity to run a bit and had to take

it. That being said, this indie interlude is exactly the type of thing you can dissociate to while lying on the ground after finishing your last midterm. It's also probably the exact amount of time that your peace of mind will last before you realize that you have a set due in two days. I hope you enjoy your minute and 44 seconds of bliss and serenity.

Lastly, I'm beyond letting Taylor Swift speak for herself. Let her speak for us all when she says *I Hate it Here*.

Whether or not you like Songs to Get Murdered to, I hope you can at least appreciate their titles enough to check out the next edition of Songs to do Something To.

Yipeekiyay,
The New Cowboy in Tech Town

SONGS TO GET MURDERED TO (SPOTIFY)

SONGS TO GET MURDERED TO (APPLE MUSIC)

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

@thecaliforniatech

Movie Review: Civil War

Emily Yu
Culture

"What kind of American are you?"

In this new film from Alex Garland and A24, that question takes on a different meaning. Since 2020, when Garland began writing "Civil War," political polarization and violence have only increased. Despite its initial trailer and release during an election year, "Civil War" does not address or provide any commentary about the country's fraught political landscape. Instead, Garland depicts unconventionally divided states of America.

The United States has imploded. 19 states have seceded into three separatist groups. The "Western Forces," an alliance between California and Texas, are closing in on the nation's capital with the help of the "Florida Alliance." Their goal is to oust the third-term president. The story centers around four war correspondents as the conflict nears its end. Lee is a photojournalist, famed for a photo she took at the "Antifa massacre." She and Joel, a thrill-seeking reporter, work for Reuters. They are joined by Sammy, who writes for "what's left of the *New York Times,*" and Jessie, an aspiring photojournalist who reveres Lee. They are trying to

reach the White House in order to photograph and interview the president who is hostile to the press. "They literally see us as enemy combatants," says Sammy. "They shoot journalists on sight."

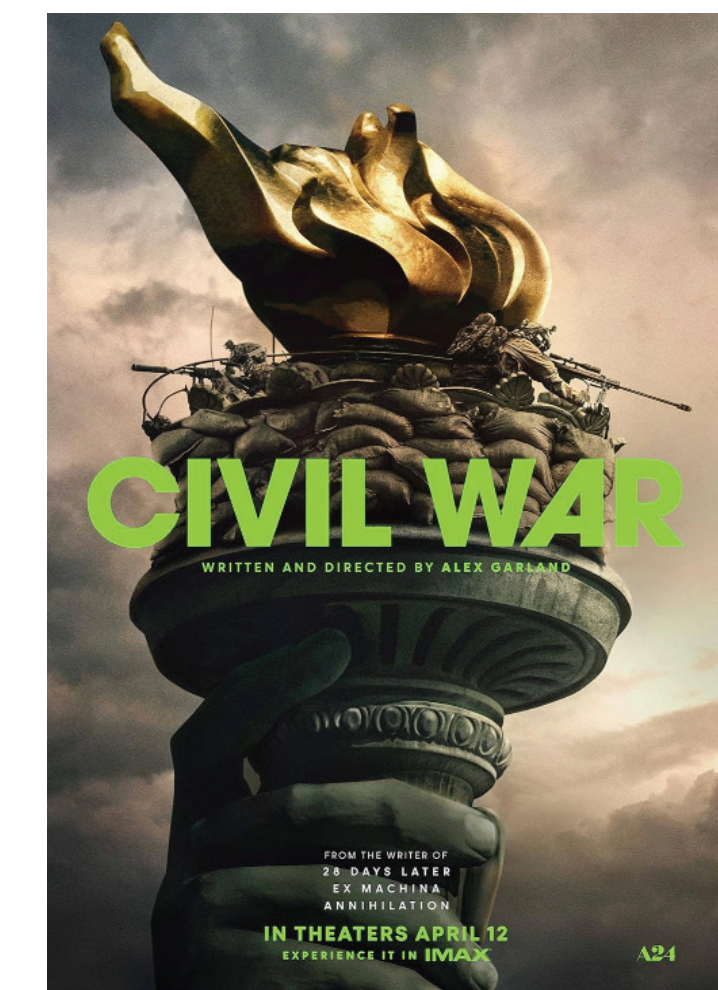
Departing from the moderate safety of New York City, the four reporters have to take an indirect route through Pittsburgh and West Virginia to reach DC. They make several stops throughout the journey. At a gas station, Lee bargains for half a tank of gas with \$300 CAD, as \$300 USD would only buy a sandwich. At another stop, a soldier holds them at gunpoint and asks, "What kind of American are you?" According to him, Lee from Colorado and Jessie from Missouri are real Americans. Joel from Florida is not.

Garland intentionally leaves out partisan politics with any semblance to reality. He keeps the context of the conflict vague and unspecified. For instance, the unnamed president is not affiliated with any party. As a result, "Civil War" is able to highlight the work of journalists. The four main characters repeatedly put themselves in harm's way in pursuit of an opportunity they may die trying to reach. The violence that they face calls attention to the risks and challenges of reporting in the midst of a war. Furthermore, Lee's harshened experi-

ence contrasted with Jessie's naivete demonstrates the mental and emotional difficulties of witnessing and reporting on conflict zones.

Additionally, by not explaining how or why the country has reached this war-torn state, Garland can focus on the societal impacts of warfare. In the film, people have been fighting for so long that they have lost sight of the reasons they started fighting in the first place. Throughout their roadtrip, the four reporters encounter all manners of violence including torture, indiscriminate killing, and mass graves—none of which have a clear political purpose. A soldier under fire from a sniper has "no idea" who is aiming at him and explains "no one's giving us orders... someone's trying to kill us, we are trying to kill them." Through this senseless violence, the film illustrates the dangers of conflict and ensuing societal collapse.

"Civil War" is a warning. Through the lens of journalism, viewers can watch what happens when social order disintegrates and trust in institutions is lost. Regarding her work, Lee says, "Every time I survived a war zone, and got the photo, I thought I was sending a warning home. Don't do this. But here we are." The one takeaway Garland wants viewers to have from his latest film: "aversion."



Science Showdown

Enric Adillon and Madeline Hicks

ACROSS

- 1 Defining feature of an armadillo
- 6 Like "Jimmy Kimmel Live!"
- 11 Bird box producer?
- 14 Home to Arcadia National Park
- 15 Like computer network or the lymphatic system
- 16 Marine Corp. battle cry, after "HOO"
- 17 A magnet always has two
- 18 5 Gum catchphrase: "___ your senses"
- 20 Frequence midwest March Madness contender
- 22 Mascot of 38-Across
- 23 Schadenfreude, in other words
- 25 One who tries to drive down the price
- 30 Petrochemical suffix
- 31 Dropped letters in the rebranding of a popular community center
- 34 Undress with one's eyes
- 35 "From my point of view"
- 37 Defining feature of the feud between 38-Across and its rival
- 38 The *better* STEM school
- 39 Not-so-defining feature of the feud between 38-across and its rival
- 40 Its usually shorter than a trailer
- 42 Have bad posture
- 43 British source of definitions: Abbr.
- 44 Pump purchase, in brief
- 45 Danielle Brooks' character in "Orange is the New Black"
- 46 They often require lenses
- 48 Many a graduate of 38-Across
- 51 Khrushchev, former leader of the Soviet Union
- 55 Inflationary influences
- 57 Pablo Escobar or Joaquin Guzmán, e.g.
- 60 Genetic material, in brief
- 61 Hit the clubs
- 62 Type of olympic lift
- 63 Approved, in text lingo
- 64 Jaguar driven by James Bond
- 65 Emoji with many variations

DOWN

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
14					15					16				
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55									56				58	59
60														
63														

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- 8 German brand when followed by-and maybe preceded by-"das"
- 9 Italian babies
- 10 Aimless adverb
- 11 ___ Maga
- 12 Antithesis of free will
- 13 First singer with a hit track using autotune
- 19 SoCal basketball team, on scoreboards
- 21 See 35-down
- 24 Direction from 38-across to the coast
- 25 Jump into action?
- 26 Get on the same page
- 27 LGBTQ advocacy group
- 28 Millenials and boomers
- 29 Summer retreat for many New Yorkers
- 31 "Hear ___"
- 32 Greek witch who turned men into pigs in "The Odyssey"
- 33 "___ end of the day..."
- 35 With 21-down, encourage to commit a crime
- 36 Performance enhancing drugs popular with cyclists
- 38 State that voted to legalize recreational cannabis in 2016, familiarly
- 41 Acted maniacally
- 42 Canadian province north of Montana, familiarly
- 45 Sad (esp.)
- 46 Defined as zero celsius and one atmosphere of pressure: Abbr.
- 47 Green mushroom in Mario
- 48 Bygone bird
- 49 Animal noise from "Old MacDonald"
- 50 Impenetrable, after "iron"
- 52 Progress cautiously
- 53 Word after tall or fairy
- 54 Common topic for an SAT math question
- 56 Bashful
- 58 Traffic component
- 59 Canadian province or SoCal airport: Abbr.

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

We strive to represent every voice in the Caltech Community with fairness, accuracy, and impartiality in our news reporting.

Send submissions or contact the Tech editorial team at

tech@caltech.edu

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

On Ranked Pairs Voting

Alejandro Lopez
Letter to the Editor

Dear Editors,

A few months ago I learned that in the course of conducting its elections, Ricketts Hovse was unsure which exact voting method to use. At first, I and a few other alumni were shocked and disappointed; only a few years ago, a number of then students including myself had worked to switch Ricketts, several other houses, and ASCIT over to what we considered the most ideal voting system for us, the "Ranked Pairs" or "Tideman" method. But taking a step back, it makes sense that nuances might have been lost over time, especially across the pandemic. At the time those changes occurred, because of widespread discussion, voting systems were almost as much on the minds of students as the game *Pokemon Go* (perhaps hyperbole). Additionally, Professor Ordeshook's version of PS 12 covered voting systems extensively, and I have also learned he no longer teaches that course. As an aside, I apologize Ricketts never kept of permanent written record of this change, but it occurred before I was Ricketts secretary. My intention though now is not to dwell on the short-sightedness of Ricketts at the time, but to address all current undergrads so they might appreciate Ranked Pairs as a voting system.

What is the Ideal Voting System?

There is no ideal voting system, according to math done by people a lot smarter than me. More precisely, of the many criteria that can be imposed to determine what a "good" voting system is, no single system can satisfy all of them. Many students are hopefully familiar with major issues with certain common voting systems however. The "first-past-the-post" or "plurality" system allows candidates to win without a majority of votes, and is very vulnerable to spoiler effects and strategic voting and becomes especially unideal for elections with many candidates. No group I'm aware of at Caltech uses plurality voting, but much of the United States uses it for many elections. An improvement over this system is the "two-round" system which takes the top two

candidates and runs a new run-off election to decide the winner. This ensures the winner wins with a majority. This system is still used by Fleming, and a similar system is still used by Page. Out in the real world, California uses two-round system extensively.

The two-round system is only a slight improvement over plurality voting and still suffers from several issues. Notably, focusing on the top two candidates adds an element of arbitrariness to the system, especially since voters can only express a single preference. Additionally, the system requires the extra time to run run-offs in some cases. A natural improvement is to instead have voters vote only once with ranked preferences, and then conduct a series of "instant" runoffs, where candidates are eliminated one by one during counting by whoever has the fewest votes, and votes are redistributed to the next candidate each voter prefers. This method is known as instant runoff voting (IRV) and it's the most common form of ranked choice voting. It's currently used for single-winner elections in Lloyd and Avery and is used in San Francisco and a few other state and local government elections across the US. Ranked pairs was mistaken for IRV in Ricketts this year precisely because it is so common.

A brief history of voting systems at Caltech

Voting at Caltech has followed the evolution in thinking as I just described; for most of the 20th century (as far as I've found) ASCIT and the houses conducted elections using a simple two-round system, with separate runoffs occurring in the event one candidate didn't initially reach a majority. At some point in the late 1980s or early 1990s, ASCIT voted to switch to IRV. Most of the Houses (except Page and Fleming) switched to that system at some point as well. Most recently in the late 2010s, some students saw issue with IRV. IRV is still dependent on eliminating candidates, which can arbitrarily influence results. The 2016 Ricketts Secretary special election resulted in a bizarre occurrence where changing a single vote would have altered the winner merely because of the elimination order. IRV also fails one criterion students deemed important, the Condorcet criterion, which

says that the winner should beat any other candidate in a head-to-head matchup. Voting systems that meet this criterion are known collectively as Condorcet methods, and students settled one of them, Ranked Pairs. Ricketts, Dabney, Blacker, and Venerable (then Rud-dock) each voted to switch to Ranked Pairs around the same time. ASCIT voted to switch in November 2017, with over 80% of students campus-wide supporting the amendment.

How Ranked Pairs Works

The best way to think of Condorcet election methods is as a round-robin contest; each candidate/ticket is compared to each other. In each pair (A,B), the winner is simply the candidate whom more voters rank higher. If a single candidate is found that beats all the candidates, that candidate is called the Condorcet winner. Condorcet methods always elect the Condorcet winner where one exists; they differ in how they determine the winner in cases where there is no Condorcet winner, wherein a "cycle" exists. A cycle is a scenario like the game rock-paper-scissors where A beats B, B beats C, and C beats A. Ranked pairs avoids cycles by "locking in" pairs sequentially by "strength", giving preference to pairs where one candidate beat the other candidate by a greater margin (hence the name, "Ranked Pairs"), and skipping any pairs that would create a cycle.

In general, cycles are rare in real life and Condorcet winners usually exist, so the most important part of ranked pairs for voters to understand is simply that their rankings are used to compare candidates to each other one by one. Each pair in a ranked pairs election can be displayed in a table, like those you see if you look through the results page on Donut. The locking in of each pair can be displayed as a directed graph.

I hope this helps students better understand and appreciate their voting systems, and that students in houses with older voting systems might consider updating them. Voting, after all, is a cornerstone of student self-governance and voting systems have been one example in recent memory of students using science and math to solve their own problems without any direction from administration.

TIX Coordinator Resigns

continued from page 1

The Tech also heard from a student who was the subject of a report, but no formal complaint or investigation was pursued against them. They told us "I can't say I knew [Vatti] much, but she was at least willing to check on me, months after we last talked. It cheered me up."

Vatti leaves behind Caltech's Title IX Office at a time where many students do not have confidence in the office, according to a campus-wide poll run by The Tech last term.

In this poll, 70% of participants (81 out of 115) scored the Office's effectiveness a 1 or 2 on a scale ranging from 1 ("Not effective at all") to 5 ("Extremely effective").

Among those polled who had personally interacted with the Title IX Office, 59% (23 out of 39) chose a 1 or 2, when asked to rate how satisfied they were with their overall experience with the Office, on scale ranging from 1 ("Very unsatisfied") to 5 ("Very satisfied").

When asked if they thought the office processes cases within a reasonable timeframe, 70% chose a 1 or 2, on a scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree").

Other recent articles published in The Tech have also highlighted instances where individuals thought their cases were mishandled by the office, mainly because of delays and poor communication.

When Vatti took office, "she was very well aware of the reputation of the Title IX office, one of the things she wanted to do... was to change that," according to Gupta. He cites a particular Title IX case that occurred before her time at the office, as one of the reasons for this negative reputation. This case is colloquially referred to by students as the "Lululemon" case.

According to publicly available legal documents from a 2019 lawsuit involving Caltech, in the "Lululemon" case, a female student was allegedly sexually assaulted by another student, then mistreated and intimidated by Caltech when she pursued an investigation. News of this case spread, resulting in a distrust of the Title IX office amongst much of the undergraduate population.

Gupta notes one of Vatti's aspirations for the office, which he feels did not come to fruition: "I remember her saying she wants to do more to help people understand [how the Title IX office works], but I don't think I ever saw it materialize."

"There was a lot of distrust of the office, in large part because... of the... Lululemon scandal with Felicia [the Title IX Coordinator before Vatti]," says Winter Pearson (CNS '24, Dabney), who was a Title IX advocate for 3 years. "And then there was some potential hope in having a different Title IX coordinator [Vatti]."

However, it seems like this hope has faded, as Pearson says "the belief that [interacting with the Title IX office] will actively negatively impact your life, and you should just handle it yourself... I think is becoming more and more prevalent across campus."

"One of my hopes is that when we replace Hima, we replace her with someone who is better able to rebuild that trust [in the Title IX office]," they say.

"They will have their job cut out for them," says Gupta, regarding Vatti's future replacement. "Regaining trust is a hard thing to do. But I hope they can do it because it's a very, very important issue on our campus."

The Article About Roompicks

continued from page 1

Also new this year is the change to the unaffiliated-priority Bechtel Suite Picks, as described above. This points system is a "hotfix" for the imbalance created by the wave of dishonest unaffiliations this year. By giving "historically unaffiliated" groups a higher pick, hopefully students who are truly not part of any house culture will be able to take full advantage of the unaffiliated-priority system that is intended for them.

According to VPSA Gilmartin's email, for next year's lottery he will "will work with the IHC and other student leaders, and with unaffiliated student stakeholders, to ensure a lottery system that meets the needs of unaffiliated students, and prevents the regrettable current strategy by which students unaffiliate as a matter of convenience, to gain preferential access to Bechtel."

So is there a risk of underfilling the houses?

The results of the OSE affiliation survey indicated that over 100 students dropped their house memberships between winter and spring term, prompting worries about whether houses had enough full members left to fill them. However, as mentioned above, the OSE affiliation survey did not actually change anyone's membership status, and the real number of students who officially unaffiliated over this period is much less. (Although it was still large enough to motivate the modified pick order for unaffiliated-priority Bechtel suites.)

Even so, it is still possible for a house to have more beds than full members who opt into House Picks. In such a situation, there would be vacancies remaining even with reserved frosh rooms. According to IHC Chair Evan Portnoi, the Housing Office plans to fill any such vacancies with upperclassmen house members who haven't picked into a room yet.

I thought we were guaranteed 4 years of housing? (No.)

Despite rumors to the contrary, Caltech undergrads are not guaranteed four years of on-campus housing. While an average >90% of students live on campus each year, according to Associate Director of Student Housing Joe Bennethum, only first- and second-year students are guaranteed housing.

The Housing Office makes the 2-year promise clear in their Resident Guide and Housing Policies manual, available on housing.caltech.edu. This policy has been consistent since it was changed from promising only 1 year in 2019. The most recent time that all undergraduates were assured four years of on-campus housing was in 2010.

The confusion stems from language in the 2020 and 2021 Caltech Catalogs which vaguely refer to a "four-year residency expectation." Bennethum clarified in an interview with the Tech that, in this case, "residency" simply refers to "enrollment." This language was removed for the 2022 catalog.

House	Estimated Available Beds (Not Reserved for Frosh)	Full Members
Lloyd	56	75
Page	59	84
Ricketts	45	74
Venerable	58	82
Avery	99	111
Dabney	44	68
Blacker	40	75
Fleming	54	77

Table 1: Estimated Available Beds vs. Full Members eligible to pick into those beds, by house. Numbers provided by IHC, updated Monday April 22.


Timeline


Date	Event	Notes
April 25 - 28	HOUSE PICKS	
May 6	Updated lottery numbers posted	
Monday, May 13, 2024	Bechtel Suite Application Due	Called Unaffiliated Suite Lottery Application on Housing website
Wednesday, May 15, 2024	Bechtel Suite Picks	
Friday, May 17, 2024	Marks/Braun and Bechtel Single Application Due	Called Unaffiliated Double Lottery Application on Housing website – even though it's also for people who need singles
Monday, May 20 - Tuesday, May 21, 2024	Marks/Braun and Bechtel Single Picks	

Amazon Skymall


Welcome back to Amazon Skymall! In this column, we hold a raffle where we [not] randomly select one of our lucky readers and give them the item of their choice from these hand picked selections!

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







Tie Dye Party
\$69.99




Hedgehog Plush
\$11.95



250z Flask
\$22.99



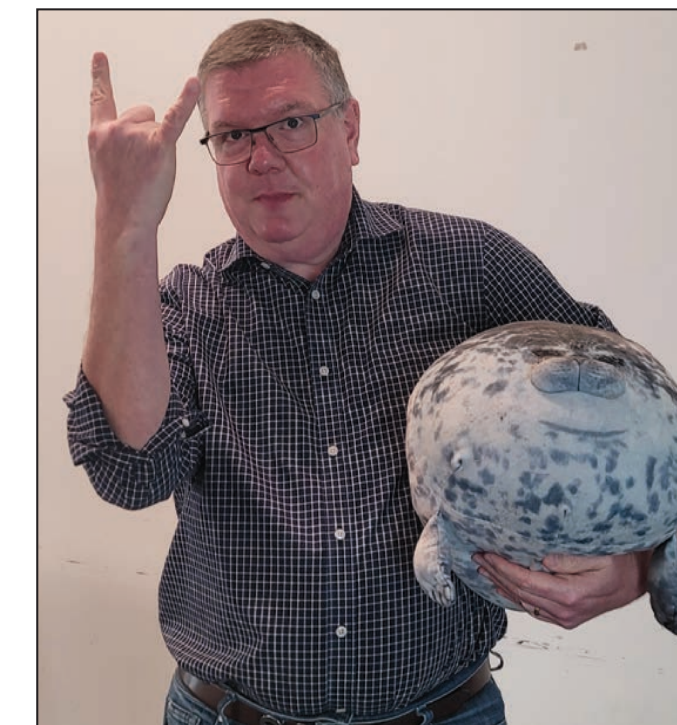
Laser Cat Toy
\$25.00



NO Free

Last Issue's Winner

Lee Coleman (Student Wellness Services)



Commencement is Expensive

For many first generation college students and their families, college graduation is a celebration of innumerable sacrifices and hard work. However, if you happen to be first generation and low income (FGLI) graduation and the celebrations that come with it can be downright unattainable. Regalia starts around \$100 if you buy it new. To celebrate with your family at the Senior Banquet, it costs each family member a whopping \$85, and the Commencement Office does not have a fund to help students celebrate this major accomplishment with their families, who are often the ones that have sacrificed in order for their children to get here. In the next issue of the Tech, I'll dig more into the high cost of graduation and the ensuing celebrations, including thoughts from students and the Commencement Office. Stay tuned, and feel free to contact me if you want to share any similar experiences.

—KATELYN SULETT (ksulett@caltech.edu)

The California Tech

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cordially invite you to the

Senior Celebrations 2024

May 13, 14, or 15
6:00-8:00 pm

President's Residence
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Enjoy a festive evening
honoring the Class of 2024



Scan the QR Code
to RSVP by May 1

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The California Tech

#10

CalGuesser

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

"On campus" is defined by the bounds of the map on caltech.edu/map/campus.

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

Last week's winners!

CalGuesser #9 - April 12, 2024

Congrats, you found it!!!

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

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john, who knows, apr 24