EAS Town Hall

On June 9th from 12:00am-1:00pm, a town hall was held for all postdoctoral scholars in the Engineering and Applied Sciences (EAS) Division. Approximately 20 total people were in attendance. Handouts were distributed listing a variety of Caltech resources for postdocs along with upcoming events. A brief introduction was given about the Caltech Postdoctoral Association (CPA) to all members. Emphasis was placed on the new EAS division representative position and its voice for EAS postdocs to CPA. Representatives from the Hixon Writing Center, the Center for Diversity, the International Office gave short 5 minute presentations explaining their departments and how they serve postdocs. Alexandra Katsis, the postdoc coordinator for EAS, then talked for several minutes discussing how she and the EAS office interface with postdocs. A discussion was then held on several topics. Numerous perspectives were given on the upcoming wage law and its impact on postdocs at Caltech. Several EAS postdocs brought up the issue of career development and requested additional workshops addressing career development strategies, especially for faculty positions. Overall, the meeting was a general success with postdocs agreeing that EAS meetings/social gatherings approximately on a quarterly basis were best.

Division Representative Budget Request

During the past year, new positions within the Caltech Postdoctoral Association (CPA) were created, with each Caltech division and JPL gaining a representative. These positions were created to give members someone to contact to raise issues or gives suggestions to improve the postdoc experience at Caltech and JPL. Representatives were encouraged to talk with postdocs within their division to gain perspective on their division. In the EAS division an email list was created with IMSS for easy communication, a town hall was conducted and a survey was sent out by the EAS division representative with other divisions planning to follow suit in the upcoming Fall term. After initial feedback from EAS postdocs, quarterly meetings/social gatherings were recommended. The hope is that this will increase the feeling of community within the postdoc community. These quarterly meetings are a potential model to follow for other divisions as well. Through the town hall and other events, increased communication was made with the EAS division office. This communication has already proved useful with a joint CPA/EAS Division event planned in the Fall to welcome new EAS postdocs and all returning EAS postdocs. In light of the positive feedback from postdocs a small budget is requested for the upcoming fiscal year for all division representatives. These funds will be used to hold 3-4 division level events throughout the year for a total of $650 or approximately $200 or less per event. We anticipate these events increasing the communication between postdocs within their division. Additionally, these events will help make Caltech postdocs feel a more inclusive environment at Caltech.

Number of divisions: 7

Budget per division: $650

Total requested budget: $4550