New applicant pool strong, large

Despite boost in interest, admissions committee aims for a class of 215-220 students

by John Oh

Recent Nobel Laureate, gave the keynote speech after a viewing of the video of Zewail’s Prize presentation.

In the most amusing moment of the night, Zewail recounted some of the cultural barriers he had to overcome when immigrating to the United States from Egypt as a graduate student. As Zewail explained, in Egypt adolescent boys play together and jokingly tease each other with a phrase that, when literally translated into English, says “I will kill you.”

Early in his graduate life, Zewail was befriended by a fellow University of Pennsylvania student, and one night they were out with some friends eating in a late night diner. They were having such a good time that Zewail turned to his friend, slapped him on the back and, his eyes sparkling, told his friend “I will kill you!”

The audience roared and SURF followed Terry Cole’s memory across a bridge into the twenty-first century.

Mike Liebau brought to attention two recent studies on the influence of college rankings on students’ decisions.

One study showed the rankings having no effect. The other showed an effect only when nationwide. University jumped from being ranked fourteen to six.

“We’ve always been among the top ten,” Liebau said. “The situation with Cornell was a little more dramatic.”

Things are expected to return to normal next year.

“We’ve never been Number One before, and chances are we won’t be the top ten,” Liebau said. Although this may be an exceptional time in Caltech’s history, the admissions committee will strive to uphold a consistent set of standards and methods for admitting a successful freshman class.

Merkel awarded grant to study undergrad research

by Erik Deil

Carolyn Merkel, Director of Student Faculty Programs, was recently awarded a grant by the Association of American Universities (AAU) to explore undergraduate research.

Formed in 1900 to promote “a strong system of academic research and education” the AAU consists of 62 prestigious research universities. Merkel was given the opportunity to study undergraduate research programs at six AAU member schools after the BOYER Commission on Educating Undergraduates in Research

Universities released a scathing report stating that research universities woefully underutilize their resources in educating undergraduates.

According to the Boyer Commission, “...the research universities have too often failed, and continue to fail, their undergraduate populations. Thousands of students graduate without ever seeing the world-famous professors or tasting genuine research.”

Merkel found this viewpoint surprising, not just because of her experience with undergraduates at Caltech.
Merkel: continued from page 1

When the National Science Foundation offered grants to universities to integrate research and education, Caltech’s proposal, with SURF at the center, was rejected. In the NSF’s view, undergraduate research was widely implemented, and not unique enough to justify a project grant. Clearly, the views of the Boyer Report and the NSF were conflicting, so Merkel thought it would be interesting to investigate the true status of undergraduate research.

At the prompting of Fred Shair, longtime SURF supporter, and Neal Pings, past President of the AAU, she submitted a proposal for a pilot project to investigate undergraduate research at a representative group of AAU institutions. Upon receiving the proposal, the AAU granted funding for Merkel’s project.

Presidents of MIT, Rutgers, and the University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign immediately volunteered their schools to participate in the study.

The University of Washington, Stanford and Emory were added because they had characteristics unlike other schools in the sample. Caltech was an obvious choice to round out the set. Merkel being intimately acquainted with undergraduate research opportunities here. The major aim of the study is to characterize various aspects of undergraduate research.

Merkel has already discovered anecdotally that undergraduate research is perceived differently at different schools and in different disciplines.

Merkel hopes to identify issues, questions, opportunities and barriers associated with the subject.

The study will also test the feasibility of a larger study at all 62 AAU member institutions. Merkel plans to gather information by talking to high-level administrators and the staff responsible for implementing research programs, as well as faculty and undergraduates participating in research.

She hopes to add the views of professors and students not participating in research to discover the deterrents to undergraduate research.

Also, she wants to ascertain the effects of a research experience on peer relationships and the transition to graduate school.

Merkel will test-run her survey at UC Irvine, then move on to the six sample schools. Early third term, she hopes to lure Caltech undergrads to her discussion groups with AAU-funded cookies and pick their brains about the research experience here.

Hopefully, the project will stimulate the ongoing dialogue on undergraduate research and collect a network of people interested in exchanging ideas about incorporating research into undergraduate education. Then the Boyer Commission will have something to complain about.

The Boyer Commission Report is available online: http://notes.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.htm

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A.S.C.I.T. Minutes
February 21, 2000

Present: BoD minus Emma; Baldeep Meeting called to order at 10:04 pm.
Eric begins the meeting by asking if the 60% has heard any dinner announcements but ASCIT-appointed officers. As of the rating, there were only four people signed a card for the six positions. Either word is not gotten around or people are apatic. Probably a combination of both.

Out sticks his head in and confirms that their installation will be this Thursday at a MOSITH. He asks if he has to attend the meeting, we say that he is welcome but unrequired, and he promptly leaves.

Eric asks Sean for an update on our financial status. Sean has some information, he will gather more data and give us an update on our finances at the next meeting.

Next on the agenda is the Budget Meeting. The BoD is required by the bylaws to conduct a survey to all ASCIT members to decide what to fund. Meghan passes copies of old surveys as examples. Arr recommends publicizing the budget meeting as soon as possible. The BoD passes and will work on the survey, advertising flyers, and a club questionnaire this week. The club questionnaire is a form to fill out by all club leaders (assuming the club is active), which will report information such as the purpose of the club, roster of members, number of activities, or funding requested.

The BoD asks Baldeep about the process of the budget meeting last year. Baldeep says that the BoD interviewed clubs first, then decided the budget. Eric proposes we decide the budget first, determining how much we have to allocate to clubs, then interview clubs. This way, when we decide the budget for clubs, we will have a better idea of how much we have.

Next, the BoD figures out how to contact clubs. Martha Helene begins searching through a huge computer file from Derek to find old club information.

The BoD decides to start an organized club registry, starting with the data we will collect from the Budget Meeting. Laura proposes we should post flyers announcing the Budget Meeting and the website address to an online form where club leaders can fill out their information online.

Baldeep informs us that new clubs must submit a statement of purpose and a petition of 10 signatures (including 5 ASCIT members) of interested people in order to receive funding from ASCIT. Eric sums up the information we want to have on the Flyer: that the Budget Meeting will be at the beginning of third term and that all clubs must submit a proposal including clubs that do not need funding but wish to be recognized. Clubs must also specify whether or not they are a new club, which the BoD defines as a club not included in last year’s budget.

The BoD decides to assign the job of organizing the new club registry to Martha Helene.

Eric and Jason will work on the club questionnaire and will have them ready by the next ASCIT meeting. Martha Helene will help in making the advertising flyers for the Budget Meeting.

Chris gives us his IRC report. His meeting with Chris Brown will be tomorrow, as announced in last week’s meeting. The topic will be freshman admissions. He also announces that the food part of the Housing survey has been tallied. You can find all the interesting statistical data on the webpage: http://optima.caltech.edu/survey.

Eric reminds everyone that the sign-ups for ASCIT appointed offices come down at 5:00 pm this Friday.

The question of how to get more people to sign up comes up again. Jason suggests using data from freshman interest sheets to find out which students have an interest in student government or publications. Going through all this data is too much work though, so the BoD just decides to convince the people we know to sign up.

Jason will email the BoD, the current appointed officers, and the publications people for their schedules in order to set up the interview times.

Martha Helene reports finding an email list of club presidents, Budget Meeting records and Budget Meeting advertisements from last year.

Finally, the BoD discusses the annual retreat at Capra Ranch, which is traditionally during Spring Break. Melissa will find out when Capra is available. The BoD decides to do the retreat before the Budget Meeting and will decide the date at the next meeting. The publications staff will also be invited.

Eric reminds us that he’s been getting up early on Friday mornings to bring donuts to the hard-working Caltech undergrads. Don’t let him wake up for no reason. ASCIT Donuts are on Friday at 8:00 am.

Meeting adjourns at 10:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jason C. Cardema

If you’re interested in assisting Ying Tian with Project Angel Food, please contact him at yting@caltech.edu. As a reminder, the time commitment for this project is but 1 hour per week from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM on Fridays. The purpose of this project is to deliver food to housebound people living with HIV/AIDS. It should be noted that students who are eligible for Federal Work Study can get paid for performing community service. Various activities which the Y offers in which Work Study funds can be made available include Project Angel Food, tutoring middle/high school students through the Y, and Alternative Spring Break.

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Opinion

What's the Problem: The Sexist Climate on Campus

by Seth Miller and Karla Tapal

Have you read your security bulletins lately? If you have, you know that first term there was a sexual assault outside Bridge on an undergrad woman who'd just handed in her physics homework. Just a few weeks ago there was an assault on a woman on the fifth floor of Millikan. And if you have enough experience with the way things work in "real life," you know that not merely all assaults are ever reported.

If you've spent more than a week on campus, you know what glomming is. If you've walked through most of the houses, you know that there's porn and crude sex jokes off the Internet up on many hallway walls. But it's a tech school, and it's mostly male, and boys will be boys, and people here don't all have a lot of social skills, and it's not like people actually are trying to be hurtful, or actually believe the stuff they put on their walls... So what's the big deal? Putting up pictures of breasts and attacking women are totally different, right?

Actually, both contribute to an atmosphere that makes many women uncomfortable. Even if those who put up porn have no evil intent themselves, the fact that it is so widely displayed can give the impression that disrespect toward women is accepted. "Don't take it so seriously" is often the response that men give when people complain about "small" issues like offensive wall decorations. But they are serious. Glomming makes everyday life difficult. Harassment by TAs and professors makes academic life difficult. Pornography in public places gives women the sneaking suspicion, around all the time, that they're not respected. And joking attacks on women hit a little too close to home to be comfortable.

In addition, if such small issues are trivialized, what will happen when larger issues are brought forth? Many times the same dismissive attitude is put forward. In the recent past, when one woman was being glommed, she was told by a person in authority that she was flirting with her harassers and should just accept it. This attitude gives rise to a culture of inaction among the undergraduate female population, as appeal to authority leads nowhere.

The problem goes beyond just glomming. A woman who had been approached sexually by a TA decided to make an informal report about the incident. No one had filed an official complaint before, but when discussing the situation with some friends she found that this TA had made advances towards many undergraduates, both in his section and outside of it. Even though the name of this TA was becoming common knowledge among the women of Caltech, and the administration had been apprised of the situation, the TA was not removed. However, most of us don't need to read anecdotes to see that sexual harassment is a problem on campus.

Many men at Tech don't realize that they can be part of the problem of a hostile climate on campus, even without knowing it, and sometimes get defensive when this is pointed out. It is not true that men here are too smart to be sexist - sexism is a cultural problem, a problem that exists for everyone raised in the society we live in. To make things more difficult, women at Tech are often afraid or reluctant to speak up about things that make them uncomfortable, or even events that are unlawful, because this is such a small campus, and nothing can truly be done anonymously. The ratio of men to women and the resulting fragmentation of the female student body doesn't help - women often don't have a support system that would help them speak up and still keep a social life.

The administration does have a clear policy on sexual harassment. However, it does not seem to be very effective at preventing problems. Some women have found that pursuing the process of complaining formally is too stressful or too disruptive to be worth the results. The difficulty of staying anonymous on this campus is also a big deterrent to bringing formal complaints. And sometimes the Caltech administration seems more bent on protecting its image than protecting its students. After all, two years ago when there was an accident and a student got severely burned the administration went to extreme measures to avoid having such accidents again. However, after the first assault this year none of the freshmen were told of the incident. Many of us only knew of the second event because some RAs thought people might be interested. Why is this sort of important information not disseminated to all students immediately?

Many people realize that there's a problem on this campus, and no one wants the climate at Caltech to be bad for women. What can be done? Few things to do are think about how your actions and words affect others in the community, try to see things from others' points of view, and try to make a point of speaking out when you see things that you feel are wrong. In addition to this, the Caltech Progressive Coalition is putting up an anonymous form on a website (http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~progress), asking people to describe problems within the Caltech community. We'd like to collect preliminary data on the issue, with the aim of finding out exactly what the problems at Caltech are. Then we can begin to work to fix them.

Here are several websites related to the problems women face in academia today:

http://www.its.caltech.edu/~wcentrec
http://sciencentral.com/02womi.html
Honor Code:

* 88% of faculty acknowledged having observed cheating, but only 32% said they did something about it.
* Students in journalism, communications, business, and engineering reported cheating more than students in other fields.

The survey also showed that schools with honor code systems have a better management of academic dishonesty. At UC Davis, 31% of students reported cheating, while schools with less emphasis on academic integrity reported at a rate of 54%.

McCabe places a main cause of cheating on first impressions. When new students arrive at a college without a strong atmosphere of academic integrity, they observe upperclassmen cheating, they get the impression that cheating is acceptable. In institutions with a formal honor code, or a strong emphasis of academic honesty, cheating becomes a taboo that stays with incoming students until they graduate.

"Caltech's honor system is the best model," says one undergrad. "People are generally honest, and the honor system gives people the benefit of the doubt. Where else will professors trust students to take the final on their own time at their own place and not cheat?"

Caltech's honor code is simple: "No member shall take unfair advantage of any member of the Caltech community." The Caltech honor system also incorporates a student-membered Board of Control. The Board of Control, members who are elected, enforce the honor code and administer punishment if necessary. "The fact that the Board of Control is made of students, and not faculty," said another Caltech student, "makes the honor code that much stronger. When you cheat, it's not just some unknown professor that's punishing you, it's your friends and classmates, and you realize that you really messed up."

The Board of Control reviews only a few cases every term, a testament to the success of Caltech's honor system.

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February 25, 2000

6

The California Tech

Comics

DILBERT® by Scott Adams

THIS TECHNOLOGY
WILL WORK OR MY
NAME ISN'T PAUL
TEILLERT.

PUT TOGETHER A
DEMO OF OUR NEW
PRODUCT. OUR CEO
WANTS TO SEE IT.

MY PARTNER IS
CHANNELING THE
ANGRY ENERGY
OF A THOUSAND
DEAD SOULS.

IF ENOUGH
CELEBRITIES
COME TO THE
ALARMA CEREMONY,
IT WILL BECOME
PRESTIGIOUS.

I WOULD READ
BOB'S BIOGRAPHY
BUT IT'S COMPRISED
ENTIRELY OF FALSE
MEMORIES PLANTED
BY HIS HERALDIC
THERAPIST.

THE LIFETIMEL
GULLIBILITY
AWARD WENT TO
BOB FLAnn.

I WISH I HAD A
NICKEJ FOR EVERY
TIME THAT HAPPENED.

THERE ARE NO
USER INSTRUCTIONS
ON HOW TO USE THIS
PRODUCT. YOU"LL
BE TOLD.

I'M NOT A GIRL, I'M NOT A GIRL,
I'M NOT A GIRL, I'M NOT.

THE TECHNOLOGY
DEMO ISN'T 100% COMPLETE.

IF IT HAD A
USER INTERFACE
YOU WOULD SEE SOMETHING
HERE... AND SOME TIMES HERE.

I WOULD LIKE
TO DREAM A
DREAM LIKE THAT.

THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO
BE SAYING... IF ENOUGH
PEOPLE COME TO
THE ALARM.A
CEREMONY
IT WILL BECOME
PRESTIGIOUS.

MY NAME IS
PAUL TEILLERT.

I HAVE A WAY
TO CHANNEL THE
ANGRY ENERGY
OF A THOUSAND
DEAD SOULS.

I WANT TO SEE
A DEMO OF OUR NEW
PRODUCT. OUR CEO
WANTS TO SEE IT.

IF ENOUGH
CELEBRITIES
COME TO THE
ALARM A CEREMONY,
IT WILL BECOME
PRESTIGIOUS.

I'M PLANNING TO
GIVE AUSTRALIAN
AWARDS TO FAMOUS
PEOPLE.

I WOULD LIKE
TO DREAM A
DREAM LIKE THAT.

I WISH I HAD A
MY PEN IS
HOVERING!

MY PARTNER IS
CHANNELING THE
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Notepads: Gotta Catch ‘em all
Dean’s Corner

Fair Caltech
by Jean-Paul Revel

Once a year the campus is invaded by hordes of companies, here to beguile and recruit our best to work for them. In the past, the Career Day Fair, where the would-be employers and employees met, has looked like the piazza in a small European town on market day: tents, awnings, wooden tables laden with stuff, hawkers doing their best to attract customers attention to their booth and away from the competitor’s, milling crowds of seniors in their Sunday best, the women prim and well groomed, the men shaven, showered—the whole enchilada.

This year the fair had to be moved indoors, as the rains were believed to threaten the spirit of the occasion (and the bodies too). So to Braun Gym it was, not exactly in the middle of Campus, but somehow no one seemed to mind. In spite of the pessimistic predictions, the weather was gorgeous, blue sky, fluffy clouds, warm sun. The walk to the gym was a pleasure. Having the job fair indoors gave a much warmer, closer feeling, a mix beat

companies staff their booth with our alumns, and it is not just a recruiting party where strangers try to entice you, but a reunion where old friends see each other again. Besides exchanging reminiscences, there is the opportunity for Techers-to-TEther to talk about what it is like to work for Company XYZ. I go to the show to see people. All day, a steady stream of alums come by the office with hugs, smiles, hand shakes, inquiries and memories welling up. Most alums, however, I see on the floor, but their greetings there are more tense and strained. After all, these alums have a job to do, i.e. recruit new blood, and I am not in that cohort. When someone asks me if I want a job, it is supposed to be funny.

Besides the pull of familiar faces and the pull of trying to find a way to put all the knowledge that Caltech has packed into their brains to work, people also go for the freebies. If I must confess, I keep my office stocked in pens (and my wife takes away the brightly colored ones) and in note pads to keep by my telephone. The one thing I don’t like about the pads is that it is difficult to hold the phone to one’s ear, and write at the same time. The pads slip around too much. I have tried to hold the phone receiver between shoulder and jaw, so I have two hands free, but that greatly limits the movement of the writing hand. Maybe someone will come out with a pad that has a sticky back, so that it will stay put. Right now I roll a small ball of the goop that is used for holding up vases and other objects on their shelves during an earthquake. It works a little too well—it can be hard to remove the pad without destroying it when it is needed elsewhere. Oh, bother! I should have patented the idea before divulging it in public. My chance to fortune, if not fame, squandered! Of course you’ll say, maybe you should try a headphone instead, but somehow I am embarrassed to try that. You see, they don’t really look appropriate on my head, I don’t think.

The other day at the supermarket I saw this young man, a lawyer type, ultra properly dressed in gloomy black—jacket, vest, tie and crisply creased pants—walking down the aisle apparently mumbling to himself, and then I realized he was not mumbling, but speaking. Aloud. Too normal and sharp looking to be in some sort of distress, and then I noticed a little black thing in his ear and a discreet boom justing out of a slender headband. He was no doubt on an important call while collecting milk for himself and cream for his kitty, or maybe arguing with his girl friend who did not want to go see that movie on Friday night—anyway, what he was doing matters not. What does matter is that it looked ridiculous on him, as I expect it would look on me sitting at my desk with a bug in my ear. But then I have looked ridiculous before. Luckily the picture is poor, but have you noticed my head dress in the snapshot that sometimes appears above? And I am the one who sang for some Lloydis the names of the Pokemon. Very educational. I did not know that there was a Bulbasaur, I only had heard of Pikachu. I guess it stuck because it sounds like PicaSoo (Street), one of the ace skiers of the US Olympic team in Nagano. Pikachu, Charmander, Squirtle, Bulbasaur and JigglyPuff—well I learned something.

So I hope you had a most successful time in your interviews and will have a grand time as you start 'out on a career. See you again next year, all rested, with a bit more color than you had here, and a bit more filled out. For those of you still in the “underclasses” it is nice to get a glimpse of what might be in your futures. Hey you, struggling with your physics homework set, take ten and come over to the fair next year. Even if you are not ready to graduate yet, it is so encouraging to see one of the fatties that could await you (if you don’t decide to go to grad school instead). Thank you Career Development Center, usually Sally Asmundson, but this year Amy Malak, and their helpers, for bringing all these windows to campus and opening them wide. A bientot!

Jean-Paul Revel

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Beginning American Viennese Warsaw Lecture Series will be in room Dance Club, 7:30-9:00 p.m. for four successive Mon starting Feb. 14 [taught by a professional dance in- theater (at Caltech undergraduates) in Wittgenstein Concert on the Caltech campus. No free dance practice time are provided after each class. For the last minute changes are www.citalculus.edu, in the morning, Jeopardy-style competition for teams of up to four students. This will relocate from the third floor of stru-ctor required. Ludwig van quartet, piano sonata etc.). Lecturel tion. We regret any inconvenience this the morning on Tuesday, Feb 23, History of music. Mu 123 will explore in­ teresting with Caltech’s partner is required. Refreshments and -conference (i.e. mathe­matics, the nature of the course (i.e. because of the nature of the course (i.e. physical science, the Family in the term by Professor Kevles on T­erm 4. Quiz bowl is a is coming available in the Financial Aid Office. Contact applications to Dennis W. Cabaret Scholar­ship in, c/o Thomas J. Peterson, 2821 Elk St, Newport Beach, CA 92660. Entries must be postmarked by Febru­ary 29, 2000. The Coalition of Higher Edu­cation Assistance Organizations (COHEAG) will award six scholar­ships to eligible undergraduate students for the 2000-2001 academic year. Applicants must be U.S. citizens; they have a 3.75 or above GPA; enrolled at a COHEAO member school; must be entering their sophomore, junior, or senior year at the member school; and only one scholarships per family per academic year will be awarded. Further information about the COHEAO scholarship is only av­ailable through the COHEAO website: www.coheao.org. To apply, applicants must submit a typed application, 300 word or less typed or hand­written, academic letter of recommen­dation, and seal official copy of your most recent transcript. Supplemental application materials to COHEAO Scholarship Committee, 109 S. Marshfield Ave. M/C 157, Chicago, IL 60612. Application materials must be submitted by March 1, 2000. The Talbots Women’s Scholar­ship Fund will award five $1,000 and fifty $1,000 scholarships for under­graduate women in the fall of 2000. Applicants must be women cur­rently residing in the United States who plan to return to an accredited four-year college or university and enroll to part-time or full-time to complete an undergraduate baccalaureate degree. Eligible applicants must have completed at least one semester of college a minimum of five years prior to September 30, 2000 and not have earned for more than one college course per semester since September 30, 1995. For further in­formation and application materials, you may contact Elizabeth Tuma, Program Manager at 597-9311-0439. Only complete applications received will be considered for an award. Entries must be postmarked on or before May 1, 2000. The Association of Desk and Derr­ick Clubs, through the Desk and Derrick Educational Trust, is accept­ing applications for scholarships for the 2000-2001 academic year. Applicants must be Canadian or U.S. citi­zens, completed at least two years of undergraduate work, have a 3.0 or higher GPA, demonstrate financial need, and be pursuing a career in petroleum or allied industry. Awards in the amount of $1,000 annually are limited to full-time students. Part-time student qualify $400 annually. Applications are available in special financial aid (i.e. to find out more information, you may contact: Evelyn Black, Desk and Derr­ick Clubs, 4823 S. Sheridan, Suite #308A, Tulsa, OK 74106-1131 or email at evelyn.black@labatt.com. Entries must be submitted by April 1, 2000. The JVS Jewish Community Scholarship Fund announces the availability of applications for the 1999-2000 academic year. Applications are intended to provide a limited amount of financial aid for needy Jewish stu­dents who are legal and permanent residents of Los Angeles County. App­licants must be full-time at an accredited institution and have a minimum of 2.5 GPA or above. Recipients are also eligible to apply for loans from the student loan program and the Becker Graduate Student Loan program of JVS. Contact JVS for more information. For further information you may contact: Jewish Vocational Ser­vice, 5000 Whitlete Boulevard, Suite #2300, Los Angeles, CA 90036, or phone 323-761-8888, extension 122, or email at jvaps@jvs.org. Entries must be postmarked by April 15, 2000. To submit an event for the Mints, contact tech@u.acalculus.edu or mail your announcement to Caltech 58, 8th and 9th floors. Weekend should be brief and concise. Email is preferred. The editors reserve the right to edit and abridge at discretion. Unless specified, all mints will run for two weeks.