

## Erin-Kate Escobar: Dual Destinies

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Contributing Writer

Erin-Kate Escobar is not the type to hide who she is.

Unlike most of the office doors in the Caltech Center for Diversity, hers is plastered with posters and stickers. An orange paper-sized sheet underneath the glass pane in her door simply says, “You belong here”; a square sticker below it reads, “Bisexual Yesterday, Today, And Tomorrow,” printed on the pink, purple and blue stripes of the bi pride flag. Six small fliers and decals are wedged in the glass pane.

One, a business card for a Women in Science program in Ontario, hints at her role as the Center for Diversity’s singular women’s resource coordinator. Escobar supports the Women Mentoring Women program, coordinates various events across campus, and acts as a confidential resource for those who want to vent about sexual harassment or other issues without having the contents of their venting reported.

Inside, Escobar’s office setup mirrors the duality of her roles as organizer and resource. On one side sits her desk, cleared save for a small pile of folders. A corkboard occupying over half the wall next to it is covered with greeting cards, art and photographs of her with students and friends. Three different calendars are pinned just above her computer: two monthly calendars, set to May and June; and a third smaller two-year one. Six small and well-watered succulents line her windowsill, while her bike lies just below the window.

The other side of her office is occupied by an unassuming coffee table, several plush chairs, and

a small, inviting couch. The bookshelf in the back corner, filled to the brim with women’s literature, also contains a shelf dedicated to craft supplies; one container is aptly labeled the “feather management box.”

Apparent is her aptitude for handling endless calendars and seventeen-page-long to-do lists, a skill she possessed from a young age. “I look back at my planners from high school,” Escobar said, bemused, “and I don’t know if I was thirty when I was fourteen or if I’m still my fourteen year old self, because the amount of meetings and planning and scheduling I did then is about the same as it is now.”

Outside her office, Escobar is a force of unyielding positivity on campus, rarely seen without a smile. Upon first meeting her, it’s hard not to notice her immediately personable nature.

“You’re so comfortable around her that you can share all your deepest darkest secrets within the first five minutes of talking to her, whether you thought you were going to or not,” said Brittany Kamai, a Caltech postdoc and close friend of Escobar.

She also “has the fantastic ability to see a conflict and figure out what miscommunication caused it, instead of getting angry about it,” said Alyssa Poletti, a junior who has worked with her for the last two years as part of Feminist Club excomm.

Though she almost seems born for the role of diversity center coordinator, and has a Master’s in alternative higher education to boot, Escobar never intended to return to the education sector after college. Her mother, father and stepfather all were educators, but her plan

after high school in Santa Cruz was to work in politics to help make change for the most people possible. Her undergraduate degree in politics at the University of San Francisco led her to summer internships in San Francisco politicians’ offices and nonprofits in D.C.

But regarding her apparent change of heart at the end of college, she said: “I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, I’m a queer Jewish woman of color! I have intersecting multiple identities, and the world’s not ready for me to lead them as a politician!’ They’d want to put me back in boxes and simplify me, and I don’t want to be simplified. I don’t want to have to represent just the Latinos, or just the women, because I feel more complex than that as a genderqueer, mixed-race, multi-ethnic human. So I went, ‘Well, I guess that’s not for me.’”

So, following college, Escobar tried on many different hats. She started volunteer gardening in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan — she minored in Arabic during college — and eventually took that love of the outdoors to a position as programming director at a California urban gardening nonprofit in Oakland. She adored the position initially, but she was working eighty-hour weeks there, and “got to the point where (she) wanted to walk in front of a car instead of go to work,” she said, and left.

At her next nonprofit, she supported over 800 cyclists biking a route from San Francisco to Los Angeles

to raise money for HIV research. Though she liked the job overall, her favorite part was helping coach and motivate the cyclists, and she realized that was the role for her.

At that point, Escobar called up a mentor from her undergrad, a diversity center employee who doubled as the school’s LGBTQ club adviser. When asked how he attained his position, he directed her to his previous Master’s program at the University of Vermont; she applied and was accepted. In her next two years there, she still got to simultaneously coach and return to conflict resolution and dialogue work, which she hadn’t done since college. It was here that she discovered how much she enjoyed teaching and working with groups of people in a nontraditional education setting, a realization that set the stage for the application to her current position.

Although her friends and colleagues concur on how well she fits her role, Escobar’s strengths can sometimes be her downfall.

“Because she has such a big heart, I think it’s hard for her to operationalize the amount of time that some things take,” said Hanna Song, the senior director for diversity in the CCD. JPL had approached Escobar for planning a diversity training, and, as Song recalled, “She went, ‘Yes, we can do six trainings in one month!’” at a time when she already had multiple trainings planned at Caltech. Her people-pleasing nature can make it

difficult for her to prioritize her own needs and manage the boundaries between professional and amicable relationships. Though Poletti loves her positivity, she said, “Sometimes, I just want her to get angry at all the injustice in the world.”

Escobar readily acknowledges her shortcomings, admitting that it’s sometimes difficult for her to stop working. Though she makes sure to rest — taking walks, hiking, biking, or swimming in order to recharge — she said she’s “really bad at taking time just to do nothing,” sometimes feeling guilty when not running errands on her breaks.

She also recognizes that her role as a confidential resource, while one she adores, is often emotionally draining.

“I feel like there’s a constant search of what the right balance of emotional labor to put out is, and what it means to be a queer person of color who offers the amount of emotional labor that I think I’m required to offer in my job. So I think I’m constantly looking for mentors and building blocks of humans I can surround myself with or read stories of ... and see who I want to be.”

However, she’s clear that she doesn’t see her faults as permanent; she just needs to learn how better to climb the mountains.

“I am what I want to be when I grow up,” she said, “but I also have a lot of growing up to do.”

## Correction to Recommended Tech Usage

A May 21 photo depicting the Tech being used as a makeshift dustpan did not credit the photographer because the photographer was unknown at press time. The photo is in the Tech courtesy of photographer Ethan Jaszewski.

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# ASCIT Minutes

Meetings are every week in SAC 13

## ASCIT Board of Directors Meeting: VPSA

Minutes for May 23, 2018. Taken by Rachel Sun.

**Officers Present:** Sakthi Vetrivel, Erika Salzman, Sarah Crucilla, Dana He, Alice Zhai, Rachel Sun

**Guests:** Kavya Sreedhar, Tom Mannion, Joe Shepherd

**Call to Order:** 12:15 pm

### President's Report (Sakthi):

- ASCIT elections happened.
- ASCIT Amendments: changed bylaws to be gender-neutral; bylaws can be found on Donut. Some committee positions were moved from IHC to ASCIT. Changing RevComm's meeting requirement did not pass.
- Would like to introduce compost bins to campus. Joe suggested that this be brought up to the Sustainability Council.
- Fleming Interhouse is on May 26, Techstock is on May 28, and Ditch Day is Tomorrow.

### Officer's Reports:

#### V.P. of Academic Affairs (Erika):

- Erika is the new ARC Chair.
- The student-faculty lunch on 5/21 was quite successful; students, faculty, and Dean Green attended. Everyone who applied got a spot.
- Research list for 2017-18 has been compiled and updated. The research list is for students to see which professors are interested in having students to do research during the school year.
- ASCIT Teaching Awards have been decided and announced. There will be a dinner at the Athenaeum to present these awards.
- The option fair in winter term was held to help undergrads decide which option to choose. There will be a reception to thank the undergrads and professors who helped with this event.
- There will be appointments for Secretary and At-Large Representatives. New people will be appointed to the Academic Faculty Board Committees.

#### V.P. of Non-Academic Affairs (Sarah):

- ACRL meeting: moving to talk more about rotation, talk to student reps if

you questions / concerns

- IHC has focused on the alcohol policy and reckless drinking. Spreadsheets recording drinking have been shut down. There will be meetings with Joe Shepherd and Kevin Gilmartin to plan bonding activities for seniors to replace these drinking activities. IHC will be working with the Title IX subcommittee to improve safety regarding alcohol at parties. In particular, an expanded list of all the houses' safety squads was sent out at Blacker Interhouse; IHC is looking to do the same thing for Fleming Interhouse and other future parties.
- IHC has appointed Alex Reeves as RevComm chair, Ben Cassese as Stewcomm Chair, Jules Oppenheim as Foodcom Chair, and Max Shen Molesky as Interhouse Athletics Manager.
  - We are hoping that the new Interhouse Athletics Manager will increase overall involvement in interhouse athletics with new plans.
- IHC is trying to improve relations between houses. Part of this involves making sure activities are more open to more houses.
- Would like to hold Big I. Presidents of each house sent out a survey to gauge interest in Big I. However, there are issues with security, construction, and logistics.

#### Director of Operations (Varun):

- Not in attendance.

#### Treasurer (Dana):

- Nothing to report.

#### Social Director (Alice):

- ASCIT held a Huntington Gardens event on May 12. 70 tickets were distributed.

#### Secretary (Rachel):

- Nothing to report.

If anyone has any questions or concerns about a section of the minutes please email the appropriate officer. We are happy to answer any questions.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 1:05 PM

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## A Year in Review: Winter Sports



*"I would like to nominate this photo for the nonexistent prize of 'Most Flattering Tech Sports Photo of the Year — All Seasons.'"*

-gocaltech.com



*"Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy! Lucky me I get to score a point!"*

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*"Bruh — this cardiovascular thing is killing me."*

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*"Up high ... down low ... TOO SLOW!"*

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*"I don't know if I'm more concerned about her eyes popping out or her biting her tongue off. Damn girl, A+ concentration and focus."*

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*"YAASSS QUEEN — 10/10 perfect form right down (up?) to the ponytail."*

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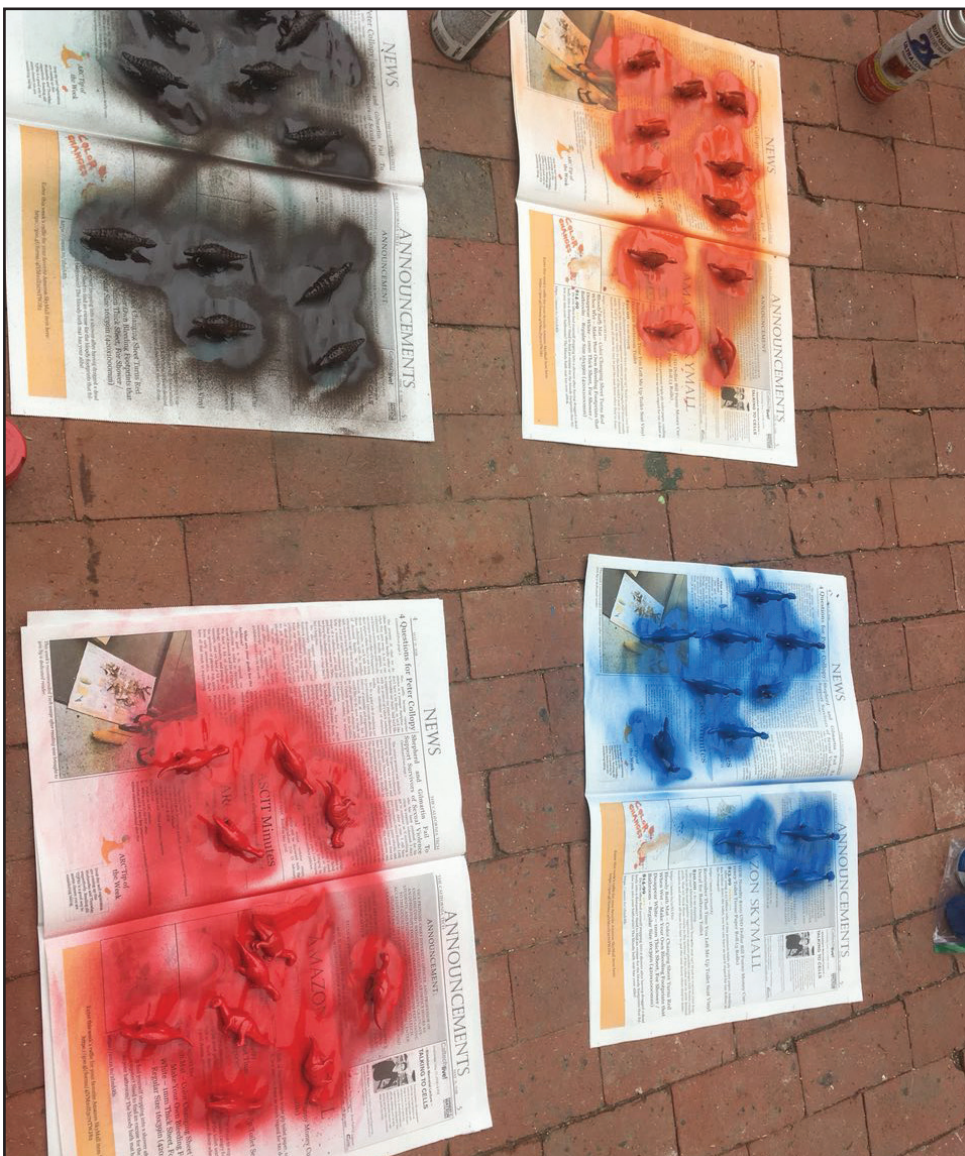
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This week's recommended Tech usage after reading was brought to you by a dedicated reader. Photo courtesy of Oriol Humes.

## ARC Minutes

Meetings are every week in SAC 13

**ARC Meeting Minutes 5/27/18**

*Present: Erika Salzman, Allison Tang, LC Chen, Michael Yao*

**Congratulations to our new ARC Secretary and at-large reps!**

ARC Secretary: Arushi Gupta

At-large reps: Tanvi Gupta, Alice Jin, Surya Mathialgan

Next week is the last meeting of the year!

We will be appointing people to the student-faculty committees.



If you don't get into a limited enrollment course during registration, you can try emailing the professor to get on the waitlist, or just showing up to the first class with an Add Card.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CALIFORNIA TECH

MAY 29, 2018

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## ANNOUNCEMENT:

VICE PROVOST, CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER, AND PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH CINDY WEINSTEIN HOLDS REGULAR OFFICE HOURS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, GRADUATE STUDENTS, AND POSTDOCS TO MEET FOR DISCUSSIONS PERTAINING TO THE COUNCIL ON UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION; CALTECH ACCREDITATION; THE STAFF AND FACULTY CONSULTATION CENTER; STUDENT-FACULTY PROGRAMS; THE CENTER FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND OUTREACH; THE CALTECH DIVERSITY CENTER; AND THE CALTECH LIBRARIES.

THERE ARE FOUR 15-MINUTE APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE PER OFFICE HOUR. SIGN UP IN THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST, PARSONS-GATES ROOM 104, OR BY SENDING AN EMAIL TO DE ANN LEWIS AT [DLEWIS@CALTECH.EDU](mailto:DLEWIS@CALTECH.EDU) (EXT. 6339). WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

STUDENT OFFICE HOURS FOR SPRING TERM 2018:

MAY 29, TUESDAY FROM 9:00 A.M. TO 10:00 A.M.  
JUNE 13, WEDNESDAY FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 11:00 A.M.

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**Sunday, June 3rd**

11:30 am - 2:00 pm | DTLA  
(Transportation provided)

**Smorgasburg LA**

Cost: Free, but \$\$ needed for food



**June 16th - 19th**  
**Catalina Island**  
**Backpacking**  
**Adventure**

(Space is limited to 8 people)

Cost: \$135

## CaltechY

### Save the Date:

**Beyond the Y:**

**EXPLiCIT Playfest 2018**

May 26th, 1 PM - May 27th, 3PM  
TACIT House, 275 S. Hill Ave

Got a question? Email us at  
[caltechy@caltech.edu](mailto:caltechy@caltech.edu)



oh god how did i get here i am  
not good at computer



are you good at computer?  
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# LET'S TALK!

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<b>MON MAY 7</b> 10-11:30AM 243 ANNENBERG	<b>THURS MAY 17</b> 12:30-2PM 256 S. MUDD	<b>TUES MAY 29</b> 3-4:30PM 256 S. MUDD
<b>FRI MAY 11</b> 2-3:30PM 156 CRELLIN	<b>MON MAY 21</b> 3:30-5PM 300 BROAD	<b>WED MAY 30</b> 11:30AM-1PM 243 ANNENBERG

*Let's Talk is not a substitute for formal counseling and is not considered mental health treatment. Let's Talk staff can listen to your specific concerns, help you problem-solve, and connect you with on and off-campus resources that could be helpful to you.*

**MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH 2018**

## Mini-Crosswords

More cute little crosswords! I've heard that there are some similar small puzzles that are 5x5 so look forward to that next week if I can find some!

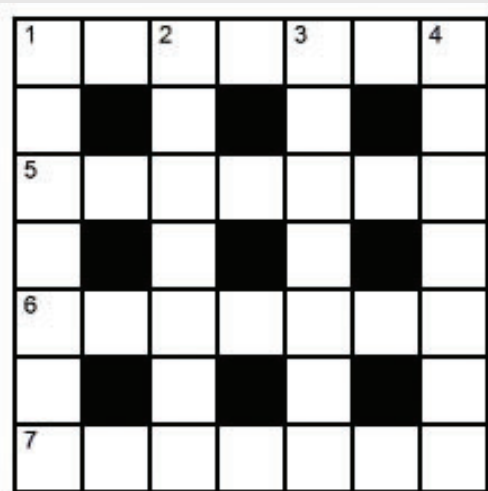
crosswords from <http://www.puzzlechoice.com>

**Across**

1. Pictorial
5. Stomach
6. Artist of consummate skill
7. Modesty

**Down**

1. Syntax
2. Speech
3. Burrowing rodent
4. Excuse or overlook

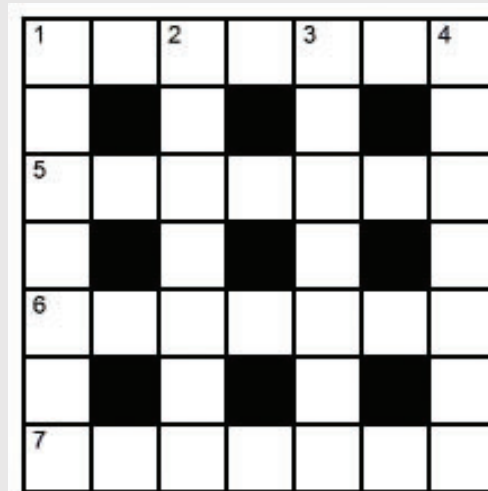


**Across**

1. Long-standing and recurrent
5. Panacea
6. Pear-shaped tropical fruit
7. Beam

**Down**

1. Mythical half man, half horse
2. React
3. Paradise
4. Write music









## Letters from the Front

Blacker Hovse Experimental Sociology Department

E/N: Some names have been altered to protect the appearance that the author can remember them.

It was in one of those fits of mild psychosis which, late into the night, at first appears to be a flash of inspiration that we set out to explore the untamed wilds of Tinder. Armed with a painting of a shirtless angel, a surreal haiku, and a woman's name, our amateur anthropological expedition immediately met with what can only be called resounding success. As we waved our fingers to and fro (mostly fro), watching the clothes shrink and the foci drift chestward, we discovered that a shocking number of users will swipe right on anything at all. We encountered Joe, who feared no skin cancer; Matt, who, having seen our profile picture innumerable times during his time as an undergraduate here, really should have known better; Paul, who was very confused when we started using plural nouns. But of all the singles looking to meet in \$user\_area, it was Steve who caught our attention. Steve worked with computers- we, too, had used computers. Steve had a beard- none of us had beards, but oh, what a beard it was! It flew forth from his face like the viking warrior that

he bore a vague resemblance to if you squinted enough, undeniable proof that yes, this person has above-average levels of dihydrotestosterone. All in all, it must have been at least six glorious inches in length. But in the course of our conversation, it became apparent that Steve was, in fact, actually another human being: a fact that had escaped us earlier. We explained that we used our thirty terabyte file server to store poorly compressed copies of the movie Titanic in various languages- he gently deflected the conversation towards topics where our incompetence appeared somewhat less spectacular. We said other things- he responded. The details, sadly, have been lost to the ages. But it was when Steve laid bare his soul to us, revealing that, tragically, this was one of his more successful Tinder conversations, that the horrible truth of our situation revealed itself to us: we were not very good people. It was at that moment that we committed ourselves to a different course of action. From then onwards, fake tinder accounts were to be used only for the purpose nature intended: demanding pictures of small animals from strangers.

## Answers to Puzzles and Crossword: <http://bit.ly/2IYNc8t>



Sophie Piao (b. 1997)

*I'm exaggerating but c'mon guys I was elected editor not cartoonist, 2018*  
Digital.

We are always accepting submissions for comics, and will pay you.

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Letters and submissions are welcome; e-mail submissions to [tech@caltech.edu](mailto:tech@caltech.edu) as plain-text attachments, including the author's name, by Friday of the week before publication. *The Tech* does accept anonymous contributions under special circumstances. The editors reserve the right to edit and abridge all submissions for any reason. All written work remains property of its author.

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### Letters from the Editors-in-Chief

Sophie Piao: @ frosh: why are you reading this? you should be in bed.

Amrita Rhoads: hi i like showing off pictures of my dogs. please message me if you want to see them

Milan Roberson: eggs are my favorite fruit!

Dan Xu: Last week was an experience.

This week's recommended Tech usage after reading is: Ditch Day prep!

### The California Tech

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