



Additional RAs to be hired Caltech Victories

MOYA CHEN
Staff Writer

One year after the expansion of the graduate resident associate (RA) program and the addition of Area Coordinators (ACs) to the North and South Houses, the Deans' Office once again approved an increase in the number of RAs in student housing. Ricketts, Page, and Ruddock Houses, as well as the off-campus Braun House, will each add another RA in the coming

a response from approximately 450 undergraduates with over 70% approval for the RAs in a variety of different categories," explained Lesley Nye, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students. "It became quite evident that the students love their RAs and think they fit well into the institutional support network. The idea is that since we know that students value RAs so much, why wouldn't we want to provide more of them so that they could cover more people?"

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- Dean Nye

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academic year. These new RAs will come at the cost of several on-campus spaces for each house. In return, they will bolster the support network and decrease the student-to-RA ratio according to the goals outlined in the 2011 Mental Health Task Force report.

The Deans viewed more graduate RAs as the most appealing method of strengthening the Caltech safety net. A survey of the student body demonstrated strong confidence in the existing RA program. "We had

Part of the motivation behind the expansion of the RA program stems from the report of the Mental Health Task Force convened in 2009 to reevaluate the support network at Caltech. The committee issued a report in 2011 which targeted a student-to-RA ratio of 50 to 1 and advocated that "each student should know and see his RA/AC on a regular basis." The report also looked at causes of undergraduate stress and called for an increased number of faculty in residence in undergraduate housing.

Some students have raised concerns over losing valuable on-campus beds to make room for the new RAs. However, these

concerns will likely be mitigated in the long run. "I understand there's frustration about losing space," Dean Nye noted, "but I think the added benefits outweigh the costs....We'll be gaining on-campus beds with Bechtel even if we don't give the rooms back."

Additional RAs form only one part of the deans' plans to increase the strength of the Caltech safety net.

There have been concerns that the upper-class counselor (UCC) program is not uniform across the eight Houses. In the fall, before the start of term, the UCCs will be asked to attend a three-day, intensive training program lead by Taso Dimitriadis, Residential Life Coordinator (formerly Area Coordinator) of the South Houses, and Jennifer Howes of the counseling center.

This is one part of long-term plans for development of the UCC program. The idea of augmenting the UCC system with undergraduate RAs has been floated around for some time. Undergraduate RAs would serve to lower the RA-to-student ratio without impacting the number of on-campus beds.

When asked about this possibility, Dean Nye responded, "I would want, and this is by no stretch of the imagination a promise, for us to develop and structure a program in such a way that we could have a mix of both graduate and undergraduate RAs. But before we can do that, we have to be able to hold all off the UCCs of all of the houses to the same standards.... We also will have to do careful program assessment before we can determine just what sort of combination of undergraduates and graduates is ideal for Caltech overall."

AUDREY LIU
Contributing Writer

On Saturday April 21st, seven teams of Techers went out to Google LAX in Venice, California to compete in the annual Google Games, which debuted in LA for the first time last year. After snagging the first, third, and fourth places in the Games' inaugural year, Caltech obliterated the competition, which included USC, UCLA, and UC Irvine, yet again, by taking five of the top seven places; Team Beavers, comprised of sophomores Angela Gong, Atharv Vaish, David Ding, Mike Qian, and Kalpana Suraesh, earned their second consecutive first place finish, with Suraesh replacing Michael Yurko from last year. Teams Lloyd and DEI (Dabney Eats It) originally tied for second; after a thrilling Google Doodle Pac-Man match, 'Lloyd' ultimately secured second place.

The Google Games tested teams' abilities in four sections: geek trivia, puzzles, Lego building, and coding; earning stars in each of these rounds counted towards a total

point value. Geek trivia quizzed competitors' knowledge of nerdy pop culture, while the puzzle portion included Pokemon and DDR puzzles. The teams then built a Lego bridge and were awarded for span and height. Ben Razon of Team Animal Crossing said, "Figuring out that our bridge would be more sturdy sideways... was a novel idea that we came up with because we were able to synthesize ideas together effectively." Finally, the coding portion entailed writing algorithms to solve problems on Google Code Jam. David Ding of Team Beavers said, "Strangely, I think [this was] the hardest part for us... which isn't [what] you'd expect from five CS majors."

Despite some trouble in the Lego and coding rounds, Team Beavers performed well enough to pull off a win.

For their victory, each member of Team Beavers took home a Google Chromebook, while Lloyd and DEI received Google lava lamps and binary clocks, respectively.



On Friday, April 20, the Caltech Women's Tennis Team made history by breaking a 30-match losing streak that Caltech had held in SCIAC since 2007. The deciding match fell on the shoulders of Stephanie Kwan, who was one-and-one with her opponent after two matches before forcing a tie-breaker that led the Beavers to a 5-4 victory over Occidental.

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Helping readers burst out of the Caltech bubble

Need to know

< **100** words about the world this week – topics sorted from good to bad

by Sam Barnett – links to full stories available at barnett.caltech.edu/news

Synthetic DNA developed **95%** accurate transcription between artificial and natural DNA [NATURE]

IMF global fundraising \$ **450 billion** more received – doubles IMF's crisis lending capacity [CNN]

US gasoline prices fall **5¢** in two weeks – average now \$3.91/gallon – 1st price drop of 2012 [CNN]

Upset in French election **80%** turnout – 1st time a current president has lost 1st voting round [BBC]

Strange dolphin deaths **877** washed up on Peruvian coast – marine biologists investigate [CNN]

Egypt stops sale to Israel **40%** of Israel's natural gas came from Egypt – pipelines shut down [BBC]

Gas pipeline attacked **14** attacks by militants on Egyptian pipelines since Mubarak's ouster [CBS]

Food with Mannion!

Do you like eating food?

How about free food at nice restaurants?

Ever want to tell the world exactly what you think of said food?

The Tech will be beginning a new column to chronicle the foodie experiences of new writers every other week... The Catch: They'll be going head-to-head with Tom Mannion who will be reviewing the same restaurant. If you have ever thought you were more of a gourmand than our resident master chef, now's your chance to prove it!

Email us for a spot on the list at tech@caltech.edu

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ASCIT Minutes

Minutes April 16, 2012. Taken by Laura Santoso

Officer's present: Chris Hallacy, Pushpa Neppala, Christian Rivas, Diego Caporale, Mario Zubia, Prakriti Gaba, Laura Santoso

President's Report

1. Board of Trustees: a Trustee meeting is April 23, with the campus/house walkthrough on April 24.
2. Leadership Summit: This is a leadership training session for every type of student leader on campus. Will likely be scheduled for May 12 from noon to dinnertime.
3. Dean's office/Room picks: Trying to figure out why students are leaving the houses and living off campus.
4. Faculty Board Meeting: Was primarily about freshman seminars. They are looking at how having both freshman seminars and a unit cap effects the classes freshmen take.
5. Bechtel Committee: Second round of house town halls to get opinions about the new residence are almost done. The current options are freshman housing, sophomore housing, and unaffiliated/OCA housing. The committee has until May to make recommendations.

Officer's Reports

1. ARC (Pushpa)
 - a. New Menu Class: The curriculum committee is considering adding EST2 for next year (energy, science, and technology).
 - b. CCTL (Caltech Center for Teaching and Learning): There are two candidates for the head of the new teaching and learning center and final decisions will be made soon.
 - c. SFL: Next student faculty lunch will likely be May 1.
 - d. ASCIT teaching awards: decisions will be made in a couple of weeks.
 - e. Committee appointments: Sign-ups for the general student body to be on ARC SFC committees will go out soon.
2. IHC (Christian)
 - a. Sign-ups: Revcomm chair, food com chair, interhouse athman, and stewardship committee sign-ups are now out. Interviews will have happened by last weekend.
 - b. Formal Dinner: dining is thinking about making formal dinners for several houses at Chandler, instead of individual house dinners.
 - c. Resident Life Coordinators/RAs: the committee is scheduling interviews for the applicants.
3. Director of Operations (Diego)
 - a. Big T: still working on getting last year's Big T published. This year's Big T is on schedule.
4. Social Director (Prakriti)
 - a. Movie Night: There will be an ASCIT movie night May 11 (Friday) to see the Avengers.
 - b. Another social event?: Thinking about organizing a Caltech flash mob.

Student speaks against frosh-only housing

ANONYMOUS
Contributing Writer

Discussion has been circulating recently among undergraduates on the situation regarding the new Bechtel Residence, particularly whether or not it should be a freshman-only residence.

The majority of the undergraduate population seems opposed to this idea, for a variety of reasons.

These reasons include the threat to the House system as an entity, the social aspect of the Houses that would be lost by segregating frosh, and academic concerns surrounding tutoring, course advice, and major advice. These are all valid reasons, and require discussion. However, the inclusion of UCCs at a suitable ratio would help mitigate some of those issues (particularly the academic issues) and, depending on their dedication, even allow for the organization of social activities.

I am choosing to speak about an issue brought about by frosh-only housing that is likely to remain unspoken, and which underlies many issues surrounding undergraduate student life in general. This is the issue of mental health among undergraduates.

First, I will present a brief summary of why this issue is so pivotal. It is estimated that roughly 3-6 percent of the population is depressed at a given time – and 17 percent of the population will experience a major

depressive episode at some point in their lives². This number is likely to be higher at Caltech, for a variety of reasons. Mood disorders, such as bipolar disorder, may be as much as 10 times more common in “creative professions” – including scientists. Chronic stress is known to increase the risk of depression – and it would be hard to argue that college students, and Caltech students in particular, are not under significant stress, given the social pressures of a small school, adapting to life here as a freshman, and the academic workload.

Recent actions by the administration (punitive actions against Ricketts and Page, cancellation of the spring musical, a new and ill-defined hazing policy) have done little to lessen worry among students. This all adds up to an environment that seems ripe for depression and the issues that arise around it – most particularly, the worry of suicide.

The mental health of students should be central to any discussion of student life, not an implied undertone never brought out due to the potential awkwardness of the topic – as it is with the suggestion of a frosh-only housing system, where subtle references to “comfort” and “adjustment” replace an open and frank discussion of the real issue at hand.

At this point, I will address my personal history. I have suffered from major depression for several years, dating back to high school, and have attempted suicide in the past.

I have had extensive psychiatric counseling in the past. I suffer from emotional issues aside from depression and have required at various times in my past counseling for these issues, including anger management. There is strong likelihood that I suffer from bipolar disorder, although an official diagnosis has never been given. I also suffer from maladaptive obsessive compulsive disorder – this means that the symptoms of my OCD are strong enough to interfere with normal day-to-day functioning. In short, I am a perfect example of the student whose mental health is a concern.

When I was preparing for college, there was a worry about how I would approach my mental health. Would I require continual counseling? Would I need to find a local clinic, or would any mental health resources on campus be sufficient? Being separated from

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my family and friends, who had helped me through periods of severe depression in high school, was in and of itself difficult enough to nearly send me into a depressive episode. I chose Caltech for its academic offerings, as I hoped not to let my mental disorders define me, and came ready to work hard, do research, and try to have a social life. I also came prepared for the eventuality that I would need to find a way to deal with my depression.

Then I came to Caltech and rotated into my current house. For the first time in my life, I felt safe.

I was surrounded by like-minded individuals, who were all brilliant, shared my interests, and perhaps most importantly, many of whom had been through similar experiences.

I wanted to be around them, and they wanted me in their house. Afterwards, living with upperclassmen, sharing in house traditions, and being “forced” to spend time with fellow freshman enabled me to be comfortable around a large group of people for the first time in my life, and has helped me deal with multiple

instances of depression which have arisen in my time here far more

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I know for a fact that I would have had more problems in a frosh-only house...In high school, I was never “forced” into a social environment with people who were like me in many ways, and it ended with multiple suicide attempts.

quickly and effectively than I had in high school.

The idea that randomly assigned UCCs, RAs, and ACs would replace true friends is frankly laughable. I would ask those who propose frosh-only housing to put themselves in the following situation. Imagine you are a new college freshman. You are away from home for perhaps the first time, surrounded by new people. For the first time in your life, you aren't the smartest person

with them. You went on a House sponsored Ski Trip with them. You

have House dinners with them every night, and try to get them floated on occasion.

They helped you with your chem homework that one time you were completely confused about NMR spectroscopy. At midnight, you knock on their door and ask them if they want to play Starcraft II for an hour to take a break from sets, and then you go out to In 'n' Out afterwards. That one time you drank a little too much at an Interhouse, they stayed with you all night to make sure you were OK. And all this interaction was “forced” upon you by virtue of the House system.

Alternatively, there's an AC. They live – somewhere. It's “over there”, in some vague area of the housing complex.

They might not even live in the same building as you. You saw them at that obligatory meeting at the beginning of term after Rotation, and maybe once or twice after when they came to talk to the entire house.

You haven't spent more than 30 seconds talking to them one-on-one. You're not sure if they even know your name. Or you could talk to an RA – you've seen them more often. They took your alley out to dinner once, and show up at parties on Saturday nights to remind you to clean up when you're done. So you sort of know them... That might be enough, right? But they're still, what, 6 years older than you?

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in the room. You are struggling with classes, you don't have a good avenue for making friends, and you are unsure of how to think about your future. Your roommate, who seemed awesome in the first week, has weird hygiene habits and a sleep schedule that clashes with yours. You're overwhelmed, feeling down, and need someone to vent to and ask for advice. You could go talk to one of two people.

The first is an upperclassmen who you met in your first few

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days here – during Rotation. You talked with them for a while, got along really well, and thought that you wanted to be in a house with people like them.

When you rotated into their house, you went out to dinner

Familiarity, bred by the housing system, was essential for me being able to seek out help. There is no way I could have made the connections with other frosh and upperclassmen, had the shared experiences I did, or trusted them enough to go to them.

A brief reminder for those who aren't aware – one unfortunate symptom of depression is a lack of desire to seek help. When I'm truly depressed, I can't muster the willpower to wander halfway across the House to get to my RA, or walk all the way down

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to the Counseling Center. I can't avoid upperclassmen knocking on my door at night, asking if I want to come to Carl's Jr. If I don't answer the same way I normally do, they know something's up – and they help me.

I know for a fact that I would have had more problems in a frosh-only house. Anyone who tries to dispute this doesn't know me. In high school, I was never “forced” into a social environment with people who were like me in many ways, and it ended with multiple suicide attempts.

In fact, I was around a variety of people with a variety of different personalities – much as if frosh who would belong in different houses were forced to live together. To those who might reply that I would have made friends by being in close contact with frosh in my alley of a hypothetical frosh-only Bechtel House, I also know that is wrong.

I made friends with the people in my house not only because we were forced to be together, but because we ended up in the house due to our already shared interests – we were practically pre-made friends, waiting only for the House system to force us together.

There's a reason I don't visit those Houses on the other side of the Olive Walk – I don't feel comfortable around the people there. That's why I didn't end up there.

I can speak only for myself. I know certain of these sentiments are shared by others – because, just as I have turned to friends bred by the House system for help, so have others turned to me.

I can say with certainty that without the House system, I would have had significantly more problems with depression. Frosh-only housing would have exacerbated these problems.

I can't say for certain whether or not I would be here, alive, today without the House system – but I suspect that the answer would be no.

This is my plea. Keep Bechtel from being designated frosh-only housing.

Preserve the House system. It has made my life here worth living.

ASCIT President candidates give statements

PRAKRITI GABA Candidate

I am a junior running for ASCIT President in the 2012-2013 Election. I've been on the Board of Directors for two years now, initially as Secretary and currently, as Social Director. With such consistent involvement in the BoD, I've had the honor to work with several prior ASCIT presidents first-handedly, both to discuss



important student-related issues, including Housing and Core, and to arrange one of the most successful ASCIT formals Caltech has seen in countless years.

With these previous accomplishments along with my desire to make your voices heard and taken seriously, I believe that I possess the experience, and the leadership skills to be ASCIT President.

My aim as ASCIT President will be to improve communication between students and administrators. Much of the tension and unfavorable change that occurred this past year was a result of a lack of consistent interaction and communication between students and our administrators. I will ensure that student voices are heard directly, whether it be on the recently proposed Bechtel issue, the roles of the ACs, Rotation, or on academic core reform.

I will be sure to tirelessly talk to the administration until they compromise with us. I will make sure that they know that we, as Caltech students, should have a say in matters that affect us and our time here!

My prior experience as a member of the BoD for two years has given me the ability to form numerous strong connections with faculty and administrators. Such ties will allow me to advocate for you in an effective and efficient manner.

Moreover, I want to increase student and faculty interaction. I will do this by increasing fundraising for student-faculty lunches at the Ath.

I will arrange more events, in collaboration with the ARC, that give students the opportunity to learn about the fascinating research Caltech Professors are involved in early in the year so that it will be easier for students to contact Professors for internships, including SURF, Amgen Scholar, etc. In fact, I want to take

such interaction even further by inviting more well-known scientists, physicians, economists, and politicians to campus so that you can learn about the work and experience of successful people in our world today, instead of being limited to those solely in the Caltech 'bubble.'

In addition, I will continue to supervise unique social events without allocating our entire budget on them. There will be another, even more successful ASCIT Formal.

We will have Midnight Donuts at your convenience. As a junior at Caltech, I know that Caltech can be a stressful place. I want to help relieve some of your stress, and making sure that fun and interesting social events are planned throughout the year will be another one of my goals.

Furthermore, I will work consistently with the IHC to promote interhouse interaction. Caltech admits a select few students each year to study among the best of the best in the world. It's a shame that a waning amount of interhouse interaction keeps all of us from getting to know each other better. Though I completely support the house system, I also think that a bit more interhouse communication will enhance our time at Caltech.

I will also make sure that other ASCIT services are consistently available for you. Of course, this includes bagels once per week!

But I would also like to arrange for new gym and workout equipment, and a well-equipped ASCIT Screening room. I will work in collaboration with the Caltech Development Office and DevTeam to improve the Caltech website, and I want to increase awareness of the variety of scholarships and funding available to students, including that from the Alumni Association.

Perhaps most importantly, I want to be available for you!

I encourage you to come to our open BoD meetings to get to know pressing issues around campus. I welcome you to contact me any time to discuss any problems or requests. If elected to the position of ASCIT President, I will listen to you, lead you, and advocate for you.

Over the past two and a half years, you've helped me become a better leader.

Now, let me make Caltech a more enjoyable and fulfilling experience for you.

DIEGO CAPORALE Candidate

Sitting on the ASCIT Board of Directors as the Director of Operations for the last year has been a bumpy ride. From student outrage and protest to an ASCIT formal on a yacht, our BoD has tackled issues big and small and effectively worked together with the IHC and the student body. This

has meant countless meetings with each other and administrators to try to hash out issues that the students have brought to light. ASCIT's main goal this year was to better represent the students and to create the framework for a stronger student body. We wanted



everyone at Tech to be heard, so we held town halls and walked around asking people what they thought, always fighting for the students. As ASCIT President, I want to keep ASCIT moving in this direction. When an issue arises, such as the structuring of Bechtel house, the President must have a good sense of what the public stance on the matter is, as well as promote reasonable discourse between the students and administration.

As someone who is generally well connected in the Caltech community, I already have a good understanding of what Caltech undergraduates want, and I would augment this by collecting opinions both by simple surveys as well as by making rounds through the houses to better understand your ideas.

Also, being on the BoD and taking charge during house events, have allowed me to gain reputation amongst important figures within the administration and faculty. As President, I could use these relationships to hit the ground running.

All this being said, the President also has the responsibility to lead his fellow BoD members. I plan to emphasize cohesion within the BoD and have us all work together to be efficient and productive. While working well with each other is great, we also have to work well with other student leaders on campus. Given that I have good relations with the IHC as a whole, I can work together with them to effectively and seamlessly get stuff done.

One additional role of ASCIT is to promote more interhouse interaction through joint events funding in the houses and school-wide social events. With the 20% boost in the ASCIT budget, I will ensure that some of that is used to have several social events that are in line with what people want to do.

Next year, we plan on having an ASCIT formal and a Big Interhouse, but we'd also make sure that the student body approves of these and future big events. Also, I would

continue to provide all the services that are provided by the President including the ever present Friday morning donuts and Monday morning bagels. Moreover, I would ensure that the other services (Donut, publications, screening room etc.) that ASCIT provides continue and are updated to better fit the students wants and needs.

I can best represent the students and effectively lead the BoD next year. With your support we can make our student opinion heard.

BROCK JONES Candidate

I'm running for ASCIT President.

ALEX MOUSCHOVIAS Candidate

ASCIT exists to represent the student body to the rest of campus, and to provide social events and other services to the students.

As president I will ensure that your thoughts are heard and your ideas come to fruition on both fronts. During this year, ASCIT has significantly improved relative to years past, but there is still a long way to go.

This year, ASCIT has been more open to student input and more involved with student issues than before, and during the last two months has started creating lines of communication with Athletics and the Dean's office where none existed before. These are all good starts, but we must do more.

We need to make sure that passionate students are given the opportunity to improve things on campus.

We need to make sure that student opinions are heard. I will build on my relations with other departments on campus who can help us, such as Business and Development to establish and increase house endowments, and the Alumni Association in order to provide students with a vast network of advice and contacts.

As we form these new connections, we must also work to maintain existing ones.

This is especially important for those that effect our daily lives, including Student Affairs, Housing, and the Deans.

By holding regular meetings with representatives from these groups we can ensure that student opinion is heard - not only after something changes that we don't like, but also to provide input on proposed changes and create a more enjoyable campus by suggesting our own improvements. This will enable us to have a large impact on important decisions like Bechtel, area coordinators, and the hazing policy.

In order to make sure that we are indeed communicating the opinion of the undergrads as a

whole, we first need to obtain it. In addition to continuing this year's tradition of holding small town hall meetings in the houses, I will ask all ASCIT officers to eat lunch together once a week in Chandler so that anybody can easily talk to us and ask questions or suggest ways that we could improve.

Also, I hope that at least one member of ASCIT will eat dinner in every house each week for the same reason. The more input we can get from you, the more we can do for you.

Even as we work on all of these behind-the-scenes improvements, we must of course continue to provide more and better visible services.

I intend to make good on the last year's promise of a biennial ASCIT formal by holding one during my time in office. I will also ensure that polls are sent out to select other social events that a large number of students will attend, rather than



spending large amounts of money on events that only appeal to a small audience.

I will work to finish last year's Big T, and get the next one out on time. I will also work to repair those other services that have fallen by the wayside, such as a degrading ASCIT screening room, and the SPECTRE sci-fi library that is still sitting in boxes from last year. And of course we will still have weekly donuts and bagels. :)

Finally, a pet project of mine for this coming year will be the Winnett student center. Tim Black, the IHC chair of 2 years ago, spent a considerable amount of time on this project, and there even exists complete blueprints for a renovation. I intend to finish what he started to create a student center that we will actually want to use and can be proud of, that will be open to students of any house affiliation (or lack thereof).

If this seems like a daunting list of tasks to accomplish in one year, it is.

But by relying on my proven track record as a member of Lloyd's excomm, president of two clubs, and experience on several appointed committees, and by working together with the rest of ASCIT, the IHC, other interested students, and members of the faculty, I truly believe that we can make a difference to be proud of, and I thank you for your support.

ARC Chair candidates appeal to student vote

ISHAN KHETARPAL Candidate

It is often said of big, bureaucratic governments that “the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing.” In my time on the ARC thus far, I have found



that surprisingly, such a statement is also very applicable in a small, loosely organized institute such as ours.

We see this manifestation in our otherwise-excellent curriculum: for example, most students taking Ph 001B require vector mathematics that is not taught until the following term. We also see this manifestation in our administration: in the last month, the Curriculum Committee has successfully done the impossible, by passing a resolution to implement a reduced core curriculum while simultaneously voting overwhelmingly against the concept of a core curriculum reduction. At the end of the day, the student is the one who is baffled by this situation--faced with 100 pages of reading from each of four classes, how do you know what you are actually supposed to do?

That is not to say, however, that the quality of academics at our institution is anything short of excellent. Rather, I assert that the manner of its delivery should live up to the same reputation. As a young mind entering Caltech, I looked forward to classes with challenging, fun content and professors who constantly found new, innovative ways to make sure that each and every student got a top-notch learning experience. The shortcomings of the latter motivated my migration to ARC work in the first place.

Such is the story with many ARC members. I wish to clarify that if I am honored with the role of ARC Chair, while overnight change is improbable, I will ensure (1) close involvement with the student body to gather feedback, and (2) measurable concrete strides in these directions.

In the last year, my work on the Core Curriculum Steering Committee (CCSC) has led me to examine very closely the role of a student representative. From the time I started on the committee, it became very clear very fast that I was involved in shaping something that had been in the pipeline for several years. However, as it

became clearer to me that there were a variety of students with a variety of opinions, I worked with my colleagues to (1) visit all eight undergraduate houses for town hall meetings and (2) carefully engineer quantitative metrics to present this opinion to faculty. The process is still ongoing, but I feel that I have had a substantial role in making students and faculty more aware of each others' motivations and opinions, thereby facilitating the process.

My favorite ARC-related story, however, relates more directly to my original motivation for joining the ARC. From the start, I had a vision to have greater institutional emphasis on teaching and learning, and at every corner, looked for ways to make this happen. In one extended conversation with the Vice-Provost, I presented my motivations and suggestions, and we both agreed that this is an important issue that needed to be addressed at the institutional level. Over the next several months, after consulting with resources from academic institutions all over the country, it was decided that the key step in a solution would be the establishment of a Caltech Center for Teaching and Learning (CCTL). Similar centers have dramatically improved academic quality at our sister institutions, MIT and Stanford, and I remain convinced that the CCTL will make similar innovations here. Just last week, I spent several days meeting with finalist candidates to staff the upcoming CCTL. I am proud to announce that our institute's center will be opening in the fall, and I take a great amount of pride in seeing my vision transformed into reality.

The demands I will face as ARC Chair will vary. Nevertheless, I am very confident in my ability to interface with the student body, set goals based on its feedback, and most importantly, deliver concrete results out of these. I am aided in this endeavor with close friends in all Houses and firm contacts in all facets of the administration.

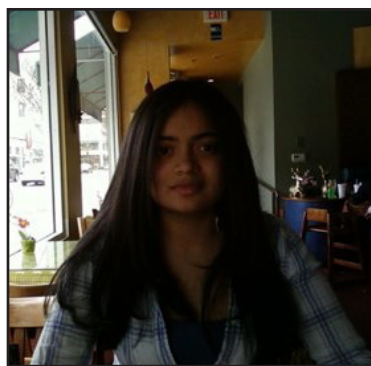
If you have any questions, I encourage you to contact me at ishan@caltech.edu. I hope that you will take careful consideration in the election of this important position, and regardless of the result, I look forward to serving you in the coming year.

“The truth shall make you free.”
~ Institute Motto

MAHATI MOKKARALA Candidate

Hello my name is Mahati Mokkarala, a junior from Fleming House who is interested in running for ARC (Academics and Research Committee) Chair for the next upcoming year. I've been on the ARC committee since the end of last year as an ARC Representative-at-Large and during my time at the

ARC I've been involved with the SFL (Student-Faculty Lunch) Program, helping organize 3 student-faculty lunches a term. The ARC Student-



Faculty Lunches were and still are an excellent way for students to meet with faculty from many different backgrounds in an informal house setting. I helped plan and organize these events all last year including sending out all of those invitations and replies from the arcmandude gmail, making sure students got to sit with the professor they wanted and profs get to interact with an x amount of interested undergraduate students, as well as help order enough (usually too much!) food for the entire event. With this experience, I got to interact more with professors ranging from the humanities and social sciences to math/physics and further realized how fulfilling it is to encourage and improve Caltech undergraduate student life by encouraging more faculty-student informal social interaction. Organizing the ARC SFLs further made me interested in trying out for the ARC chair position; honestly, by helping streamline and popularize the Faculty Lunch event, I recognized that I had the leadership potential and interest in upholding and improving, in any way possible, an undergraduate's academic experience here at Caltech.

After being on the ARC for around a year, I've come up with some ideas on how to further improve the ARC Committee. Some ideas I've been thinking about include increasing student-faculty-TA-grad student interaction by perhaps organizing a sort of social event like the student-faculty lunches program so then even TAs will get to know more about the students they are helping teach. I've honestly noticed that TAs who know Caltech undergraduates well or who used to be a Caltech undergraduate are generally some of the better if not the best TAs. Some other ideas I've been thinking of recently include implementing a town hall meeting every term in every house; this idea would be like the core-reform town hall meetings where the ARC members on the Core Curriculum Steering Committee informed students about new changes to Caltech's Core Curriculum. Instead of focusing exclusively on Core, these house 'town-hall meetings' would allow house ARC Representatives and Representatives-at-Large from other houses to meet with a larger group of students and

discuss about what the ARC has done this term in terms of course concerns and improving Caltech academic life. Another key issue the ARC is focusing on this term is promoting more undergraduate year-long research like MIT does with its UROP program; I'm also extremely interested in this program as honestly successful research is a long-term, not summer commitment. Honestly my main motivation for running is a chance is to help maintain and improve Caltech undergraduate life in any way possible; by becoming ARC Chair I have the chance to make a difference for the Caltech undergraduate population.

MALVIKA VERMA Candidate

Look in your email inbox. See anything including the email address “arcmandude@gmail.com”? Well, that's me.

My name is Malvika and I'm running for ARC Chair.

The ARC does a lot. It is the student liaison to the faculty for academics, the organizer of option fairs and other informative events, and the body that makes sure that our courses are of the quality that a Caltech education should be.

As ARC Chair, I will not only do the standard duties of running student-faculty lunches, organizing the Option Fair, and serving on various committees—all of which I have already done extensively in



the past year—but I will also make sure that our voice is heard when it comes to academics. You may have met me at the Core Curriculum townhall meetings. This sort of outreach, via house events, surveys, and open meetings, is exactly what I plan on doing as ARC Chair. I want to know your opinions so I can fully represent you at Faculty Board meetings and at meetings with the deans.

We all know about the new core. As a Core Curriculum Steering Committee representative, I have the experience and the connections to work with the faculty. While I understand the faculty's point of view when it comes to their actions, I think it is important that we as students stand up for what we value in a Caltech education. We need a good, strong Core, backed with quality teaching—as ARC chair, I will reopen the

discussions involving Core with the faculty to make sure that our education matches what we think is important.

Thank you for reading my candidate statement and I look forward to (hopefully) being your new ARC Chair.

PUSHPA NEPPALA Candidate

While I chose to attend Caltech because of its academic reputation, later in my freshman year, I became involved in the ARC because the teaching quality and curriculum did not seem to live up to this standing. It frustrates me to see students unhappy with the quality of their education at a place like Caltech. My goal as ARC Chair would be to increase student satisfaction with their education. Specifically, I want to improve communication



between faculty and students by promoting discussion between both parties on academic issues. As interim ARC Chair and former ARC Rep, I have persistently been working towards this goal.

As ARC Rep, I started the Professor of the Month Program, successfully dealt with numerous course complaints, and became involved on the CCTL (Caltech Center for Teaching and Learning), a committee that is working to start a teaching and learning center for professors who have some insufficiencies in teaching.

As interim ARC Chair, I have already forged several student, faculty, and administrative contacts; with the help of these individuals, I hope to make academic resources more available for students to advocate for their opinions. I have been currently overseeing the organization of discussion between students and faculty involved with core reform, and in the next few weeks, I plan to continue my involvement of organization in more meetings between concerned students and faculty members. I know who and what my resources are, and the connections I have made will prove to be invaluable in my work to improve the educational experience at Caltech.

Continued on page 7

ASCIT Treasurer candidates

MONISHA DILIP Candidate

The duty of the treasurer is to handle the ASCIT money, provide reimbursements for clubs in a timely



manner, and to help the BoD in any capacity that it needs. I, for one, believe that I am quite trustworthy, and, having passed Ma1a, I can adequately count, add, and perform any other mathematical functions required of me as the treasurer. I have quite a lot of experience splitting checks when going out to dinner, including in large groups where half of the people have cards and half have cash. Yeah, it's pretty impressive. Having finished core, I have all the time in the world to get reimbursements back to you very soon after you submit them. But in all seriousness, I know that, if elected, I will put in my all to help make next year amazing.

SHARJEEL AZIZ Candidate

I have been active in helping the ASCIT for the past year as a Freshman. I know how events are organized, how the organization is run, and how the members of ASCIT have to take into account the perspective of others in making decisions. I believe I will be an excellent Treasurer because I have been active in many clubs



and student run organizations these two terms--and I know when and how to designate funds appropriately. I will fund those events that will be for the benefit for all of the undergraduates and not those that target specific groups. I will, however, never limit my point of view. I will ask the other ASCIT members for their advice and work together with them in helping the undergrads organize events. I will also seek the perspectives of those

around me--fellow classmates and other Caltech students. In the case that they feel that an event would be beneficial for the Caltech community and I do not, I would lean towards funding the event for the sake of their happiness. I am an organized individual and would definitely make Caltech a great and exciting place next year. Please feel free to email me at saziz@caltech.edu or come by my room at Ruddock 208 if you have any questions. If you come by and talk to me, I'll make you an offer you can't refuse...

PUIKEI CHENG Candidate

The two certainties in life are death and taxes. In Caltech we collect the latter as ASCIT dues—and it's not a small amount of money either. What happens to that money afterwards? Many students bemoan the lack of a social life on campus, but that's not because of a lack in funds.

I believe that we should have a chance to enjoy our college experience. With the expanded ASCIT budget for next year, I aim to increase the social budget



for club funding and multihouse events such as Big Interhouse. However, although I would personally love ASCIT movie night, not everyone thinks that's worthwhile—and I would love to hear those disagreements in order to determine the best way to spend our money.

I have been a treasurer and I've organized events; but most people at Caltech already know how to count and pay bills.

I don't think paying the bill is enough. Many people don't really know what ASCIT does.

If this is true, then ASCIT needs to change to fit the needs of students. We should reevaluate whether free food really counts as a "social event"—students should have a blast rather than just a feast.

There must be a better way to spend. Your ASCIT money didn't appear out of the blue, so you can be sure I won't waste a single penny of the green.

In all seriousness, my name is Puikei Cheng and I'm running to be your treasurer.

PALLAVI BUGGA Candidate

This past year, I have held the position of assistant treasurer, aiding Mario Zubia in his tasks as ASCIT Treasurer. Through this position, I have gained valuable experience that I believe qualifies me for the position of treasurer for the coming year. While assistant treasurer, I helped Mario manage club funding—my tasks involved approving payment requests, granting club reimbursements, ordering and sending checks, and updating and recording club budgets. While in the position, I became well acquainted with the budgeting system, and often oversaw many of the tasks independently. I



believe the experience I have gained while in this position both qualifies me as a candidate, and prepares for a successful tenure as ASCIT treasurer. As assistant treasurer, I became aware of the requisites necessary to successfully hold the position of treasurer, and I sincerely believe I fulfill those requisites. Through hardwork, organization, and dedication I will ensure that my efforts make a positive contribution in enriching both the academic and extracurricular lives of Caltech undergraduates. If given the opportunity to fulfill the position of treasurer, I will make sure to carry out my duties to the very best of my abilities. I sincerely thank you all for your consideration, and would truly appreciate your vote for Pallavi Bugga as ASCIT treasurer. Thank you!

Director of Ops

MARIO ZUBIA Candidate

A question I've been getting a lot lately is "What does Director of Ops even do?" If I don't get that, it's



sometimes "We have a Director of Ops?" But, it's okay.

In a nutshell, the Director of Operations is a behind-the-scenes job that oversees publications (like the Big T), keeps tabs on ASCIT inventory, and manages clubs.

If you're involved in any club, then Director of Ops actually has a significant role in how your club experience might be and what resources are available to you.

If your club ever needs something special like rehearsal space or say you guys aren't sure how to tackle a problem involving your national chapter, I'd be your go-to guy. Also, there have been a few recent changes in the club policy (essentially giving more power to the undergrad members) and now, more than ever, is an exciting time to take over.

As Director of Ops, I would build upon the system that Diego established in making Donut more student friendly, work with proving clubs with more resources, and try my best with organizing and making the SAC more widely accessible.

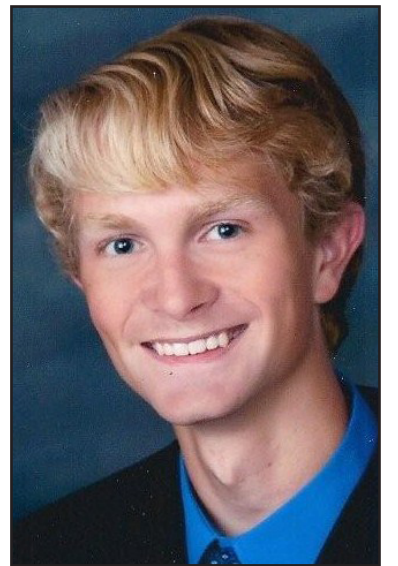
Even though I'm a junior rising on senior, I didn't know much about the SAC until this year. This lack of knowledge is also fairly common for many North housers/even some South housers. The SAC has some decent offerings to students, so I look forward to increasing awareness and publication of the resources available. One of the most important roles of being Director

of Ops is serving on the ASCIT Board of Directors. This last year, I was lucky enough to be ASCIT treasurer, so I got the chance to work hand-in-hand with other officers and tackle the different, often difficult, issues that came up. In the next year, I'll continue to work hard in representing the interests of the student body.

Another benefit from being involved as treasurer is that I fully understand the financial aspect of how ASCIT runs and operates. This is very helpful in that I can efficiently allocate our club and SAC resources, in accordance with the budget. On top of that, I've seen Diego this last year and know what the job entails. I'm up for the task at hand, am an extremely diligent worker, and will put my all into fulfilling my proposed tasks. I know if elected Director of Ops, I'd do a great job and be a strong and helpful member of the BoD. I'd appreciate the vote. Thanks.

MATT VOSS Candidate

I am the undergrad representative to a Diversity Center's working group. In this position, I organized events and talked with administrators, faculty, RAs and ACs to set-up activities. I was an editor for the little-T, and thus have a working knowledge of clubs on campus. I'm also involved



with Admissions and Prefresh Weekend activities.

TL;DR: I'm a competent person and not a tool

ASCIT elections for the positions of President, ARC Chair, Treasurer, Director of Operations, and Social Director will be held on Monday, April 23rd.

Voting will commence at 10:00 AM and will close at 12:00 AM at the end of the day.

ARC Chair candidates (cont.) ASCIT Social Director

Continued from page 5

I am currently working on and/or would like to become involved on the following projects as ARC Chair:

Curriculum Reform Updates and Communications

As interim ARC Chair, I have been working with the people on important faculty committees to open up discussion of core reform to all students. For example, I recently proposed having CCSC (Core Curriculum Steering Committee) updates and discussion points published in the campus newspaper as weekly "ARC Bulletins". Prof. Mitchio Okumura, chair of CCSC, and I are currently discussing how this can be used as a means for passing on curriculum information as well as a better means for faculty student communication; hopefully, this idea will become a reality by later in the term.

Additionally, the ARC is currently working to arrange meetings with professors involved in core reform and students interested in discussion. Many professors making important academic decisions are interested in student feedback on the implementation and changes to new core. There are plans to use the "Take a Prof to Lunch" program for this purpose of discussion.

Caltech Center for Teaching and Learning

Through my involvement on the CCTL, I have gotten to know the coordinator of the Teaching and Learning Center that will open this fall. This coordinator has spent his career educating professors on how to teach well,

while incentivizing faculty to care about teaching. Through personal discussion, he has agreed to act as a resource for the ARC to deal with course concerns. Because I now have him as a contact for course concerns, if elected ARC Chair next year, the ARC would be in a better position to effectively handle complaints about teaching quality. In addition, I would encourage this new center to be involved in the training of new faculty, all TAs, and undergraduate tutors. Problems in teaching quality stem from professors as often as from ill-equipped TAs. Having a real, legitimate TA training program in place would improve the quality and usefulness of recitation sections.

Option Mentoring

Along with encouraging the administration to better train its freshman advisors, I would like to legitimize the option mentoring program. So much of what we learn as frosh comes from talking to upperclassmen.

By improving the option mentoring program, so that option mentors are more available and involved in freshman advising, there would be a smoother transition and less confusion during students' first year at Caltech.

Honor code

This term, a number of course concerns have arisen that have dealt with professors' misinterpretation of the Honor Code. The ARC has passed these concerns onto the deans who have ultimately resolved all of the issues. However, after discussions with Dean Kiewet

and the BoC Chair, it has become apparent that more and more students and faculty are losing faith in the honor code. The honor code is one of the cornerstones of the Caltech education, so I would like the ARC to work to reinvigorate faculty and student interest in and promote respect for the honor code. Currently, I am working with the BoC Chair working to send out a survey, in the near future, to gauge student interest in the honor code. After examining the data from this survey, the ARC will take the appropriate course of action.

ARC as "Student Ambassadors"

The ARC is supposed to act as a liaison between faculty and students, and we provide resources for students to connect to faculty and vice versa. To that effect, I would like to make the ARC a more visible and accessible group on campus.

Encouraging house representatives to go to house dinners as well as better advertising ARC resources would improve the ARC's relationships with students.

In addition, through interviews for At-Large Rep positions and working with the option mentors, I would like the ARC to have more representation from more options and years at Caltech.

Please feel free to email me (pneppala@caltech.edu) with any questions, comments or suggestions. Even if I am not elected to be your ARC Chair for next year, I will be Chair for a few more weeks, so I would also appreciate any feedback on what you would like the ARC to pursue this term.

MICHELLE TANG Candidate

Maintaining some semblance of a social life is important, especially at Caltech. I plan on giving everyone here the opportunity to do so.

Throughout the past year, I have been thoroughly involved with ASCIT social activities. I worked with others under the previous ASCIT Social Director to help plan, organize, and set up social events throughout the year, including ASCIT Formal and a number of other parties. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to take over as the interim ASCIT Social Director last term. Many of you heard about and even attended the events that I planned for students, such as the Ice Skating Party, the Pong Marathon, and Be

A Kid Again at Mannion's (puppies and girl scout noms). I also created a monthly social calendar available on the Olive Walk and restarted the ESC (Executive Social Committee), a committee comprised of the social directors/chairs of each house. I would contact and meet with the ESC every once in awhile to discuss both house and interhouse social events.

Acting as the interim ASCIT Social Director meant that I also gained a lot of experience working with members of the BoD, Tom Mannion, the deans, security, and

other members of administration. In particular, I keep in regular contact with Mannion, which I feel is important for the role of ASCIT Social Director because, as we all know, Tom knows everyone and everything. Furthermore, I've locked down a number of social contacts around the LA area for DJs, rental services, and so forth.

In addition, I already have a number of ideas for social events that I hope to be able to carry out in the subsequent year. While I was the interim ASCIT Social Director, I worked with Mannion regularly to plan events not only for the remainder of last term, but for the rest of the year as well. If elected, I will be planning an ASCIT movie night at the Edwards theater in Alhambra for students to watch The Avengers for free, hopefully

bringing back Europarty, and throwing an End of the Year Party. Furthermore, Mannion, the BoD, and I have been talking about and preparing for another Big Interhouse around November. I am also hoping to carry out a number of other larger scale events to get students off campus.

I believe that I am incredibly receptive to what Caltech students want and am more than willing to hear students out when they have ideas. If elected, I will try my hardest to create a better social environment here at Tech.



Challenges and Choices application information

Dear Undergraduate Students,

Each year I select students to participate in Challenges and Choices, the Counseling Center's outreach program at New Student Orientation. The program is designed to highlight some of the most common challenges new Caltech students face, and to address some of the personal challenges they may also encounter. If you'd like to be part of our program, I'd love for you to apply.

The message is simple: New students will face challenges in their first year, and by thinking about effective and healthy ways of coping ahead of time, they may be better prepared for their first year experience. Additionally, we hope to build a sense of community so that new students know there are people here to help them with adjusting to Caltech, including other students, UCC's, RA's, Health Advocates, TA's, Faculty, Deans, Counseling Center and Student Affairs staff. We want them to know that they don't have to face these challenges alone.

In selecting students to participate in Challenges and Choices, I look for students who:

- Are committed to the purpose of the program.
- Are comfortable "acting" in front of a large audience (no memorization is necessary)
- Have experience with the challenges we address.
- Are comfortable talking about their own unique and personal challenges their first year.

We look for students who understand that ultimately every student will find their own way on these issues; that there isn't just one right way to cope; and that with guidance from others, students can manage the challenges they face and have a positive first year experience. If you are interested in helping with the program and believe you have the experiences and qualities we are looking for, please fill out the online application. The deadline is May 25th, 2012. The link to the application is: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CandC2012>.

If you're chosen, there will be one day of rehearsal on Sunday, September 23rd, and new student orientation will be from Monday, September 24th to Wednesday, September 26th at Ventura Beach.

Please understand that each year we have many more people apply than can actually participate, so our selection will be based on those applications that best fit the goals of the program and represent the diversity of experiences that exist at Caltech. Whenever possible, we strive for fair representation among houses.

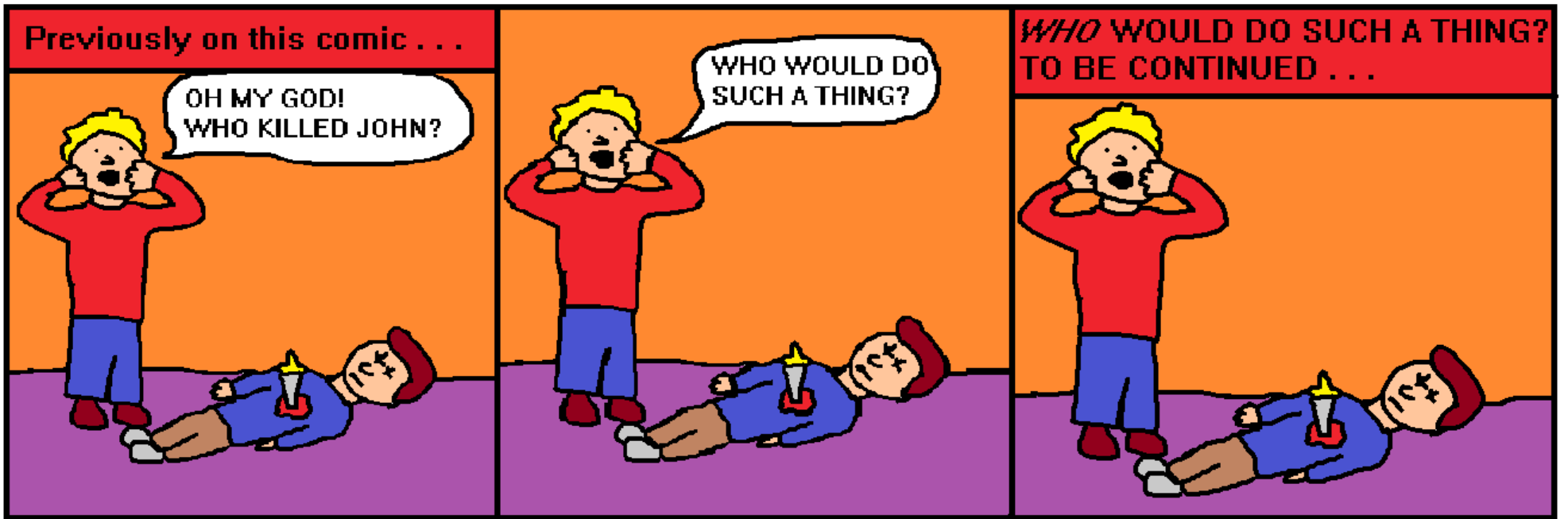
Sincerely,

Lee H. Coleman, Ph.D., ABPP

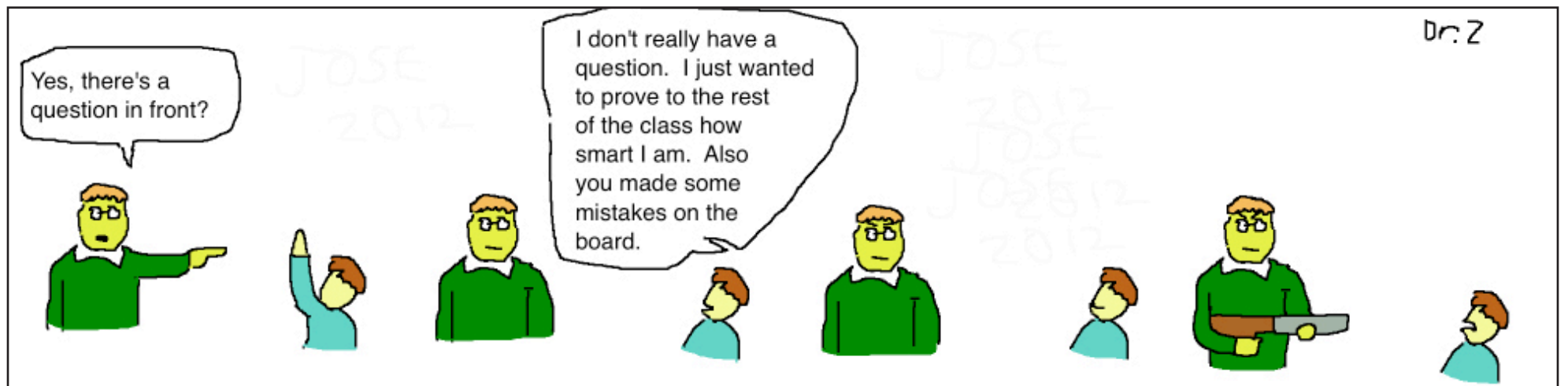
Assistant Director, Caltech Counseling Center

THE ARC, PART II

BY CARSON CHITPAW



Acquired Taste



For more photos, videos, and archives of previous issues, check out the Tech website!

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