

The California Tech

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TECH@CALTECH.EDU

CAMPUS REOPENS TO UNDERGRADS

DEVIN HARTZELL | CAMPUS

For the first time since March 2020, undergraduates have returned to Caltech's campus for an academic term and in-person instruction.

The 270 members of the Class of 2025 moved in on Sunday, September 19th, followed by returning sophomores on Tuesday, September 21st. Both classes participated in orientation sessions conducted over Zoom, which were similar to orientation events in previous years.

Per usual, the incoming class was divided into groups of eight assigned to a pair of counselors called FCCs from the junior and senior classes. However, these groups were permitted to meet in person for meals and other discussions related to the sessions over zoom.

"I can't even begin to describe how stark the difference between interacting with the incoming class is. Interacting through Zoom and Discord just aren't the same," said Aubrey Stevens, (BioE '23, Ruddock) who was an FCC last year and this year. "So much of interacting with people isn't in what is said to everyone. It's in the side conversations that you really get to know people. I've been able to talk to each person in my FCC group in the whole group, one-on-one."

Compared to zoom, "I feel like for me, I would have been more disconnected. But some people who are typically quiet in person are the loudest online and I felt that they would be the opposite. It's just different," said Jonathan Booker ('25).

Both the freshman and sophomore classes participated in an

in-person orientation picnic next to Millikan Pond, and each class picked up dinner the next day from food trucks parked near Bechtel. Tom Mannion provided the classes with a variety of chocolate for a tasting session conducted over zoom.

This year, most classes are being conducted in person, with modifications for social distancing. Instead of the traditional location of Baxter Lecture Hall, Ph 1a and Ma 1a are being taught from Beckman Auditorium, which is also being used for CS 24 lectures. Hameetman Auditorium in Cahill is being used for a variety of core recitation sections, in addition to courses in Astrophysics.

However, a few courses are being taught remotely. CS 1 and Ch 1a have remote lectures, while some other noteworthy remote classes include ACM 104, ACM 116, the practical track of Ma 2, and Ma/CS 6a.



An in-person orientation picnic

"Attending Ma 1a in person made the delivery feel so much more immersive and lively compared to taking classes over zoom. It makes me grateful for basic things we take for granted, I never really imagined I'd be so thankful that my math lecture was in-person," said Cristian Ponce

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Students walking to class

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Write for the Tech!

Hiring for all positions!
(Yes, YOU can take my job!)

STUDENTS FRUSTRATED BY CONTINUED COVID RESTRICTIONS

DEVIN HARTZELL, ADITEE PRABHUTENDOLKAR AND DAVID MELISSO | CAMPUS

As undergraduates return to campus, Caltech's administration has implemented extensive measures to prevent an outbreak of COVID-19. However, many undergraduates believe that the restrictions are too harsh, and many traditional rotation events are being held online.

Currently, undergraduates are required to submit two saliva samples each week for surveillance testing. All undergraduates are required to take a COVID-19 vaccine at their earliest convenience, and wear masks when indoors. Furthermore, gatherings are being encouraged to take place masked and outdoors, and are limited institute-wide to 25 people.

Before arriving on campus, students needed to show proof of a negative COVID test taken 3 days prior. To eliminate the possibility of an infection during travel, another sample for testing was required the day of arrival.

Rotation is being conducted large-

ly on Discord and Zoom, with in-person pod events to provide limited, masked opportunities for freshmen to get to know the student houses. This remote format is the source of many students' frustration. "After being off-campus so long, rotation and other in person events would give us the best opportunities to interact with our fellow Caltech students and really get to know the sophomore and freshman classes since they've never been on campus," said Johnathon Soro (Bio '23, Page).

In a survey the Tech conducted last week, 73% of students surveyed believed that the restrictions were too harsh, and 88% of students surveyed believed that more rotation events could be held in person. 90% of students said they would be comfortable attending outdoor rotation dinners. 268 undergraduates signed the first petition in addition to dozens of parents and alumni, and 284 undergraduates signed the second petition.



Frosh attending Ma 1a lecture in Beckman Auditorium

In early September, student leaders circulated two petitions alleging that "some of the restrictions Caltech plans to impose on undergrads returning to campus are an unnecessary exaggeration of the guidelines recommended by the CDC, the Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD), and the example that our peer institutions across the country have set," drawing a comparison to

rules at UCLA and USC.

The Tech was unable to verify the first petition's claim that "indoor events of 1000+" people are permitted at UCLA. However, as of September 23rd, USC's guidelines dictate that students must be masked in outdoor settings, and that distance be maintained when masking is not

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Student Wellness Services

WE'VE GOT GROUPS AND ONLINE WORKSHOPS EVERY WEEK!

Friday, October 1st at noon: Tackle The Term - start Fall term off right!
Wednesday, October 6th at noon: Adjusting to being around other people again

Plus...

Our Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy group begins 10/14, and
Our DBT Skills group begins 10/20!

Lots more details at wellness.caltech.edu under 'Counseling Services'.



OCTOBER IS... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Join the Equity+Title IX Office, and Caltech's Campus Sexual Violence Advocate, in spreading awareness and showing support to survivors of intimate partner and/or dating violence. Keep an eye out for upcoming events!

equity.caltech.edu

Campus Sexual Violence Advocate: teresam@caltech.edu

FSRI RETURNS TO HYBRID LEARNING AND RESEARCH

DANIEL CONTALDI | CAMPUS

Between mid-August and mid-September, Caltech hosted its annual Freshman Summer Research Institute on campus, a welcome change from last year's online version. This year's program was the largest to date, with 30 students. The program's leaders, Taso Dimitriadis, Interim Director, Caltech Center for Inclusion & Diversity; and Monique Thomas, Program Manager for Advocacy and Campus Relations, hope to double its size in the coming year. In my capacity as Resident Mentor and Math TA, I hope to provide a unique look into the program over the course of its five weeks.

As students arrived on their first day, many parents were surprised and disappointed that they were not allowed into Bechtel to help their students move in because of COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, they remained in the courtyard and dining hall and spent the remaining time with their students during the welcome dinner. This was the first sign that FSRI would look different this year, despite its return to an in-person format.

As the program progressed, the students experienced their first math class on campus, which took a hybrid approach. With online lectures and in person workshops, it closely resembled what some of their freshman core classes look like this fall. Many incoming freshmen were put off by this idea, as most expected a full in-person return to campus in the fall.

From a TA's perspective, it appears that many high school calculus courses looked different in the face of Zoom learning; some topics were only glanced over or omitted altogether. This absence in curriculum, combined with the difficulties of distance learning, possibly created



FSRI students roaming campus

the need for a differently structured math program this year. As a result, students like Wendy Razo ('25) felt that "the math course was tough, but did help to understand the fundamentals of what we needed to know."

This year's math course was also supplemented by a pilot Python workshop, which many students found aiding them in their research labs as they analyzed data. It seemed to be worth it for those who participated.

For many of the students, this was their first real research experience. They spent five weeks working in various labs on campus, culminating in a final academic presentation, in a similar format to a SURF. With disciplines ranging from Biology and Chemical Engineering to Mechanical Engineering and Information and Data Sciences, the students spent nearly five hours a day in their assigned labs, getting hands-on experience.

The social events this year, however, marked the beginning of the return to normalcy in the program after last year's online version. Though limited by transportation restraints, this year's program boasted a number of activities both on and off campus. Though previous iterations of

Welcome back!
Message from Teresa Mejia, Caltech's Campus Sexual Violence Advocate

You can connect with Teresa at the Center for Student Services building in room 168. Teresa is also available by phone and Zoom. Contact her at teresam@caltech.edu

Teresa Mejia is the Institute's new sexual assault support specialist and here to assist you with concerns related to sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic/dating violence and stalking. She is a confidential resource available to all students, staff and faculty.

taught me that going to Caltech isn't just an academic experience; it's a lifestyle. Morning math videos and rigorous research routines highlighted the intensity of Caltech. However, the hard coursework simultaneously fostered an environment where students come together and have fun to study their passions. Most importantly, my decision to participate in FSRI showed me that I could forge my own path at Caltech."

And although the program may have not run smoothly given the COVID restrictions and other barriers, one freshman in particular, George Ore, commented that "FSRI felt like a Caltech demo. I learned so many things about how to handle both academic and social life. I would do it again if I had the chance."

Daniel Contaldi is an editor and business manager for the California Tech, and staffed FSRI this summer in italics



A group photo of FSRI students

CAMPUS REOPENS TO UNDERGRADS (CONT.)

('25), whose senior year of high school was taught remotely.

"I really really missed students and the last week or so when everyone came back was one of the best I've had in the last year and a half," said Professor Adam Blank, who is teaching CS 24 this term.

However, rotation this year is far from normal. In-person interactions are being constrained to 30-minute

pod events, where a small group of freshmen interact with a changing cast of upperclassmen from each house. Houses are adapting their dinners and large events to an online format similar to the last rotation, which was conducted remotely for the Class of 2024 in January.

"After being off-campus so long, rotation and other in person events would give us the best opportunities

to interact with our fellow Caltech students and really get to know the sophomore and freshman classes since they've never been on campus," said Johnathon Soro (Bio '23, Page). "Doing everything online for 18+ months [...] does not really capture the Caltech experience well, especially in regards to rotation."

However for some, the virtual format does have benefits. According to

Booker, "There are people who tend to me more social online and more social in person. I'm an in person kind of guy." And while there have been no reported cases of COVID-19 at the time of publication, 26% of respondents to the Tech's survey reported being either very concerned or terrified of the effects to their personal health if they were to contract COVID.

STUDENTS FRUSTRATED BY CONTINUED COVID RESTRICTIONS (CONT.)

possible, i.e. when eating or drinking. According to a junior at USC, people aren't following this restriction and "are gathering indoors just off campus." UCLA currently hosts home football games at nearly full capacity in the Rose Bowl; the September 4th game between UCLA and LSU drew a crowd of 68,123, according to the LA Daily News.

At Occidental College and Pomona College, outdoor gatherings of fewer than 50 people do not require masking, but Pomona's guidelines recommend masking when social distancing cannot be maintained. Harvey Mudd's guidelines currently restrict in-person gatherings to 10 people, and require masking except when eating or drinking. All schools require vaccination and surveillance testing, and have largely in-person instruction.

According to Kevin Gilmartin, Caltech's Vice President for Student Affairs, "Caltech has continuously been more cautious than we're required to be." He sees the restrictions on gathering as a temporary measure, set to expire once the administration has more data. "We need to figure out what the caseload is and how it's coming. If we are cautious initially, then we can quickly reopen more fully once that travel period is over."

"I absolutely understand undergraduates have been off campus. I understand the sense of being denied what undergraduate life is about and the Caltech residential life," said Gilmartin. "We want a sustainable return to residency and the class-

room. In order to make it sustainable, we do feel the need to be cautious. If we are cautious initially, then we can quickly reopen more fully."

"Our highest priority is to protect classroom learning," said Gilmartin. "Students have other priorities, like rotation and their houses." In addition to the other protocols, students are required to wear KN-95 or N-95 masks to classes, which they can pick up for free at the Caltech bookstore.

In response, Gilmartin said, "outdoor orientation activities have been podding. Rotation is the opposite of podding. Even if students rotate through pods, it is an event that ensures each incoming student spends time with every house community, which is a risk. Meals involve taking masks off (indoors or outdoors), which is a risk. We asked student leaders if they wanted to postpone [rotation]. We understand why they wanted to have it immediately, because we have no idea what will happen in 2-3 months."

He continued, "We expect people to be more cautious inside classrooms than, for example, outside of Red Door. Rotation is supposed to be fun and spontaneous, so it won't be as cautious. It's supposed to be a social experience where you get to see what a house community is like."

"It's been quite hectic dealing with the changing restrictions, and it's really unfortunate that we can't hold our events in person even though we're on campus," said Aditi Seetharaman, (BioE '23)

the Ruddock House President. According to Soro, "house dinners are an important part of house culture and really help to build the feeling of community on campus, and can be safely done outdoors, but we have not been given a chance to show that we can host house dinners safely and responsibly, which I think is unfair."

Additionally, undergraduates only have card access to their own residential communities for at least the first two weeks. According to Gilmartin, this is a "way to limit interactions. If there is an outbreak in a house community, we could limit it to that house and do better contact tracing. Our house communities are terrific, but they are intensively social. And they are the most intensively social feature of our campus." The second petition called for this restriction to be lifted, and it's predicted to be one of the first to be lifted.

So far, no students living on campus have tested positive for COVID-19. Schools nearby have also seen low case rates: one student has tested positive at the Claremont Colleges in the past 2 weeks. Currently, USC's test positivity rate is 0.2%, and UCLA's is 0.1%.

"I hope and expect that we will be able to lift restrictions," said Gilmartin. "Staff are still conducting many meetings over Zoom. Later we will be approving indoor and outdoor social events. Right now, no one has enough information to know what is safe."

TIPS FOR SURVIVING YOUR FIRST TERM

DABNEY HOVSE | HUMOR

Math 1a with Nets Katz is the easiest course on the planet, you don't have to start the sets until about 20 minutes before the due time.

CS 1 is the hardest course on the planet, you only have one chance to do each assignment and if it's not absolutely perfect you will fail the class.

You should sleep 16 hours a day, like a cat does. You should also meow at people to make friends.

It's recommended in CS courses to mix up stylistic elements like braces and whitespace. It helps to break up the monotony for the TAs and professors.

The Big Bang Theory is essential viewing for understanding the world of Caltech and science academia.

The turtles in the turtle pond are free to take for making soup. That's actually why the pond is there.

The standard accepted bribe for a TA is \$30 per 10 percentage points. It is a violation of the honor code to intentionally cheap out on them.

In a pinch, the house dryers also serve as toilets.

Pro Tip: If you participate in the CDS Lottery on the Dining Services website, you have a chance to get a buy one get one free pasta coupon.

Fight Club meets at 8:00 pm on Tuesdays in the Hameetman Center. Recommended for anyone struggling with the alienation of the modern world.

Make sure to email your sets directly to the Professor CS1.

When the time comes you should rank all of the houses #1, because they are all fine houses.

Acceptable terms of respect for underclassmen include "senpai" and "nii-san" (if a man).

It is generally good practice to smudge any written work, crumple the paper it's on, soak it in water, and lightly dry it with a butane torch. The harder it is for the TAs to read, the more they must focus on your work and the more you stand out.

Tasting the chemicals in Ch3 is essential to understanding the chemical process

To make sure your work is graded and returned to you, print out all your homework and put a drop off blood on each page.

Please do not pirate course textbooks online; this just prevents the authors from getting the money they deserve. Instead, take copies from the library or professors' offices.

The California Tech only prints on paper with high nutritional content, and it is recommended that you eat your copy after reading.

A secret perk of the Anytime Plan is that you can grab food from Chandler at any time in the day. The doors are locked not because it is forbidden to enter, but because CDS wants to limit the number of customers.

In order to conserve water, it is recommended that you do not flush the toilet or wash your hands.

The proper spelling of the school's nickname is "CaL tEch".

Go to bed, frosh! Ditch Day is Tomorrow!

[YOUR ANNOUNCEMENT HERE]

Advertise in the *Tech!* tech.caltech.edu

ASCIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES FOR JULY 11, 2021.
TAKEN BY NICOLE HEFLIN.

Officers Present: Ayooluwa Odemuyiwa, Mohini Misra, Katherine Chang, Matthew Hajjar, Kavya Rajagopalan

Guests: Diego Olaya

Call to Order: 6:03 pm PST

President's Report (Ayooluwa):

Housing logistics

Off-Campus Students will have additional costs for transportation, internet, etc. Some off-campus students might be forced to take a leave of absence if no remote learning option

Potential Forms of Action:

Reach out to Financial Aid Office (and Deans) for extra funding for off-campus students

Reach out to counseling services and health center to discuss options for off-campus residents

Reach out to CTLO to discuss online learning options (lecture recordings, etc.)

Reach out to profs to support the petition for additional funding for off-campus students

Compile a document including housing in the Pasadena area, lease info, utility costs, transportation alternatives?, etc.

Start discussing housing plans for future years that will best accommodate/support ALL students

Orientation event planning

ASCIT App logistics

Future projects and budget

Officer's Reports:

V.P. of Academic Affairs (Mohini):

ME13 concerns

Compile grad school resource for seniors

V.P. of Non-Academic Affairs (Katherine):

Roompicks logistics

Rotation logistics

Director of Operations (Aditi):

Nothing to report

Treasurer (Matthew):

Nothing to report

Social Director (Kavya):

Nothing to report

Secretary (Nicole):

Nothing to report

Guests:

Diego Olaya:

Petition was created to get better financial support for off-campus students

Large portion of ASCIT budget should be dedicated toward housing off-campus students (transportation costs, internet, etc.)

ASCIT should reach out to profs to sign petition
Need for unaffiliated student representation on IHC

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: 7:37 pm PST

ARC MEETING MINUTES

9/12/21

MINUTES BY: JAMES CHEN

Present: Mohini Misra, James Chen, Anjini Chandra, Zitian Ye, Ely Jrade, Gabi Twombly, Helen Shen, Megan Wang

How to Succeed at Caltech Presentation

Dry run Thursday 9/16, 3pm PST

Undetermined if sophomores can move in day earlier (same day as orientation presentation)

Miscellaneous

Adding/dropping classes will continue to be online

Catalog not out yet

LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

Hey everyone,

The first thing I'd like to say is how much I appreciate everyone here. I missed all of you so much over the past year and a half, and I'm so happy we're all back on campus now. Caltech really isn't the same without the physical location that is Caltech, and the houses aren't the same without the physical houses. I am so grateful that we're holding a hybrid rotation, and that the Caltech community and the house culture is still so strong. Of course, things could be better, things should be better, and things will be better. Nevertheless, it's good to be back. Good luck for the term, make sure to do your surveillance testing, and stay masked (with a good-quality mask) when possible. The Tech is printing on paper again and it feels so good! Come write with us!

Devin

Hi everyone,

First off, I'm so grateful to finally have the chance to publish The Tech in person. After a year of online school, it still feels surreal to be on campus attending classes and house events. Although we still have a lot of restrictions in place, it's been incredible meeting all of you in person for the first time, getting a feel for campus life, and learning about house culture.

Last year, The Tech was entirely an online publication. I'd say the best part of that experience was building our social media presence (follow @thecaliforniatech on Instagram!), and that's something I hope will continue to stay strong. But now that we're in-person, I'm so excited to finally be publishing physical copies and distributing the paper to more people.

If you'd like to contribute to The Tech (through writing, photography, graphic design, etc.), please contact us. We'd love to have you!

Aditee

EDITORIAL: BE CLEAR ABOUT RESTRICTIONS

DEVIN HARTZELL | OPINION

COVID is still out there. Los Angeles County still reports 15 cases per 100,000 each day, and 23 people die here each day from COVID-19. No vaccine has been authorized yet for children under 12, and many members of the Caltech community are still afraid for their and their families' safety from the virus. 26% of students in our poll report being "very concerned" or "terrified" about the consequences to their own health if they catch the virus.

However, it has become clear that the coronavirus will never be completely eliminated, and will likely circulate like existing cold and flu viruses. This begs the question, what is the endgame for our campus community? At what point will we treat COVID like the cold or the flu? (Should we be treating these other respiratory diseases differently, now that we've seen the harm they can cause?)

While we respect the administration's approach of lifting restrictions after an initial period to collect more data on the threat to our community, these are the questions on our mind, both in the long-term and short-term. We will soon try to reach a "new normal," but we don't currently know how, when, or even if this will happen. We also believe that more events can be held in-person and outdoors, as 87% of the respondents to our poll have said.

The truth is that the student body is not satisfied with the unclear and changing guidelines from the administration, and the lack of a definite timeline and metrics for lifting restrictions. More than two-thirds of students who responded to our poll disapprove of the administration's COVID response, and 24% of respondents said they strongly disapproved.

And harsh restrictions are hard to justify in a fully-vaccinated community undergoing twice-weekly surveillance testing. The vaccines are working at our peer institutions: across all of the Claremont colleges, only one student has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks. Currently, USC's test positivity rate is 0.2% and UCLA's is 0.1%.

We don't believe that these differences in opinion are irreconcilable. While we recognize the ever-changing nature of the pandemic, establishing clear, persistent guidelines on lifting (and if nec-

essary, reinstating) social distancing policies will do a great deal to gain goodwill from the student body and earn our trust. We are anxious to know what's next, and we want to interact with our friends in other houses whom we've missed for so long. Communicating with us in advance will give us a chance to share our thoughts in a constructive way, and plan safer and better events under the guidelines.

We believe that this request is reasonable. In fact, on August 31st, long before any students moved in, UCLA released a 10-page document outlining exactly how restrictions will be instituted and lifted contingent on 8 factors, including case rate, breakthrough hospitalizations, and capacity for quarantine housing.

We recognize that rotation dinners are not ideal for limiting the number of interactions between wide swaths of the student body. So far, however, the risk to students has been shown to be low, and holding one or two in-person rotation dinners will not produce the full-scale mixing of students that we wish to prevent.

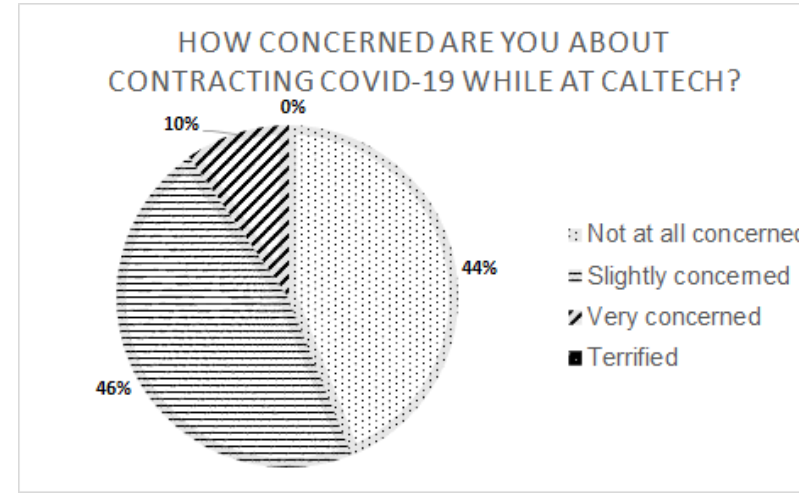
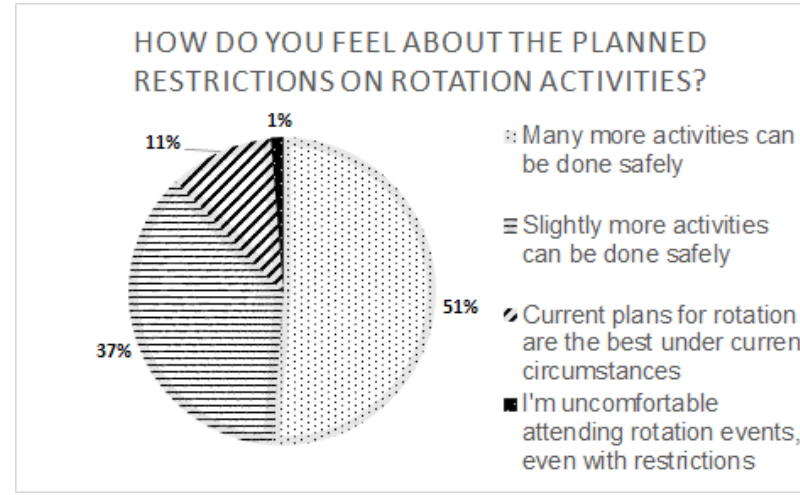
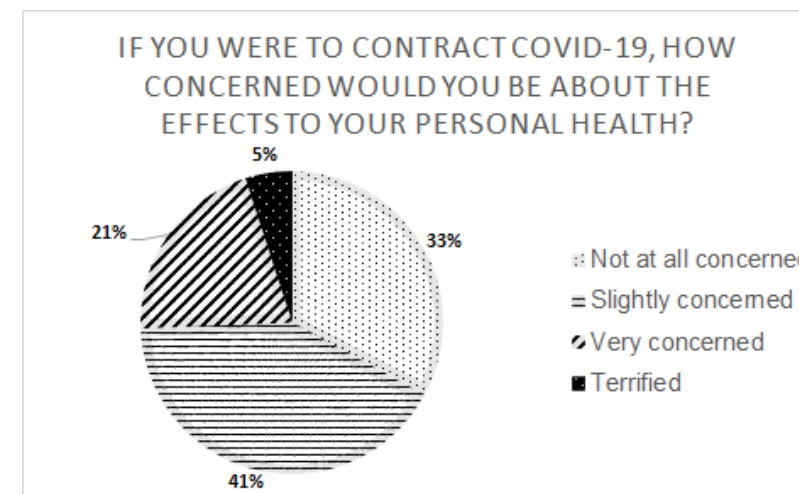
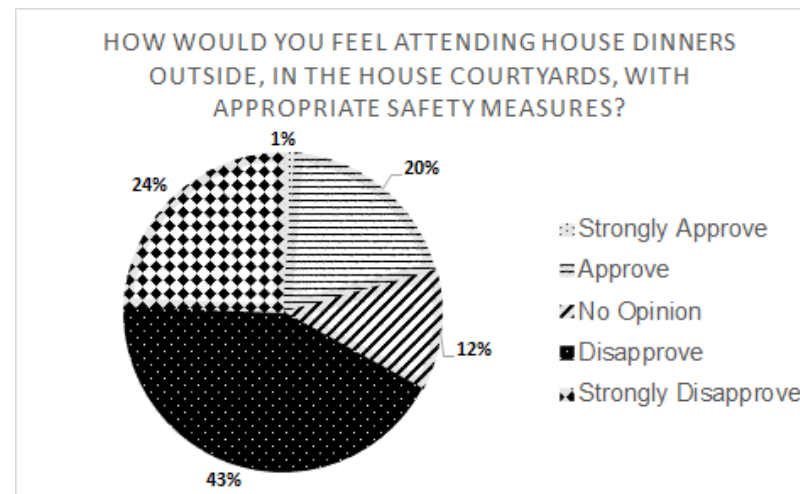
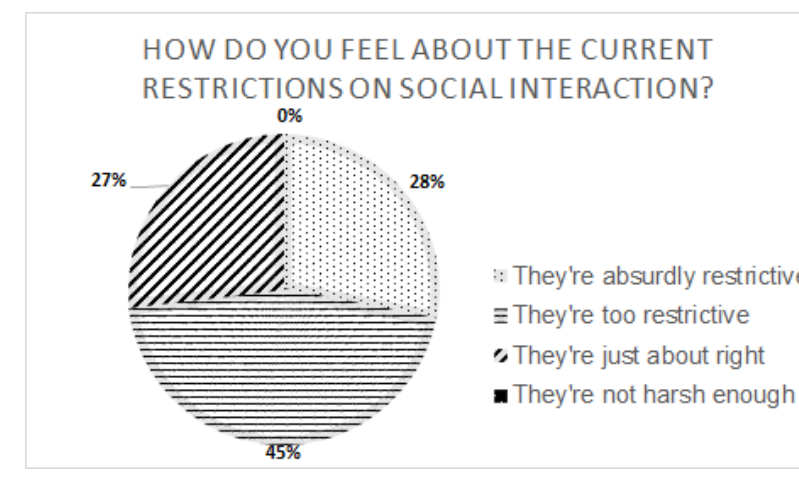
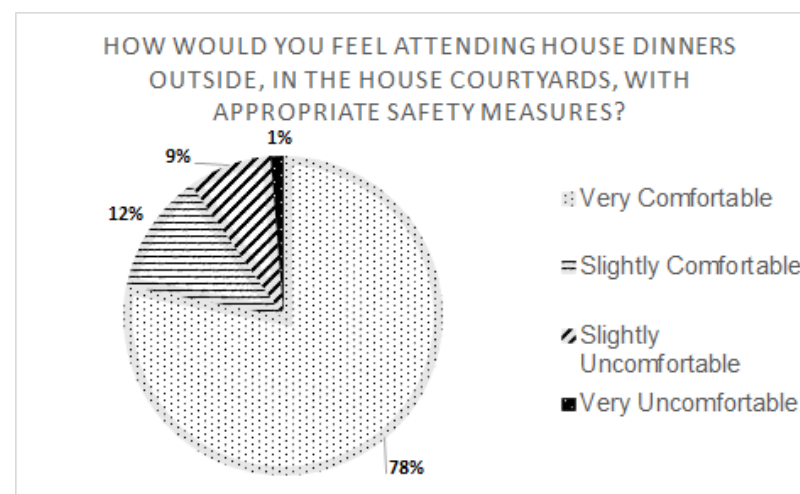
Therefore, we propose that rotation should be modified to accommodate an extra free dinner, and that both free dinners be held outside and in person, contingent on continued adherence to social distancing guidelines and low or nonexistent case rates among the student body.

Finally, we appreciate and commend continued accommodations for those members of our community who aren't yet comfortable returning to full in-person activity. Please keep them in mind when planning events.

Have opinions of your own?

We'd love to print them!
Pitch us at tech@caltech.edu

THE CALIFORNIA TECH - SEPTEMBER POLL RESULTS



How are you feeling about the beginning of the school year, and why do you feel this way?

- "Excited, overwhelmed, frustrated with administration; A lack of clear communication of COVID guidelines from admin, restrictions on student activities that are normally crucial to allow students to integrate into life at Caltech, particularly rotation dinners which could be held to the same standard of safety as orientation activities have been."
- "Fairly worried; The current Delta surge and the administration's stance on restrictions makes me feel less than safe in returning. While online courses were frustrating, my environment at home was positive and currently feels safer than returning to campus."

- "I do occasionally feel anxious when in rooms or areas with a large number of people, but I know that I am relatively safe on campus surrounded by vaccinated individuals where we are all being tested regularly."
- "The concern is mostly that I wouldn't be able to attend classes for two weeks, which wasn't an issue last year when we were doing remote learning. I'm fully vaccinated and have no comorbidities, so the risk of severe illness or death if I catch COVID is one that I'm comfortable taking."
- "Excited and hopeful; I'm excited because it looks like many classes will be in-person, and I'm looking forward to learning and meeting new people. I'm also hopeful that restrictions will loosen after the school year begins and the Caltech "bubble" is possibly established."

- "Why should ANY class be online when the deans are holding a 500-person outdoor movie night as part of orientation?"
- "We have the most restrictive guidelines of any college in the country (more or less) despite being fully vaccinated, having twice a week testing, and an indoor masking mandate. Additionally California has the lowest covid spread in the country."
- "They seemed restrictive but now that I'm actually interacting with people, they aren't that bad or socially restrictive. One thing to note though is that a good amount of students are not strictly following the restrictions (i.e., not always wearing masks)."

CALTECH COVID-19 DASHBOARD STATISTICS AS OF SEPT 29, 2021

Campus Population	Confirmed COVID-19 Cases		False Positives
	Within the Last 14 Days	Past Cases	
Students in Caltech Housing	0	12	
Staff/Faculty in Caltech Housing	0	0	
Family/Household in Caltech Housing	0	4	
Students in Non-Caltech Housing	0	36	
Staff, Postdocs, Faculty	1	205	1
Totals	1	257	1

Total Number of Known Cases to Date: 258

THE SUPERIORITY OF REMOTE LEARNING

NORMAN CHUNG | HUMOR

After the past year and a half, I'm sure that many of us are ecstatic to finally return to some semblance of college student normalcy. We're all ready to see friends again, explore campus (some for the first time!), dine on exquisite CDS cuisine, and just do things that students do. Of course, most important of all is finally being able to (partially) escape the supposed horror that is remote learning. However, today I beg you to consider: is remote learning truly worse than the in-person learning we were all used to in times past?

Now, you're probably thinking that I'm insane. How could the quality of remote learning come anywhere near that of in-person learning? Let me start by asking a question: what is this "in-person" learning we're referring to? Well, it's in the name: "in-person" learning *obviously* means learning about the in-person, and learning about the in-person can be... revolting, to be frank. Think about it - there are so many ways that the human body grosses people

out on a daily basis. To devote valuable time and effort every day only to be rewarded with feelings of disgust seems wasteful. When you compare the squishy workings of the in-person to the cold, comforting touch of a remote, it should be clear that remote learning is far superior to in-person learning.

Of course, some of you out there are willing to put aside your feelings of disgust, and I applaud you. Learning about the in-person is a noble endeavor and has the potential to help countless individuals. But that's the thing: it's noble *because it's hard*. After many millennia, humans have still yet to fully understand how the in-person works. Sure, there's lots to learn and lots more to discover, but in-person learning can feel like banging your head against a really thick wall for a long while, hoping the wall will crack open before your skull does. Again, to all of you out there doing this exact thing, I salute you as a lowly engineering student. I just think that remote learning is far superior because humans seem to have it mostly figured out by now.

Now, I've discussed at length why in-person learning sucks. Allow me to switch gears and talk about why remote learning doesn't suck. Now, what do you learn when you learn remotely? Well, you learn about circuits since remotes have circuits in them. Circuits require electricity to function, and electricity is a freakishly useful thing in this day and age. Therefore, by the transitive property, remote learning is a freakishly useful thing, far more freakishly useful than in-person learning could ever be. Sure, the human body is nice and all, but it's not like learning about the in-person helps the in-person keep me alive or anything. Thus, remote learning *must* be better than in-person learning. Bulletproof logic.

Even after all of these arguments, I haven't even mentioned how beautiful of an invention remotes are. Between avoiding taking walks of shame to whatever device I'm trying to operate and joyfully pressing buttons, the dopamine released in my brain is unparalleled with a remote. The net energy saved from operating a remote is also then available for me

to do other important things^[1]. Compare this to knowledge about the human body, which isn't as immediately useful as operating a remote and doesn't spark the same lackadaisical joy.

Finally, if you're still not convinced, remote learning basically teaches you to shoot a laser and turn things on. Is that not the coolest thing ever?

So, in conclusion, remote learning is very clearly superior to in-person learning. Appreciate it while it lasts, because we all know it won't be here forever.



[1] Like writing for the school newspaper, which you should totally do.

THROWBACK: CORONAVIRUS CASES POP UP ACROSS U.S. OVER WEEKEND

[FROM MARCH 2020]

MICHAEL VALVERDE | CURRENT EVENTS

The coronavirus has spread through the United States this weekend, with urban centers such as New York City and Chicago announcing their first confirmed cases of the illness. In Washington, the death of two elderly men prompted governor Jay Inslee to declare a state of emergency, urging residents to remain home if sick and practice good hygiene.

Things did not go much better in the rest of the world, with countries such as South Korea seeing a massive surge of cases over the past week. To date, there have been over 88,000 confirmed cases worldwide, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths.

Looking towards home, two cases were confirmed in the Bay Area,

both without any obvious cause; the patients in question had not traveled to China recently, nor did they knowingly encounter someone who did. This may suggest that they received the virus from someone else in America who was not diagnosed.

Fueled by fear of the coronavirus, the global economy took a substantial hit this past week, with more than six trillion dollars in market value being wiped from stock markets around the world. The New York Stock Exchange saw a particularly bad decline, with the Dow Jones losing 3,500 points last week, its worst weekly performance since 2008. This mainly stems from the shutdown of factories and stores abroad, especially those in China, which has been hit especially hard by the coronavirus.

Hearing such bad news, panicking and fearing the worst is a natural reaction, however, at the time of publication there are no known cases in Pasadena and the risk of infection for the general population is low. That being said, we should all be proactive in minimizing the chance of an outbreak occurring, both for our sake and for those around us. John Y. Tsai, MD, Medical Director of Student Services and Julia M McCallin, Associate Professor for Human Resources have recently sent out an email to the Caltech Community with some helpful tips on preventing infection, reprinted below for ease of access. We should all strive to follow these guidelines to create a safer campus.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) or wear a mask when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Do this frequently, and certainly after sneezing, coughing, or before/after touching your face.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.
- Avoid contact with others who are sick and do not travel while sick.
- Get an influenza vaccine if you have not already done so.

A NEW SUBMARINE DEAL RAISES TENSIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE US

DANIEL CONTALDI | CURRENT EVENTS

In recent weeks, tensions intensified and subsided between France and the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. On September 15, the US, UK, and Australia announced the signing of a new security pact between the three nations, known as AUKUS. Under the agreement, Australia is set to receive several nuclear-powered submarines from the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as fostering cooperation on other security fronts, including quantum technologies and cyber capabilities.

Sources within the White House purported that the new deal is an effort to counteract the influence of China's power in the Indo-Pacific region, a country who has openly called the deal "extremely irresponsible", accusing the signing countries

of enacting a so-called "Cold War" mentality and claims that it further threatens the stability of the region.

All of this comes as quite a shock to France, who claims to have had no knowledge of the talks leading to the deal or the breaking of the original contract until hours before the public announcement. AUKUS is set to replace a deal signed some years earlier between Australia and France for the purchase of twelve diesel-powered submarines back in 2016.

According to the Washington Post, the replacement of the France-Australia contract with AUKUS is estimated to be costing France approximately \$65 billion in its defense economy, however, they have more at stake than money. France also holds territorial assets in the Indo-Pacific region, which is home to about 1.6 million French citizens.

Being left out of the new pact has demoted France's sense of its position in the region from that of a power, to that of a resident. In response to the announcement, Jean-Yves Le Drian, France's Foreign Minister, called the situation "a stab in the back".

French President Emmanuel Macron had no immediate comments, but instead made a move unheard of in recent French history; he recalled the French Ambassadors to the United States and Australia. Shortly after, as reported by the BBC, a 30-minute phone call took place between Macron and President Biden, as France and the United States sought to mend the political divide, during which the countries agreed to attempt to move forward.

The United States conceded the fact that "open consultations" with France in the formation of the deal

would have mitigated the conflict. In exchange, France will be returning their Ambassador to Washington D.C. On the same call, Macron and Biden released a joint statement where, according to the White House Briefing Room, "the two leaders have decided to open a process of in-depth consultations, aimed at creating the conditions for ensuring confidence and proposing concrete measures toward common objectives."

When questioned about the new deal, Australia defended its position and actions, claiming that their deal with France was signed nearly six years ago, and with technology and tensions advancing in the region, they are in need of a new class of submarines that France is simply unable to provide.

ROTATION 2021

Editor's Note: Only houses that replied to the Tech's requests for pictures are included here.

BLACKER



FLEMING



RICKETTS



RUDDOCK



DABNEY



ASCIT'S NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS KICK OFF A NEW YEAR

ANKITA NANDI | CAMPUS

With the start of a new academic year brings new plans for student leadership and their role on campus. The Caltech student body elected a new Board of Directors in May of the past Spring term, amidst uncertainty of how the 2021-22 academic year would proceed. With four full classes of undergraduates on campus for the first time in over a year, many students wonder just how "normal" this school year will be. Much of student leadership's goals revolve around communication with administration and ensuring events are safe.

Upon speaking to members of ASCIT BoD, common threads include uncertainty around how events would proceed with the in-person environment while still pushing for as normal an experience as possible. With two classes of students completely new to campus and two classes returning after a year virtually, there is an emphasis on maintaining and increasing campus culture, and all of BoD and the Interhouse Committee are focused on ensuring the transition to campus is smooth for all students. As Social Director Kavya Rajagopalan said, the "goal is for students to still be able to engage in some form of social activity and not become incredibly inundated by work and not meet new people."

Despite the in-person experience, the majority of rotation events, including house dinners, will be online over Discord, similar to virtual rotation of the 2020-21 academic year. Virtual rotation is just one of the many examples of the pandemic still

having its effect on the student experience. When planning events, as Rajagopalan said, "almost anything could be cancelled at a whim." President Ayooluwa Odemuyiwa says one of the first major obstacles will be ensuring that students make it past the two-week threshold, which marks the period after which administration may be willing to loosen restrictions to open more events up. To make it to that point, Odemuyiwa emphasized how the student body has to work together, highlighting how the collaborative nature of Caltech has to prevail beyond academics to ensure social events can open.

Aside from Rotation, Rajagopalan intends to keep other campus traditions like ASCIT movie night, midnight donuts and bagels, and the ASCIT concert, all of which prevailed last year as well despite the virtual environment. ARC Director and Vice President of Academic Affairs Mohini Misra intends to maintain student-faculty lunches and advising events for students, which similarly continued last year. Given the covid restrictions, she is open to hybrid events and ensuring such events are accessible and safe for all participants.

Amongst the desire for normalcy and safety, all BoD members seek to support the students in all facets of student life. With regards to house culture, IHC Chair Katherine Chang intends to be an advocate for houses, working with House Presidents and administration to ensure that traditions can continue. Both Director

of Operations Aditi Venkatesh and Treasurer Matthew Hajjar work with clubs to ensure they receive appropriate funds. Misra said that while the ARC is not able to release course recordings from last year, teachers are expected to provide materials for quarantined students. Also, following her Student-Faculty Conference presentation on mental health and academics at Caltech, Misra intends on working towards supporting students' mental health as students adjust to the academics-stress balance.

At the beginning of their terms, all of BoD emphasized how they would ensure transparency regarding operations and communications with administration. Rajagopalan is open about her dissatisfaction regarding communications with administration, saying that they were "strict to an extent that does not align with the general interests of the student body, and not transparent about what they expect the trajectory of social events to be." Odemuyiwa highlighted the recent Undergraduate COVID Response Letter/Petition as an example of BoD's transparency, how student leadership advocated for student

voices to administration, and how BoD provides updates regarding such ventures.

With classes fast approaching, student leadership is working hard to ensure students' concerns are heard and the campus remains safe. As Odemuyiwa said at the beginning of her term, BoD is composed of other students, and serves as a direct connection to administration. BoD members encourage the student body to reach out to them with any concerns, and attend IHC or ASCIT BoD meetings, both of which are currently being held over zoom. Policies and events are in flux due to the covid restrictions, but only time will tell how the new school year will progress and how much in-person changes the campus.

Editor's Note: Ankita didn't give an article title, so I was really tempted to use "Now that we're back in person, we can't help but notice ASCIT's Hot New BoD" or "We aren't Board of these new Directors" - Kenny



From left to right: Ayooluwa, Mohini, Katherine, Aditi, Matthew, Kavya, Nicole

AN INTERVIEW WITH ASHLEY PALLIE, CALTECH'S NEW DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRAD ADMISSIONS

ADITEE PRABHUTENDOLKAR | INTERVIEWS

Q: How long have you been working with the college admissions process?

A: I am starting my 14th year in college admissions. I started working at Scripps College, my alma mater, and was there for 6 years before heading down the street to Pomona College. I spent 7 years at Pomona, most recently as the Director of Recruitment.

Q: What factors led you to a career in college admissions?

A: I was recruited to my first job at Scripps by the Vice President for Enrollment. I was the student body president and gave a speech alongside the VP to the incoming class; at the end of the presentation, she offered me an opportunity in the office. I thought I would do admissions for a couple of years before becoming a professor and then a college president; however, in my third year, I was asked to write a strategic plan for diversity. When I discovered strategy, everything shifted. I like to think deeply about how admissions can achieve the 3, 5, and 10 year goals of an institution. At smaller schools, every student makes a difference and can have an outsized impact on the community. Helping to build a class to meet the goals of who Caltech is and who Caltech wants to be excites me.

Q: What attracts you to the Caltech community?

A: I deeply respect Caltech and the students, faculty, and staff who make up this community. I went to a women's college, so I understand the power that can come from being in a community of people who have something in common. I like the idea of finding the students who are a perfect fit for this experience, especially the students who never realized a community like Caltech is a place where they can and will thrive.

Q: What are your goals for the next undergraduate admissions cycle?

A: I want to continue to build on the great success that the Undergraduate Admissions Office has already achieved in continuing to find the best and the brightest STEM minds

from around the world and bringing them to Caltech. I also believe very strongly in getting the Caltech name out there to all corners of the world and helping students who have both incredible STEM talent and an insatiable curiosity see Caltech as a place where they can thrive.

Q: What are your overall thoughts on diversity in Caltech admissions?

A: I see the strides that the community and the admissions committee has made, especially with this incoming class, and I am excited to continue building on that momentum. That begins with pipeline building; when students from all walks of life know about Caltech, understand who we are, and can see themselves thriving here, then they are more likely to apply. I'm not interested in increasing applications just because – rather, I'd like to see the applicant pool reflect the diversity we wish to see at Caltech. Diversity broadly defined – race & ethnicity, geographic, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economically, the list goes on. The educational benefits of diversity are great, especially in a small collaborative environment, and will only make Caltech students better scientists and researchers.

Q: How do you plan to recruit historically underrepresented populations?

A: Sense of belonging is an important part of recruiting students. Everyone wants to be included, and making sure students can see themselves at Caltech is important. We'll start this fall looking into our communications strategy and website – do our communications reflect our value of diversity? We will investigate partnerships across the country with community-based organizations that have strong STEM students who may not have traditionally looked at Caltech. As we work to increase the pipeline of students from diverse communities interested in Caltech, we will keep looking to the research many have done on the challenges and opportunities for recruiting students. There are quite a few triggers to pull and each has a lot of nuance within. It's exciting.

Q: What are the current challenges in increasing diversity?

A: There are many challenges, but two of the biggest are a) competition for the same students across our peer group and b) students not believing that Caltech is the place for them. Students must have strong science and math foundations to enroll at Caltech, and other schools that require the same foundation are all competing for the students who are eligible to apply. As such, we must make the case for Caltech clear and honest. At the same time, many students either do not know Caltech or do not see this community as the right place for them. In admissions, we must make sure that all students with the necessary STEM foundation know that this is an institution where students can delve deeply into knowledge and research in an intimate community that will challenge and support them. We must make that case in neighborhoods all around the country. As Caltech becomes more reflective of the diversity of the United States, the case also becomes easier.

Q: Many applicants in the upcoming admissions cycle have had much of high school negatively impacted by the pandemic. How is the admissions office planning to accommodate these unusual circumstances?

A: There are so few times in the course of human history where every single person in the world experienced something similar. COVID has been that experience in this century; just as students had to leave school suddenly and continue online (and often in less-than-ideal conditions), so did the admissions staff. We understand the general experience, though we, of course, must leave space for the individual challenges that students faced. I was at home with my husband, infant, and toddler. My empathy for students is immense and that empathy is absolutely helping us shape our accommodations.

In the application, students are given space to speak to how COVID impacted them, both the good and the more challenging. There was beauty in the last 1.5 years for many people as well and understanding those experiences are important in con-



textualizing a student's experiences. We also understand that extracurriculars may not have been the same, along with online courses, access to research and labs, or additional family responsibilities. Some students were working to keep their families fed and others were able to attend school in-person all year long. We must meet students where they are and recognize that many did as much as they possibly could with the few resources they had.

Q: Caltech is a school known for academic rigor. Given the present moratorium on standardized testing, how will you look for that same academic rigor in this year's applicants?

A: Caltech has always practiced holistic admissions, so testing was only a small sliver of the conversation. While Caltech students traditionally scored very high on standardized testing, that was not what got a student into Caltech. It was a mix of their academic preparation, their impact on the intellectual community of their high schools, and their incredible potential for success in STEM at Caltech, amongst many other factors. Not having testing this year does not change that equation too much. We will still look for incredible academicians who are intellectually curious and who will delight in the Caltech community.

Who is Tom Mannion?

"I help students to plan and hold events. I like to say that I turn students' ideas into fun events, and, sometimes, new traditions. We host major events like Club Fair, Techfest, Orientation activities. I advise ASCIT and work closely with them to support what they do, especially their social events. I also work with students on all major and off campus pranks as well as many on campus pranks. I am involved with many food science and cooking activities and regularly do foodie activities from Italy, to Napa, to virtual to here on campus."



ASCIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES FOR JUNE 27, 2021.

TAKEN BY NICOLE HEFLIN.

Officers Present: Ayooluwa Odemuyiwa, Mohini Misra, Katherine Chang, Aditi Venkatesh, Matthew Hajjar, Kavya Rajagopalan

Call to Order: 2:01 pm

President's Report (Ayooluwa):

ASCIT app logistics
Smore orientation logistics
Amendments

Officer's Reports:

V.P. of Academic Affairs (Mohini):
ME13 concerns

V.P. of Non-Academic Affairs (Katherine):

Roompicks logistics
Rotation logistics

Director of Operations (Aditi):

SAC maintenance

Treasurer (Matthew):

Nothing to Report

Social Director (Kavya):

Family feud merch logistics

Secretary (Nicole):

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: 3:32 pm

ASCIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES FOR JULY 11, 2021.

TAKEN BY NICOLE HEFLIN.

Officers Present: Ayooluwa Odemuyiwa, Mohini Misra, Katherine Chang, Matthew Hajjar, Kavya Rajagopalan

Guests: Diego Olaya

Call to Order: 6:03 pm PST

President's Report (Ayooluwa):

Housing logistics

Off-Campus Students will have additional costs for transportation, internet, etc. Some off-campus students might be forced to take a leave of absence if no remote learning option

Potential Forms of Action:

Reach out to Financial Aid Office (and Deans) for extra funding for off-campus students

Reach out to counseling services and health center to discuss options for off-campus residents

Reach out to CTLO to discuss online learning options (lecture recordings, etc.)

Reach out to profs to support the petition for additional funding for off-campus students

Compile a document including housing in the Pasadena area, lease info, utility costs, transportation alternatives?, etc.

Start discussing housing plans for future years that will best accommodate/support ALL students

Orientation event planning

ASCIT App logistics

Future projects and budget

Officer's Reports:

V.P. of Academic Affairs (Mohini):

ME13 concerns

Compile grad school resource for seniors

V.P. of Non-Academic Affairs (Katherine):

Roompicks logistics

Rotation logistics

Director of Operations (Aditi):

Nothing to report

Treasurer (Matthew):

Nothing to report

Social Director (Kavya):

Nothing to report

Secretary (Nicole):

Nothing to report

Guests:

Diego Olaya:

Petition was created to get better financial support for off-campus students

Large portion of ASCIT budget should be dedicated toward housing off-campus students (transportation costs, internet, etc.)

ASCIT should reach out to profs to sign petition

Need for unaffiliated student representation on IHC

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: 7:37 pm PST

ARC MEETING MINUTES

5/8/2021

MINUTES BY: MEGAN WANG

Present: Mohini Misra, Anjini Chandra, Junxuan Shan, Megan Wang, Emily Zheng, Gabi Twombly

Introductions

Emily and Maddie introduced themselves

Ombuds meeting

Went well, people asked questions and Mohini answered

SFLs

50 people wanted Grubhub, 60 total people

We agreed on \$25 is enough to include everyone to give them credit instead of not accommodating 6

Showed a spread sheet of students assigned per prof and asked people who emailed the professors in the first place to email them. Mohini is drafting email to send to them in ARC shared

ASCIT Teaching Awards

We issue 2-4 awards for profs and TAs

Send out google form for nominations, ARC goes through and selects

Selecting professors 5/22

Send out awards with ASCIT Staff awards

Phic

Set problem sets super long, set 4 long, 7 questions which were mostly QP -> shortened some sets

Concerned about grading as IP problems are 40% of grades

IP recently was hard, but they were nice on grading

Option to pass fail class but many people who are taking on grades are mad at it

Nobody doing really poorly on collab problems, many IPs are hard for people

Ombuds Alice and Rahul reached out to him by a nice discord message and prof was attempting to change number of QPs and length of overall set

Doesn't seem like a problem anymore as sets are shorter which was main problem

Prof seems receptive/flexible to feedback but firm on certain things

Changing meetings time - maybe

Send out when to meet

ARC Tip of the Week

Fall term 2021 schedule release on REGIS

Action items:

(Mohini) Add new members to ARC shared folder

(Mohini) Draft SFL email for profs and students

(Mohini) Ascit teaching awards google form email to UG-list

(Mohini) Reach out to Phic ombuds

(Mohini) Send out when to meet for new meetings time

ARC MEETING MINUTES

5/15/21

MINUTES BY: JAMES CHEN

Present: Mohini Misra, James Chen, Gabriella Twombly, Nathan Suri, Maddie Ramos, Alexandra Lai, Megan Wang, Junxuan Shen, Emily Zhang

General

New ARC meeting time will likely be Sunday

SFL Recap

Not too awkward

Went about as well as expected over Zoom

At Large Rep Interviews

Sunday 5/16, 5-7pm

Mohini and James, other ARC members can be involved

ASCIT Teaching Awards

Survey closes 5/20

Lots of response already!

Picking winners next ARC meeting

BOC Collaboration Policy

BOC wants feedback on collab guide for in-person classes

Gave comments on guide as a group

Phic Course Concerns

Grading has been nicer

Work on problem sets has lessened

Concerns about grade distribution not resolved yet, but in past years final grade distribution has been fine

Maic Course Concerns

Students feel delayed grading caused them to unfairly lose lots of points in midterm

Inconsistency in grading, people lost different amounts of points based on which TA is grading

Gave feedback to Konrad, waiting to hear what happens

Going to wait until Wednesday for response/changes

ARC Tip(s) of the Week

Registration for Fall 2021 opens 5/20

Deadline for ASCIT Teaching Awards is Friday

Frosh - go introduce yourself to your new option adviser!

Action items:

(Mohini and James) Run interviews for At Large Rep interviews

(Mohini) Give feedback on collaboration guide to BOC

(James) Get updates on Maic

ARC MEETING MINUTES

5/22/21

MINUTES BY: JAMES CHEN

Present: Mohini Misra, James Chen, Anjini Chandra, Ely Jade, Zitian Ye, Junxuan Shen, Saehui Hwang, Gabriella Twombly, Maddie Ramos, Adishree Ghatare, Emily Zhang, Maggie Sui

New member introductions

Phic updates

Assignments extended due to ditch day

Seems better than before

Maic updates

No information about curve yet

Solutions are going to be posted earlier

Attempts to get midterms regraded for inconsistent grading largely unsuccessful

ASCIT Teaching Awards

Professors: Gil Refael, Sarah Reisman, Justin Bois, Lawrence Jin

TAs: Bilge Gungoren, Chan Gi Kim, Forte Shinko, Laura Lewis

ARC Tip of the Week

Final papers are coming up, so make sure to take advantage of the Hixon Writing Center! They have a lot of tutors, so you can find a meeting time that fits your schedule. Plus, they have an option to send in a paper and get feedback without having to meet.

Action items:

Update ASCIT on Teaching Award results (Mohini)

Post ARC tip of the week (James)

Write for
the *Tech!*

Hiring for all positions!
(Yes, you can take my job!)



Join The Tech
Discord server!