Gilmartin awarded Feynman Prize

CYNTHIA ELLER
Caltech Media Relations

This article was originally published online at caltech.edu.

This year the Richard P. Feynman Prize for Excellence in Teaching has been awarded to Professor of English Kevin Gilmartin, who has taught at Caltech for the past 24 years.

Gilmartin was nominated for this prize by students in several different disciplines, who praise his enthusiasm and accessibility, his artful handling of classroom discussion and debate, and his patient tutoring in the fine art of writing. In teaching evaluations, students describe Gilmartin as "an eloquent lecturer" and a "supportive professor" whose "enthusiasm is contagious."

The Feynman Prize committee—tasked with honoring a professor "who demonstrates, in the broadest sense, unusual ability, creativity, and innovation" in teaching— was unanimous in its support of Gilmartin, describing him as "an example to the Institute of the possibilities for engagement, discovery, and growth through classroom teaching."

Gilmartin's classes are no steady trudge through lectures and essays. Rather, they are taught seminar-style with student presentations, classroom discussions, and field trips to the Huntington Library. Gilmartin notes that he is particularly interested in helping students understand the historical context in which works of literature are produced, a theme that dominates his scholarly work as well. For example, this semester in a course on the works of Jane Austen (English 127), students are dabbling in what Gilmartin calls "a fascinating print record" from the period, ranging from manuals of conduct for young women to instructional pamphlets on everything from dancing to gardening. "Through the wonders of digital media," says Gilmartin, "students can see things that they would have previously found only in a rare books reading room."

Gilmartin also has pioneered workshops with visiting poets brought to campus through support from the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences and the Provost's Office. "There's

something remarkable about teaching a course where many of the authors that we read are still alive and are writing in ways that students feel are contemporary," says Gilmartin, "but then to have one of the writers actually present on campus has been a revelation for me and my students."

One of the Caltech students who nominated Professor Gilmartin

Photo Courtesy of Lance Hayashida/Caltech

for the Feynman Prize declares that he "vivifies the 'human' in 'humanities.'" She notes that teaching English can be an uphill battle at Caltech: "Despite a massive torrent of degradation inflicted upon the humanities by this sea of science-loving skeptics, Professor Kevin Gilmartin kindles a fire within each of his students to love English."

Gilmartin's impact on individual students is profound. As a Caltech alumna noted in her nomination of Gilmartin, "I came to Caltech believing that I was at best a mediocre writer and because of that, approached humanities courses with only a cursory effort. However, week after week, Professor Gilmartin would email me back with thoughtful and encouraging responses to my weekly write-ups. Gradually, I noticed myself spending more and more time on the assigned writings and speaking up more during class because, for the first time, I felt as if my opinions mattered."

Gilmartin himself, though certainly pleased by the award, is keen to share the credit with his colleagues and with Caltech administrators who have supported humanities programs in the classroom and beyond, notably

with the recent development of the Hixon Writing Center. "I was closely involved in recruiting Susanne Hall as the director of the Hixon Center, and she has supported my teaching in extraordinary ways through her peer tutoring program," he says. "One of my most rewarding recent experiences as a teacher has been to see a number of students from my freshman humanities courses go on to become peer tutors in the writing program themselves."

Alongside his regular teaching, Gilmartin serves as faculty advisor for the student literary and visual arts magazine, Totem. Another Caltech alumnus credits Gilmartin for making it possible for Totem "to host a documentary and feature film director to discuss elements of cinema, and a JPL scientist who uses the art form of origami to do mathematical modeling." Gilmartin recalls that when he was first asked to be the magazine's faculty advisor in 2002, "I didn't know what a faculty advisor was expected to do." He learned on the job, and notes that he has been glad to help student editors with funding issues and to act as the magazine's "institutional memory" as senior editors and writers graduate and new editors and writers come in.
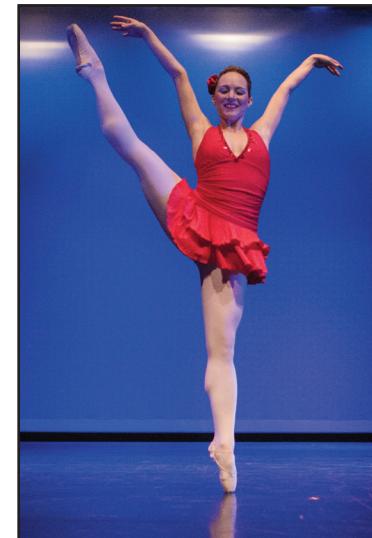
These and other Caltech students "make teaching easy," Gilmartin says. "Our students are extraordinarily bright, interested, and engaged. It's true that I've had to find ways to meet them halfway, and that's been a positive learning process for me as well. When classroom circumstances are right, their willingness to be engaged, their enthusiasm, their interest in literature and in challenging themselves is in no way restricted to the sciences."
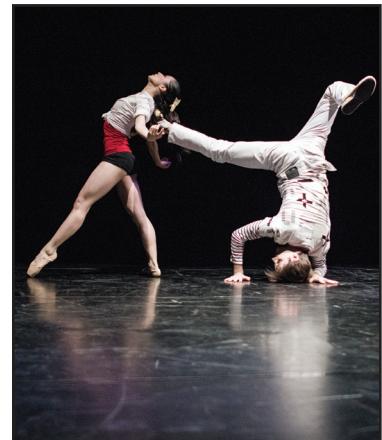
The Feynman Prize has been endowed through the generosity of Ione and Robert E. Paradise and an anonymous local couple. Some of the most recent winners of the Feynman Prize include Steven Frautschi, professor of theoretical physics, emeritus; Paul Asimow, professor of geology and geochemistry; and Morgan Kousser, the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of History and Social Science.

Nominations for next year's Feynman Prize for Excellence in Teaching will be solicited in the fall. Further information about the prize can be found on the Provost's Office website.
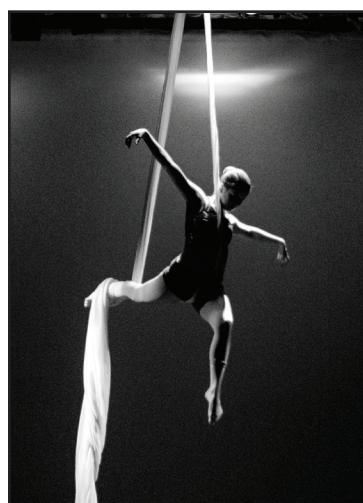
Caltech Dance Show features talents of undergrads and grads
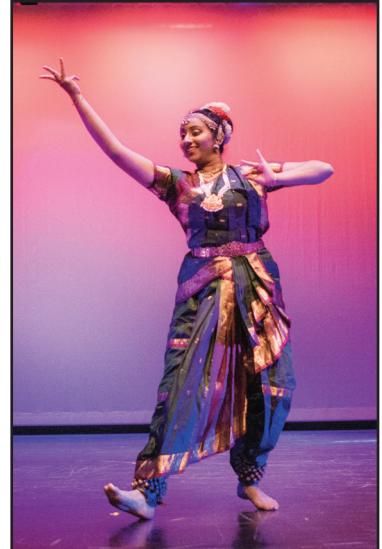
Heather McCaig performs Carmen.

Greg Donaldson and Aileen Oyama Hui mix two styles in Sam Smith's "I'm Not the Only One."

Annelise Thompson dances on silk to "Obedear" by Purity Ring.

Anusha Nathan presents intricate footwork in "Ananda Natam Aduvar."

Photos Courtesy of Michael L. Wong

NANCY WEN
Contributing Writer

The annual Caltech Dance Show was a rare opportunity for members of the Caltech community to show off their dancing skills. This year's show, held on April 17 and 18, did not disappoint. With a range of dancing styles from hip-hop to traditional Indian dance, from solo performances to a group of 21, every act ended to enthusiastic applause and the show concluded with a standing ovation from the audience.

The show had a great start, opening up with the largest dance group with 21 members, performing "Suryodaya" ("sunrise" in Hindi), a combination of Bollywood music and pop songs. They seamlessly transitioned from songs called "Saathiya" and "Satakli" to Katy Perry's "Dark Horse" and Jason Derulo's "Trumpets." The aptly-named closing act, "Suryasta" ("sunset"), featured many of the same dancers, and echoed the same style of the opening act with

songs like Rihanna's "Diamonds" and Taylor Swift's "Blank Space."

The fusion of different styles was a recurring theme throughout the night. Greg Donaldson and Aileen Oyama Hui choreographed (along with Preston Li) and then performed a beautiful rendition of Sam Smith's "I'm Not the Only One." Their combination of different types of dance highlighted the conflict and emotions between the couple in the song. Another memorable number by a couple was newlyweds Renee and Teo Wilkening's performance of "Thinking Out Loud" by Ed Sheeran. Their palpable chemistry, strong dance skills and playful sense of humor resulted in a dance that was truly "homage to their own love story."

The most breathtaking act of the night was surely "Icarus," which featured Annelise Thompson in an aerial silks piece. She maneuvered expertly on two silk ribbons suspended from the ceiling, using the fabric to strike various poses and to fly through the air. The

Caltech Y Column

CALTECH Y

The Caltech Y Column serves to inform students of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. The list is compiled by Neera Shah from information given by the Caltech Y and its student leaders.

Founded by students in 1916, the Y was organized to provide extracurricular activities planned and implemented by students as an opportunity to learn leadership skills and discover themselves. The Y seeks to broaden students' worldviews, raise social, ethical, and cultural awareness through teamwork, community engagement, activism, and leadership. More information about the Caltech Y and its programs can be found at https://caltechy.org. The office is located at 505 S. Wilson Avenue.

Upcoming Events
1. World Fest
Monday, April 20th - Friday, April 24th, 2015

World Fest celebrates the cultural diversity of our campus community and is brought to you by International Offices and the Caltech Y, in collaboration with international and cultural student clubs. Join us for a week of great cultural events featuring talks and the annual International Food Fair and Culture Show.

The complete schedule of events can be found at https://www.international.caltech.edu/programs/WorldFest.

2. Iron Mountain Hike
Sunday | April 26th | 7:00 AM
Join the Caltech Y Outdoors group for a hike to the summit of Iron Mountain. Iron Mountain is one of the most isolated peaks in the San Gabriels. The trail to the summit is the most strenuous single peak trail in the entire mountain range, but the rewarding view and accomplishment of reaching the summit is worth the effort. The hike is 14 miles round trip with a whopping 7200 feet of elevation gain.

This hike is intended for very experienced hikers only. We will leave the Caltech Y at 7:00am and expect to hike all day. If you are interested in the hike, sign up at the link below. If you have any questions, email Jeremy Sandler at jsandler@caltech.edu.
h t t p : / / g o o . g l / f o r m s / U1rTmvQYTV

3a. Pasadena LEARNS
Friday | 3:00 - 5:00pm | Madison and Jackson Elementary School | Pasadena
Come volunteer at Madison and Jackson Elementary School! We are partnered with the Pasadena LEARNs program and work with their Science Olympiad team or do regular tutoring along with occasional hands-on science experiments. Transportation is provided. For more information and to RSVP, contact vkkumar@caltech.edu. Eligible for Federal Work Study.

3b. Hathaway Sycamores
Monday | 5:30-8:00pm | Highland Park
Volunteer at Hathaway-Sycamores, a group that supports local underprivileged but motivated high school students. There are a variety of ages and subjects being tutored. The service trip includes about an hour of travel time and 1.5 hours of tutoring. Transportation is included. For more info and to RSVP email Sherwood Richers at srichers@tapir.caltech.edu. Eligible for Federal Work Study.

Other Announcements - Beyond the Caltech Y
Science Fair Judges Needed
Multiple Dates in May | Pasadena
Judges are needed for multiple Science Fairs and other events during the month of May. Please email Karen Jain at jain.karen@pusd.us for more info or to volunteer for any of the events listed below:
Wednesday, May 6th, 8:00 - 10:00 AM
Washington Elementary School Science Fair
Grades 4-5
Friday, May 8th, 9 am - noon (There is no need to stay for the whole session.),
Innovation Expo of science and engineering projects
Grades 4-9
Blair High School gym
Saturday, May 16th, 8 am - 2:30 pm (Again, volunteering for an hour or two will be great.)
Science Olympiad Tournament
Grades 2-8
Blair Middle and High School campuses
Friday, May 22, 9 am - noon
Judges for cardboard boat race
Grade 8
Sierra Madre community swimming pool

Huntington Library Plant Sale Volunteers Needed
Friday - Sunday | April 24th - 26th | Shifts from 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM | Huntington Library
The Huntington Library is in need of volunteers to assist guests to transport their plant purchases from the checkout area in the Botanical Center to the designated pickup area in the Parking Lot. Dolly carts are provided by The Huntington, but due to the volume of customers and distance to the pickup location, we need volunteers who are able to assist with the following:
Loading plants on & off of carts
Walking carts to & from the checkout area & designated pickup location
Returning carts to checkout area & assisting the next guest in need
It is a physically demanding job and there is a high volume of customers, but it is one of the most important roles in the Plant Sale and tips are frequently given for the assistance.
Contact Mikki Heydorff at mheydorff@huntington.org for more info and to volunteer.

ARC Chair (2 candidates)

KAYANÉ K. DINGILIAN

Students are highly valued here at Caltech, and for that reason we have an opportunity to be heard and make an impact upon the quality of teaching. After spending most of my three years so far helping improve the teaching quality as an active ombudsman and an elected ARC representative, I aim to help even further the undergraduate education as the ARC Chair. As a leader, I will build bridges between students and faculty in order to make the years spent at Caltech the most rewarding. I will make sure that each of you is heard, recognized, and your views are included in the overall effort to make our student body a more supportive community and our time here an exciting experience for everyone.

The ARC Chair needs to have strong leadership and I have illustrated this ability on a number of occasions. For instance, earlier this year, I was selected as the Chair of the Chemical Engineering Student-Faculty Committee. I organized and led a meeting with invited faculty and students whom I selected. We discussed improvements to the chemical engineering curriculum, and, at the end, the faculty were pleasantly stunned as to how productive the meeting was. With effective leadership and time management, the same progress can be made for the school as a whole.

Communicating well and in a creative way, both in writing and orally is crucial for a leader. Across the ARC and among the undergraduate body, many students respect me and rely on my ability to courageously speak on their behalf to their professors and teaching assistants. After several years of working as a facilitator among them, TAs and professors have also gained respect for me and turned to me for advice. For instance, the ACM95a head TA emailed me at the beginning of the year and asked for tips on how to structure various parts of the class to the students' satisfaction. Prof. Alan Weinstein also asked me in person to be an ombudsman for Ph12 last year, and based on my input he agreed to shorten some of the work, even when I emailed him on behalf of this year's students.

It is not simply a matter of belonging to ARC, but making a difference as a representative, Throughout my term as an ARC Representative, I have built up many strong relationships with administrators and helped many students more easily access the resources they have to strengthen the educational experience. For instance, I wrote a proposal to improve teaching quality in several classes which was supported by the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Outreach and Vice Provost Cindy Weinstein. I also spoke on several occasions with the chairs of both the Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Board, and have gained their respect as a student leader. I also organized and was awarded funding for individual and group conference participation from the Deans. Another current example is the revitalization of Course Capture, a program funded by the Vice Provost. As your elected ARC Chair, I plan to access these and even more resources to innovatively improve your academic life here.

I will devote my time to you, the undergraduate students. I will lead the ARC in a way so as to bring back our many programs that foster student-faculty interactions, such as the Student-Faculty lunches, and strengthen community building programs hosted by the ARC. I will jump start and complete projects that have been sitting idle for a long time, most notably a comprehensive teaching wiki aimed to inform new professors, instructors, and teaching assistants. As an ARC member and ombudsman, I have worked successfully to help the undergraduate students, and the above-mentioned are some examples, As your ARC Chair, I will be in a position to help you further, to assure you that your voice is heard, and your academic experience will be among the best and most creative here at Caltech. With your support, I will have the opportunity to support you, in turn, even more.

JAY PALEKAR

Dear Caltech,
My name is Jay Palekar and I am running for ARC Chair. Over the past two years I've had the pleasure of serving on both the ARC and the BoC, and in that time I've come to appreciate the value of the ARC as the one organization that actively makes student's academic lives better. It fights for the Honor Code, handles course concerns, and generally prevents the faculty from being batshit insane.

I'm the current Board of Control Secretary, the former Avery Rep to the BoC, and have been a member of the ARC for the past two years. Although I intend to step down as BoC Secretary, through it, I have developed strong working relationships with the Deans and other members of the faculty. I've been privy to conversations between the faculty and students on everything from online courses to the honor code and want to be part of implementing the changes that will improve Caltech life in the future.
Jay Palekar

ASCIT Social Director (1)

ANNIE CHEN

During my time as Social Director, I have become quite familiar with the responsibilities and duties that this position entails. Maintaining a balance between academics and social life is difficult, and I have made it my mission to provide students with such opportunities to do so.

Before I begin with my statement, however, I believe that as an existing ASCIT BoD member, communication between the BoD and the student body should be clear and straightforward. With that being said, I will be studying abroad at the University of Edinburgh next fall term and will not be present on campus. Although I will be abroad for a significant portion of my office, I believe that this is a great opportunity for me to work with an interim Social Director, who will most likely be heavily involved in future ASCIT activities. Working with the interim, I can ensure that first term social activities, such as End of Rotation Party, and Trivia Night, will continue unhindered.

During the past year, I have upheld Caltech traditions, such as End of Rotation Party, Big Interhouse, and ASCIT Formal, while creating other events to get students off campus. Whether it be to the Pasadena Ice Skating Rink or Santa Anita Park for Dachshund Racing, I have tried to create more opportunities for students to explore our surrounding areas. If elected, I have more social events in mind that I wish to carry out before the school year ends. These events include: ASCIT Movie Night to watch the Avengers, a trip to the Aquarium of the Pacific, and a joint party with Harvey Mudd.

I have gained valuable experience working with the ASCIT BoD, Tom Mannion, and other members of administration. I am familiar with the process to create an event, and also to see it through to ensure its success. And I have developed strong relations with businesses around the area for DJs and transportation that I use on a regular basis.

As I have always enjoyed working with others and listening to what people say, I am responsive to any ideas or inputs students may have.

Thank you for reading, and I hope that you will all give me the opportunity to, once again, serve as your Social Director.

ASCIT President (4)

NIMA BADIZADEGAN

Over the past year as a vice president of ASCIT, I have helped provide the voice of students to faculty and administrators. I am running for ASCIT president this year in order to help amplify that voice. As ASCIT president, I will focus on making sure that the student opinion is appropriately represented on important issues like the honor code.

Of all of the candidates for ASCIT president, I have the most student government experience. Since my freshman year, I have been involved with the ARC, the academic wing of ASCIT. Last year, I became the ASCIT Vice President of Academic Affairs, and with that, the chair of the ARC. Along with these leadership responsibilities, I have been a student representative on many different committees, including the Academic Policies Committee, the Faculty Board, and the Council on Undergraduate Education. These experiences have helped me hear and understand the opinions of the student body as a whole and allowed me to build connections with Student Affairs, the Provost's office, and the faculty.

During the past two years, I have worked closely with student and university leadership to improve student life. As the chair of the ARC, I have spent a lot of time this past year working with the Vice Provost on various issues that impact your academic life, including the TQFR system, problem set due times, and class scheduling. I also organized the Student-Faculty Conference, where every student had the chance to discuss important academic issues on campus and to make changes to our individual options. I also worked with both the outgoing and incoming deans on the new academic eligibility rules, and I look forward to continuing to work with the new Dean on the implementation of the academic eligibility policy. I want to make sure that the new policy is applied fairly and consistently, and that every student understands how to work with the eligibility rules

Caltech right now is in a unique position of change. Along with our new President, we have a new Dean coming next year, and a new Vice President for Student Affairs. On the academic side, a new Vice Provost came in this year, and all of this change brings with it the ability to make ourselves heard. Over the past year, I have worked with the new Vice Provost to help her understand the opinions and views of the undergraduate student body, and I am looking forward to working with the new Dean and Vice President for Student Affairs during their transitional periods. During this time, we have

the unique opportunity to effect positive change on campus and help the new members of Student Affairs understand the student experience. The ASCIT president will play an important role over the next year to make sure that our voices are heard.

As I have explained here, I am qualified to take on the ASCIT presidency, and I am eager to start. My experience as an ASCIT vice president and a representative on numerous faculty board committees has allowed me to learn from students about what makes Caltech special to them, and to develop a working relationship with administrators in Student Affairs and the Provost's office. I look forward to bringing my experience with students and faculty to the ASCIT presidency. Please contact me at nima@caltech.edu if you have any questions.

BIANCA LEPE

The most common question prefrosh asked me during PFW was "What do you enjoy about Caltech". As I pondered this question, I realized the many reasons why I believe this university is an amazing place. Besides the academic rigor, I appreciate that the honor code allows for the freedom of take home exams and offers a sense of trust in the community. In addition, Caltech's house system provides a built-in support system where students can obtain answers to a variety of academic and nonacademic questions. Most importantly, I find my fellow students to be the pivotal part of Caltech. In order to improve the quality of the Caltech experience for us undergraduates, I am running for ASCIT president.

This upcoming year will be significant, as a number of turnovers in student affairs related positions in the Caltech administration are occurring. As ASCIT president, I plan foster open and constructive discourse between us students and the administration. Active communication is key to having our voices heard in policy and decision-making. Through my past experience on my house's executive committee and my work on several undergraduate run committees, I have established strong and respectful relationships with faculty and administrators. They listen to me, trust and respect what I have to say.

Tangentially, I believe one of the most important parts of this job is ensuring that student voices are heard from different parts of campus. As such, I plan on understanding the concerns of undergraduates across all houses by attending various house dinners and social events, and undergraduates who do not affiliate as strongly with the house system

with Town Halls and possibly ASCIT President Office hours.

In addition to being a representative of undergraduates, the ASCIT president must effectively run the ASCIT Board of Directors (BoD) and use the position to push for changes that will positively influence the lives of Techers. In terms of student government experience, I have served as a member of the Ruddock executive committee for two years as the Secretary and Social Team member. These experiences have taught me how to work well with a team and achieve my intended goals, as well as how to learn from criticism. They also gave me experience working with a myriad of offices, such as the Housing and Deans' offices and the Caltech Alumni Association. In terms of breadth in student wide affairs, I have worked on the SFP Ambassadors committee, the Title IX committee, and the Dean's Advisory Council. From these committees, I have gained a strong sense of community building and have been able to connect students to a vast number of critical resources and support. Importantly, I have also provided feedback on issues of concern for the student population and served as part of a sounding board for new administrative initiatives, such as the new Interdisciplinary Studies major.

The aforementioned qualifications enable me to be a capable ASCIT president and help me achieve my two main goals for ASCIT. Firstly, I would like to provide stronger career support for undergraduates who do not plan on going on to graduate school or working at a CS company. I plan to work with the Career Center in conjunction with the Alumni Association to fix this problem. As Ruddock secretary, I coordinated the first ever Young Alumni Mixer, where recent graduates from various fields and options came to Ruddock to give advice to current Rudds on life after Tech, both professionally and personally. In addition, I have helped the current secretary create an alumni board which fosters mentorships between current students and alums. I hope to extend this mentorship campus-wide, as I know there are eager alumni from all the houses who would be willing to help current undergrads navigate a career search. This program would help to fill the information gap that currently resides in our CDC and will be an important first step in creating a CDC that will match the standard of a university like Caltech.

Secondly, I would like to continue the work of former ASCIT president Zach Rivkin in furthering ASCIT's role in improving the mental health safety net of Caltech. One of the main issues of concern from our last Dean's Advisory Council meeting was the fact that, when compared with our peer institutions, a very low percentage of Caltech graduating seniors would recommend Caltech to a prospective student. I believe that a better mental health safety net

remains crucial for students' overall well-being and happiness. Being reflective on the current structure in order to critically think of ways it can be improved is vital. As ASCIT president, I can advocate for improved UCC training and push for improvement in the accountability of the counselors. I hope to lead a discussion of each houses' UCC system to see what is most effective in helping the community, and to similarly examine our off-campus UCC system and safety net. Moreover, I want to further this dialogue between Caltech and peer institutions such as MIT and Harvey Mudd to see if we could offer each other insight on what can be improved in our respective structures. However, I would begin with small goals, such as having counselors eat at house dinners to improve their visibility among the student population. We need to ensure that our current mental health structure would be able to handle a major crisis if ever one should occur.

It would be a privilege representing the undergraduate community as ASCIT president! I am qualified for the position as my previous student government positions have enabled me to develop strong relations with administration and an understanding of the opinions of the student body. I will be an advocate for Techers and will improve student mental health and career resources. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to email me at blepe@caltech.edu or come talk to me at any time. Thank you for your consideration.

DAVID MACE

I have loved my time at Caltech, but there are clearly many aspects of the undergraduate education that we need to fix. The number one responsibility of ASCIT president is to be the intermediary between the student body and the administration, so I have asked ~150 students over the last week (and am planning to ask 400 more this weekend) what they want Caltech to change, and here's what you've all said.

"I keep hearing that there are a lot of potential mentors/employers who want to work with Caltech students, but Caltech doesn't do a good job of connecting them to me, especially if I'm non-CS." When I was a freshman I organized Hacktech, Caltech's 1200-person hackathon, where we connected students to industry jobs and mentors. Now I run Caltech's entrepreneurship club, where we do much of the same with the business and startup worlds. I can say from experience that it's pretty damn ridiculous how few of the potential mentors and employers who want to help Caltech's students, especially in ME + EE + ChemE +

BioE, are actually able to surmount to barriers to getting in touch with us. One of my goals, regardless of whether I become ASCIT president, is to build a streamlined online system where students can get in touch with mentors, profs at other schools, investors, etc. (the career center already has some of this but nobody teaches students how to access it).

"If I want to go into theoretical research then Caltech's classes are fine, but if I want to go into industry, startups, etc. then I'd rather have a Caltech caliber of education but with courses that allow more creativity and individualized development of my own ideas." This isn't going to be fixed in one year, but from working extensively with the administration for entrepreneurship club and Hacktech, I know that they're open to making the curriculum more conducive to multiple forms of innovation in the long-run. There's no right answer to "this is exactly how I'm going to do to solve this if I become ASCIT president" because the right answer is to make sure that the administration understands what the student-body wants, which is a place where we have room for improvement.

"Caltech's UCCs too often take the approach of waiting for students to talk to them, instead of the other way around. This is exacerbated in the case where students live off-campus." I've seen first-hand the problems with the support system for off-campus students because I lived off-campus for part of my time at Caltech. I think one way to improve the current situation is to make an anonymous online form where students can tell UCC's to check on their friends (this exists in poor form but the barriers to finding and filling this out are far too great at the moment). It's very rare that students go through tough times without any of their friends knowing about it, but the barriers to emailing or talking to a UCC about a friend are too great at the moment. Above all else, the help network is the first problem we need to solve so I'll be reaching out to many of you about ways we can possibly fix this.

"There aren't enough outlets for students to have fun off campus, especially for people without cars. Also we're so close to Mudd, UCLA, USC, etc. and it's a shame that we don't interact and collaborate with those students more." This falls more closely under the duties of social chair but I still want to push for changes here. Discounted uber rides to downtown LA would be a start. A focus on more inter-college events would also be very doable.

The most important point I'm trying to make through all of this is that better communication between the students and the administration is the first step to finding effective solutions to all of these problems. We have this—wtfcaltech.com—to let the administration and ASCIT know what we care about and I want to encourage everyone to leverage this opportunity to voice your opinions.

Housing Frustrations

CONNIE ROBINSON
Contributing Writer

As recently as a decade ago, undergraduates living in Caltech Housing had considerable freedom to make their living arrangement feel like home. They painted hallway murals without a lengthy and bureaucratic approval process. They painted room murals, period. They organized events without a similarly drawn out process. In short, the Houses were homes.

The most recent chapter in this story comes with a simple request: to replace the Dabney House courtyard bricks with a mosaic depicting the House's former President, Raj (Suraj) Mirpuri. Student responses to the idea were overwhelmingly enthusiastic. "Can we do this? Like actually, can we do this?" said graduating senior Adam Jermyn. Housing's response was a unilateral and non-negotiable refusal.

The domain of a house which the residents have control over doesn't even extend to the lounge furnishings. After the courtyard brick debacle, Dabney House attempted to replace the old carpet with a rainbow rug styled after Raj. This too was shut down, all due to a hearsay story about the carpet being a valuable gift from an alum.

Along similar lines, Dabney House wanted to run an event involving Raj painting the tails of his ancestral home of India on the walls of the alley affectionately known as Treehouse. Though there were ultimately reasonable objections to the proposed ceremonial use of non-paint materials in this event, the unwillingness of Housing to even consider the possibility the first time it was brought up shows precisely how unwilling the administration was to listen to creative ideas from our bright students. And is not the spirit of creativity and understanding core to Caltech's values? As Einstein once said, "If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind, of what, then, is an empty desk a sign?" Are not empty walls a sign of empty minds? Are discussion and negotiation not central to understanding students from a diverse set of backgrounds?

This is not to say that our spirit has been stifled. We continue to grow together and welcome those around us through the social events which don't get tangled up in paperwork. Last Saturday, we held an event called Ego Death, in which we laid side by side, lost ourselves in sound, and internalized the banner above us: "Welcome to Dabney."

The spirit of Dabney House is an accepting one. That, I think, is something everyone would agree with. Though the House faces challenges such as those from Housing, low graduation rates, and the occasional hygiene problem, the mere presence of our glorious leader Raj assures us that everything is fine in Dabney House. If only we were allowed to express our deep, universal love, the world would be a better place.

From the (Interim) President's Desk: The unit system is broken, and here's one way to fix it

CONNOR ROSEN
Interim ASCIT President

Last week, I wrote about the 12-term tuition policy, including the negative effect it has on students who take less than a full-time load while on financial aid. Also, this week I sent out a reminder to students about the new academic eligibility requirements, which set a minimum of 33 units of passing grades (not including incompletes) per term to remain eligible. Both of these policies are related to our measurement of enrollment and work, the unit system. I believe the unit system is too flawed for use in setting standards like full-time enrollment and academic eligibility, and I will argue for a simpler system that decouples expected work and credit for a class.

As many students can testify, the unit system is a poor predictor of the workload a class will have, and so its use for setting standards is questionable. Units are supposed to represent hours of work per week, but examination of TQFR responses from a variety of large (as measured by enrollment) 9-unit classes shows that identically united classes can take wildly different amounts of time. There are 6-unit classes that take as much time as 12-unit classes, and 9-unit classes that students spend less than three hours per week on. Nonetheless, we operate as if all schedules are created equal, by setting unit caps and floors based on the assumption that we are requiring a reasonable workload — the average number of units required per term to graduate in four years is 40.5, almost perfectly matching a 40-hour workweek.

I believe we should decouple work and units, and allow students to make better informed decisions about their schedule while not requiring students to overwhelm themselves in order to meet unit requirements. Here's my proposal: We should reset units to a 0.5 or 1.0 system — all classes are assigned either 0.5 units (for current 3-unit classes) or 1.0 unit (for all other classes). A total of 54 units would be required for graduation (the same number of "standard" classes as currently required). The maximum enrollment without an overload petition would be 6 units, and minimum full-time enrollment to maintain academic eligibility would be 3 units. To ensure adequate progress towards graduation, students taking fewer than 4 units would require Dean's approval. As part of this system, TQFR average workloads would be calculated for every class and posted publicly in an easy-to-access website (or even in the catalog) so that students could better plan their schedules and advisors and the deans would likewise be able to judge the difficulty of a proposed schedule.

There is some room for optimization in this proposal — maybe a senior thesis would be counted as 1.5 or even 2.0 units, allowing a student to enroll full-time and still focus on a thesis as a senior. Certain classes (such as current 6-unit classes) may be assigned either 0.5 or 1.0 units, depending on the intent of the class. TQFRs could have more fine-grained input options for the amount of work a class takes (allowing students to enter an actual number, instead of simply choosing a 3-hour bucket) to calculate better averages. We can reassess the number of units required for graduation or overload and underloads.

We should not be stuck with a unit system that makes invalid assumptions about workload and gets tied into policies when actual course difficulty is not taken into consideration. Regardless of whether this proposal is acceptable, it is important that we critically examine how we credit classes and ensure that students are maintaining a reasonable and healthy workload. I will remind students as well about my first article, where I urged students to give professors constant feedback about the workload of their sets and classes. Let's be very deliberate about the workloads we are choosing, and enable people (students, faculty and staff) to make informed decisions about what course schedules to take and recommend.

Students amaze with performances

Photo Courtesy of Michael L. Wong

performance required strength and gracefulness, in equal parts. Thompson managed to perform impressive acrobatics while maintaining elegance and artistry that surely qualifies her performance as dance.

Other solo performances were Heather McCaig's ballet performance from *Carmen*, Artemis Ailianou's emotional dance to a piano concerto, and Anusha Nathan's precise performance of the traditional Indian dance Ananda Natam Aduvar. Other soloists chose more modern styles, such as Albert Ge's breakdancing, Meera Reghunathan's freestyle dance to "Numb" by Linkin Park, and Anshul Ramachandran's dance to "Apologize" by Timbaland.

The show also featured the various dance clubs on campus and in the Pasadena community. The Caltech Dance Troupe, the Caltech Dance Team and the Pasadena Hip Hop Dance Company (established just last year) all showcased fun and catchy hip-hop dances. The common factor was Beyoncé: one of the Dance Troupe's songs was "7/11" by Beyoncé, the Dance Team's entire performance was "A Tribute to the Queen" (one of their songs was also "7/11") and the Hip Hop Dance Company included Drake's "Girls Love Beyoncé."

The Caltech Ballet Club gave us a taste of classical ballet with a selection from *Alice in Wonderland*. The Ballroom Dance Club had an energetic rumba/jive medley performed by Paul Núñez and Dr. Rebecca Saive. The West Coast Swing had two couples dancing the Swing with such gusto and fun that surely inspired a few audience members to attend one of their lessons.

Harvey Mudd College President Maria Klawe expands opportunities for women in tech

CHING-YUN (CHLOE) HSU
Contributing Writer

When Dr. Maria Klawe became the fifth president of Harvey Mudd College in 2006, only 10% of the computer science majors at Harvey Mudd were women. Today, this number has been substantially increased to 40%. In last week's special Tuesday IST Lunch Bunch Seminar, Dr. Klawe talked about her experience getting more women into tech careers and why she considered it important for the tech community.

Dr. Klawe is a distinguished scholar with research interests in discrete mathematics and theoretical computer science. Before she joined Harvey Mudd, Dr. Klawe had served as head of the computer science department at the University of British Columbia and as the dean of engineering at Princeton University.

As the first female president of Harvey Mudd, Dr. Klawe not only encouraged women's participation in computer science, but also largely expanded the overall female undergraduate population to 48% and the percentage of female faculty members to 40%. Outside Harvey Mudd, Dr. Klawe is also actively involved in mentorship programs and public advocacy of

women in tech. During the IST Lunch Bunch, she mentioned her plan to start a regional women's dinner series in Pasadena.

Under her leadership, the entire computer science department at Harvey Mudd worked together to increase women's participation.

Photo Courtesy of Ching-Yun (Chloe) Hsu

Every year, Dr. Klawe took first-year females to the Grace Hopper Celebration,

a conference focusing on women's research and career interests in computer science. Aiming for a wider audience without prior background, the department restyled the introductory computer science course from a traditional Java programming course to "creative problem solving using computational approaches with Python" in 2006. In order to eliminate the dominating advantage of previous computer science experience, two different versions of the intro class were introduced, intentionally named as "CS5 Gold" and "CS5 Black," where black (not gold) stood for the more advanced track. Instead of simply lowering the college admission standards to recruit more women, Dr. Klawe emphasized making computer science a more female-friendly major at Harvey Mudd.

After the lunch seminar, Dr. Klawe joined a small but diverse group of 15 Caltech women to have a further chat over tea at the Athenaeum. During the tea, Dr. Klawe shared her own experience as a female mathematician and computer scientist. Undergraduates, graduates and post-docs in different academic disciplines all found inspiration from her talk and her personal charisma.

Men's tennis closes season with some style points

CLAREMONT, Calif. (Apr. 11, 2015) – Junior Rushikesh Joshi (Sunnyvale, Calif. / Archbishop Mitty) made a stand at #2 singles against No. 1 Claremont-Mudd-Scripps Colleges and held firm in the top slot against No. 3 Pomona-Pitzer Colleges as the Caltech men's tennis team fell to both national powerhouses on Saturday.

Caltech is now 5-10 overall and 0-6 in the SCIAC, while CMS improves to 21-1 (5-0) and Pomona-Pitzer moves to 23-5 (5-2).

Rushikesh Joshi does an excellent job spanning the diagonal of this photo.
-http://gocaltech.com

Joshi and sophomore Morgan Lebby (Laguna Beach, Calif. / Laguna Beach) battled to take five games at #2 against last year's No. 21-ranked doubles pairing in the nation in Skyler Butts and Daniel Morkovine. Sophomores Ruthwick Pathireddy (Irvine, Calif. / Whitney) and Sathwick Pathireddy (Irvine, Calif. / Whitney) also won two games at the top slot against this year's West region #1 pairing of Joe Dorn and Warren Wood, while the Stags took #3 8-0.

Joshi hung right with his foe at #2 singles through the entire match, narrowly falling 6-4, 6-3. Junior Ishan Mehta (Fort Gratiot, Mich. / Port Huron Northern) won a game in both sets at #5 while Sathwick Pathireddy and Lebby took a game apiece, with Pathireddy facing last year's No. 6-ranked player in the nation in Glenn Hull.

Mehta and junior Alexander Henny (Scarborough, Maine / Scarborough) led the Beavers in doubles, taking four games at the #3 spot while the Pathireddys won three and the Joshi/Lebby pairing managed two. The singles matches were extremely tight at the top, with Joshi again falling by a slim margin at 6-2, 6-4 in the top spot while Ruthwick Pathireddy dug deep in a pair of tiebreakers at #2, eventually falling in a heartbreaker, 7-6 (6), 7-6 (3). Lebby and Henny also impressed at #4 and #5 singles, winning four and three games, respectively.

PASADENA, Calif. (Apr. 18, 2015) – Sophomore Morgan Lebby (Laguna Beach, Calif. / Laguna Beach) fought his way to an extended superbreaker defeat as the Caltech men's tennis team took on No. 31 Cal Lutheran University in the Beavers' regular season finale on Saturday.

The Beavers finish conference play 0-7 (5-11 overall) and will be the #8 seed in the SCIAC Championships, hosted by Caltech, while CLU has earned the #4 seed at 4-3 (9-11).
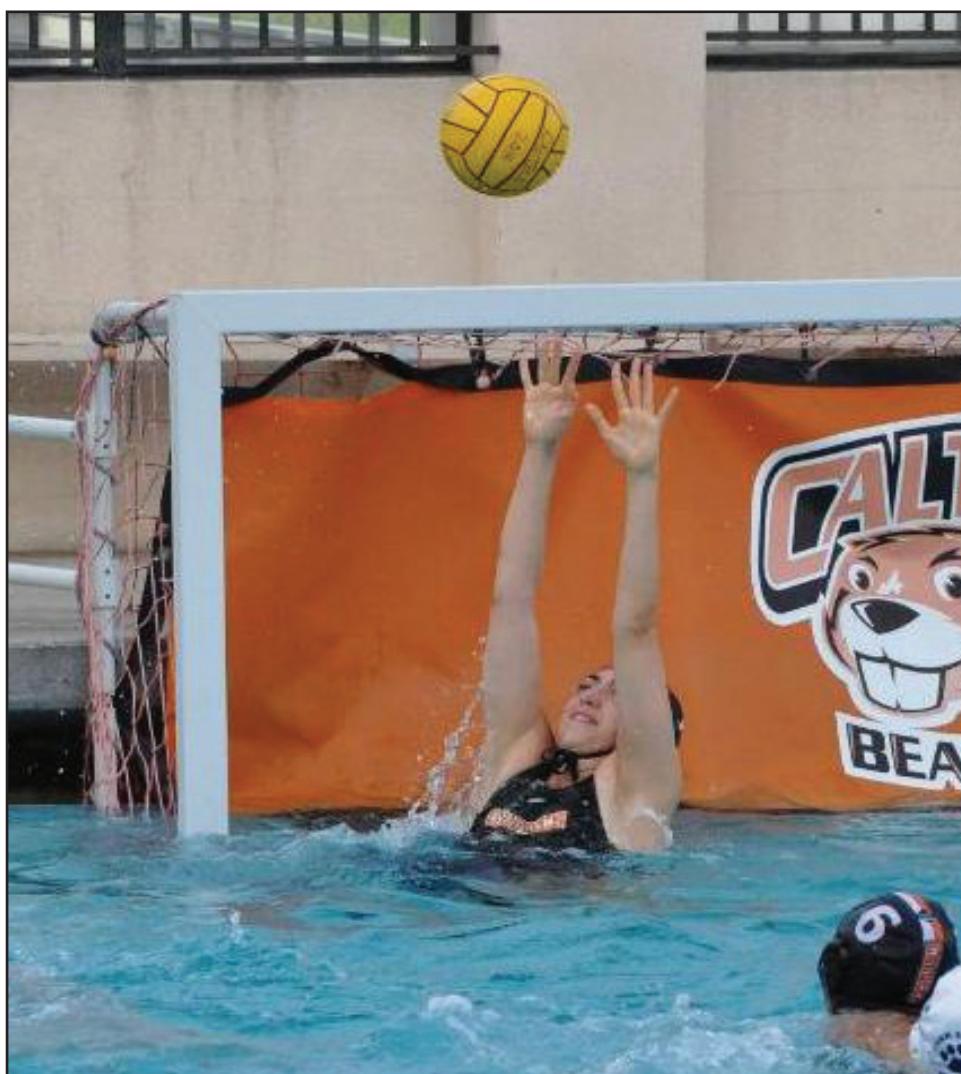
Caltech took a combined 11 games as CLU swept doubles play and the Kingsmen

Morgan Lebby is 100% prepared to fight that ball. Look at the determination.
-http://gocaltech.com

quickly clinched the match in singles. Junior Rushikesh Joshi (Sunnyvale, Calif. / Archbishop Mitty) continued his recent hot streak with a solid showing at #2 (6-4, 6-2), while Lebby went ahead by a set (6-3) at #4 before his opponent rallied to take a tight second, 6-4, and the superbreaker, 11-9.

Some stunning images of Sasha "Sasa Fierce" Zemsky

Sasha Zemsky tantilizes the other team.
-http://gocaltech.com

Sasha Zemsky said this about her photo on the website: "I really like this picture of myself. I look so confused. Perplexed."
-http://gocaltech.com

ASCIT Minutes

ASCIT Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes for 14 April 2015. Taken by Sean McKenna.

Officers Present: Connor Rosen, Catherine Jamshidi, Connie Hsueh, Patrick Nikong, Annie Chen, Sean McKenna

Guests: Anne Dorsey, Chris Dosen, Katherine Guo, Bianca Lepe, Elliott Simon

Call to Order: 12:01 pm

President's Report (Connor):
- Faculty is looking into the 12-term tuition policy as a result of the faculty board meeting. The BOD will consider other ideas to prevent people from burning themselves out due to financial stress to graduate early.
- Discussions in the future about how Caltech evaluates student learning outcomes by the time they graduate.
- BOD election nomination is happening this week. Election day is 20 April.
- BOC By-laws changes are still in the works.

Officer's Reports:
- **V.P. of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair: Nima):**
  - Guides to the new academic eligibility rules are being written for students, advisors and RAs.
  - Course capturing for this term is being done on Law 33 and Ph12c. Videos are accessible at classes.caltech.edu.
  - The ASCIT teaching awards nomination form has been sent out. Nominate people! The ASCIT teaching awards ceremony will be held in the beginning of June.
- **V.P. of Non-Academic Affairs (IHC Chair: Cat):**
  - Conversation about rotation scheduling: should we have more scheduled meals earlier, and then allow more free meals later?
  - Signups were posted for committee chairs.
- **Director of Operations (Connie):**
  - Library is working on "maker space" independently.
  - Looking into improving teleconferencing resources at the library or career center for interviews.
- **Treasurer (Patrick):**
  - Filling out forms. Getting ready for turnover.
- **Social Director (Annie):**
  - Getting Trivia Night to start this week
- **Secretary (Sean):**
  - Making new plaques for the new BOD

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. The next meeting will take place on April 21st at Noon in the Winnett Common Space.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:16 pm

ASCIT President (cont'd from page 3)

ELLIOT SIMON

I gained a reputation around my house as the energetic kid who never sleeps. Whether it was going to Denny's at 2am, watching movies, talking to anyone who's awake until past 4, or going to morning practice the next day, I was always doing something. My classmates cringed when I described this daily cycle as 'fun'. Hidden behind that word is a real, intangible, but important goal: to make Caltech more enjoyable.

There's the classic statement that 'college is the best four years of your life'. This sentiment seems to get lost in the constant grind of classes, problem sets, and the emotional stress that surrounds being at this school. I don't believe that this has to be true. The fact that Caltech is hard does not prevent us from having fun. The interhouse parties, trivia nights, and ice skating are all examples of students taking time out of their schedules for social events, for having fun.

One of my goals as Ascit President would be to create a more united campus. The easiest way to accomplish this is to create a class identity. Some ideas proposed by Connor and Cat are being developed to encourage new freshman to continue to bond after frosh camp. I would propose to implement similar situations, whether they be dinners or a beach trip, for the other classes as well. Having more events that are specific to a class and not an individual house would help strengthen friend groups between houses bringing all students closer together.

On a different note, one of the best images of school spirit and unity I've seen since I got here has been the orange outs at basketball games. More than a hundred students came together to support our classmates as they competed with other colleges. As president, I would work to expand this type of event to non-sporting competitions to bring the same support and spirit behind events such as robotics competitions or quiz bowl tournaments. This type of unity and school spirit is what I believe can lead to both the students and the participants enjoying their time here.

Beyond increasing student participation, my goals as Ascit president would be rather straightforward. I would work to protect student life as much as possible. Too much in recent years events as simple as a food fight have been forcibly cancelled by bureaucracy. Interacting with the administration, especially regarding faculty board meetings and the policies that surround them, is one of the most important parts of the Ascit President's job. From years of having to fight with Rudds over the smallest political technicalities, I have the experience necessary to fight for student rights. Additionally, I'm stubborn enough to never give up on a cause as long as I believe it is right. I'm willing to make my opinions heard even if that makes people dislike me.

Probably my biggest weakness is a lack of experience dealing specifically with administration. It is true that I have not held leadership positions at this school of the same importance and exposure as some of the other candidates. Knowing and having a good relationship with the administration can help the Ascit President reach their goals much faster. That said, I believe my leadership experience in my house and before Caltech will allow me to quickly learn the ropes of the job. I will work as hard as necessary to quickly gain an understanding of and working relationship with the administration.

Two years ago, Zach Rivkin used the position of Ascit President to improve mental health resources at Caltech. If I were Ascit president, I would work to further this effort to make Caltech's mental resources more available and higher quality. I would encourage and expand upon the discussion about the role of the UCC in undergraduate life and especially put resources into expanding the off-campus UCC program. Additionally, I would work to better educated undergraduates about the prevalence of mental health problems and use this to encourage further conversation about solutions.

One more reason why I tend to stay up late is I spend a lot of time thinking. Sometimes about simple issues like gossip or sports, but often about the more complex issues at this school. My goals as Ascit President, to increase student participation in events, to improve off-campus life, to unify the students, are all things that I've considered and truly care about improving. The common goal behind these and everything I do is to improve the quality of life of students at this school. If only one person I don't even know is made happier by what I do, it would still be worth every second. While being Ascit President will help me towards my goals, I will fight for them whether or not I get the position; because you're spending four years or more at this school, and you should enjoy your time here no matter how difficult class can be.

Thank you for your consideration.

ASCIT Treasurer (2)

NIKITA SIROHI

I love Caltech; the opportunities I've had here and the fantastic community of people make it truly special. The clubs, parties, and social events which are funded by the ASCIT budget are often what really bring joy and a sense of community to Caltech students. I would love to give back to Caltech by being a part of this.

The position of ASCIT Treasurer is twofold; one must attend to the ASCIT budget and one must serve as a responsible and passionate Board of Directors member.

Firstly, I will dedicate my time and energy into developing, organizing, and dispersing money in the ASCIT budget. When creating the budget, I will make sure to examine previous budgets to identify what appears to be over- and under-funded, and to reallocate appropriately. I will ensure that sources of funding which potential recipients may not have been aware of are appropriately advertised. I also plan to re-organize the way in which the ASCIT budget is kept track of. I will model this after systems used in Ruddock and other houses, with finances organized using Access.

Secondly, I will use my time on the BoD to improve the quality of student life at Caltech. I am personally passionate about diversity on campus, mental health, and alumni relations, among other things. I hope to work with the other members of the BoD on projects related to these topics; possibly working with the diversity or counseling center, or working to connect younger alums to students searching for jobs. Furthermore, I will be receptive to and actively seek out student concerns so that I can either address them myself or relay them to the appropriate people.

Finally, I feel I have the experience to do the job of ASCIT Treasurer well. I have been on Ruddock ExComm for two years, which helped me to develop strong organizational skills, to build positive relationships with administrators, and to seek out the concerns of different social groups. Furthermore, I have been on the Dean's Advisory Committee this year as the only sophomore, which has taught me a great deal about relaying student concerns to administrators and about current issues around campus.

Thanks for reading! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to email me at nsirohi@caltech.edu.

Have a nice day!

KALYN CHANG

Hi, I'm Kalyn! :) I am extremely responsible, organized, friendly, and approachable. If elected, my goals as ASCIT Treasurer will be creating and managing the ASCIT budget fairly and effectively, reimbursing clubs and student houses in as fast a time as possible, and being an active voice on the ASCIT Board of Directors.

I was the Page House Treasurer last year, and I was also my high school's junior class treasurer. My budgeting experience includes a wide range of activities, from managing the Page House budget to managing the budget for my high school's prom at the Aquarium of the Pacific. The ASCIT budget goes toward funding events and clubs on campus. I want to make Caltech more fun and give students more opportunities to pursue their interests by keeping student input in mind while making funding decisions.
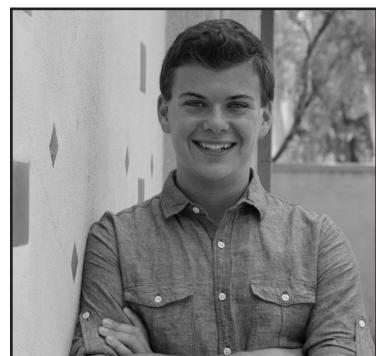
Additionally, when I was Page's treasurer, I would almost always reimburse people in less than a day. I have never lost anyone's receipt before. I organize receipts by date and in alphabetical order by last name of the person to receive reimbursement so that I can always find the appropriate receipt if I need to. I understand how frustrating it can be to have to wait a long time to be reimbursed because I've been there. I will work hard to get reimbursements back to clubs, houses, etc. in a timely fashion.

Finally, I want to make students' opinions heard! I'm pretty outgoing and I interact with people from a lot of different houses on a regular basis. I'm always willing to talk and listen to others, and I hope to help bridge the gap between students and administrators by accurately representing students' thoughts on important issues.

I promise to put in the necessary time and effort needed to be a great ASCIT Treasurer, and I hope to serve the Caltech community next year on the ASCIT Board of Directors. Thanks for reading, and have a great rest of the day!

Director of Operations (1 candidate)

SEAN MCKENNA

Hi everyone,

I'm Sean McKenna, running for ASCIT Director of Operations. I'm the only candidate running for the job, and I did it temporarily while Connie was abroad. Hopefully that's reason enough for you to vote for me instead of "NO." But here are some other reasons why I think I would be competent as Director of Operations:

* I'm currently on the Board of Directors, so I know how ASCIT works.

* I experienced the club funding process from earlier this year.

* Connie already gave me things to do.

* This job doesn't have any keys for me to lose, unlike ASCIT Secretary.

* With corrective lenses, my eyesight is better than 20/20.

If you got this far, it means you took the time to read the statement of an unopposed candidate in its entirety. Congratulations, you must be desperate to procrastinate. For more of my content in *The Tech*, I recommend the ASCIT minutes or my new weekly column.

--Sean

The ASCIT BoD election is on **Monday, April 20,** from 10:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

*Acquired Taste*   Dr. Z

:v
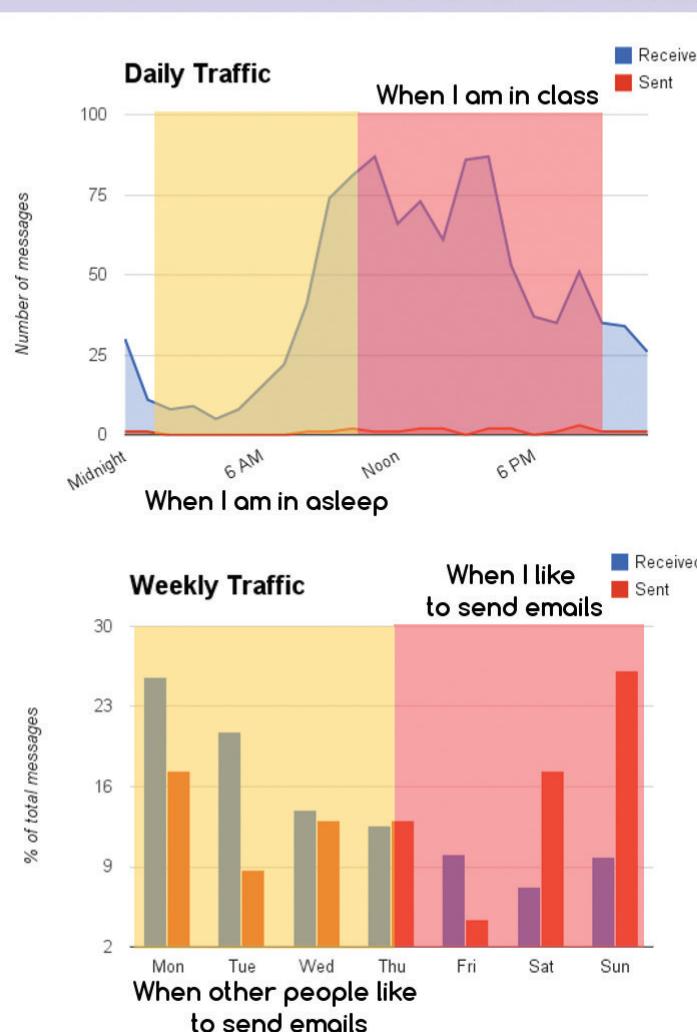
"Will still accept carrier pidgeons"   Georgio Kraggman

WHY I DON'T RESPOND TO EMAILS
AN INFOGRAPHIC

Emails received in March: 1,035
Only 6.09% were addressed directly to me

Emails from house mailing list in less than 4 years: 5,841
Work-study emails: 1,692

Most emails received in one day (during March): 68

Average Caltech email structure:

Things you don't care about
The one thing relevant to you

Also:

Ehh... I'll just read it and respond later.

Graphs made with Gmail Meter