Caltech forced to cut budget by $25 million

By McKenzie Day

For the third year in a row, Caltech nabbed the top spot in Kiplinger’s Best Value for a private university.

The financial magazine bases its top fifty list on academic quality and affordability, looking at twelve criteria that ranged from average debt to admission rate. Caltech won with its low graduation and low student to faculty ratio, based on data from Peterson’s, an online guide to all levels of higher education.

According to Peterson’s, Caltech’s student body graduates with only $6,286 in debt, making Caltech one of only two colleges on the list whose debt stops at four digits. Caltech also leads its competitors with its 3:1 student faculty ratio.

Other big names on the list include Yale at number two, Princeton at three, and rival MIT in eighth. Rice, in fourth place, boasts 5:1, with a 6:1 ratio reflecting more of the competing top schools.

Whether or not Caltech will remain at the top of this list in 2009 remains to be seen. The strain of the declining economy is causing the financial aid office to move funds from merit to need-based aid, and are cutting the cost of Caltech’s education.

Priceless piano burned in fire

Police investigation to find arsonist is ongoing

By Casey Jao

The Dabney Lounge piano received an unwelcome holiday gift over winter break. On Christmas Eve, someone entered Dabney Hall and set the nine-foot long grand piano ablaze. The fire alarm soon activated and the sprinkler system doused the flames, but not before they had gutted the piano.

The 85-year-old Steinway and Sons piano is considered a cornerstone of Caltech’s education. However, Director of Security Operations William Heim, who is managing the case, stated: "We are actively investigating this incident with the Pasadena police and fire department, and we will continue to do so until it is resolved."

Meanwhile, Mr. Heim stressed that it is "important for our community to come together."

Mr. Henderson emphasized that "any information anyone can bring forward will be held in complete confidence."

According to Mr. Henderson, the Dabney Lounge fire alarm activated at approximately 9:52 PM on December 24, 2008. Security personnel responded within two minutes and were greeted by a smoldering carcass. Because the piano was located directly beneath a sprinkler, fire damage was localized to the instrument. This "very fortunate" coincidence protected the valuable instrument.

Admissions spike, but money dries up

By Chris Kennelly

The Caltech applicant pool has surged once again, 1050 students applied for Early Admissions, up from approximately 800 last year, and regular action applications increased to 4400 students, up 12% from last year, reports Rick Bischoff, Director of Admissions.

"Were trying to build it around is a variety of students," says Bischoff. "We're trying to build it around accessibility, low-income students."

As part of the push, the Admissions office started blogs and webinars. The office partnered with QuestBridge to reach out to more applications from high-ability, low-income students.

Caltech’s blogs differ somewhat from the usual admissions blog: “Were trying to build it around issues and topics [unlike our competitors’ admissions blogs],” says Bischoff. In the past week, Joules Gould, Avery House Chancellor, came on to blog about ME72.

The early webinars have been phenomenally successful: A one-hour November webinar attracted 450 students. Doing that in-person would require dispatching admissions officers to hotel conference rooms in several cities to the east.

Olive oil underwent healthier, tastier changes this year

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By David Renshaw

In a speech to staff members about Caltech’s financial situation in Beckman Auditorium last Monday, President Jean-Lou Chameau wasn’t pleased to be the bearer of bad news.

"I can assure you that I have not slept much in the past few weeks," he said, before outlining sweeping changes that Caltech plans to take and is already taking.

Three, Caltech must delay those things

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"We’ve been very concerned about the economy and its impact," said Bischoff. "We pushed very aggressively in October. We did the easy stuff: more email and more communication.

As part of the push, the Admissions office started blogs and webinars. The office partnered with QuestBridge to reach out to more applications from high-ability, low-income students.

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The 85-year-old Steinway and Sons piano is considered a complete loss.

Gregg Henderson, chief of Caltech Security, said that “we know that someone was in [Dabney Lounge] just prior to the fire alarm going off. And we caught him on tape.” Because the investigation is still ongoing, many specifics remain confidential.
In defense of opt-out health insurance

By Wesley Yu

STAFF WRITER

Last week, I wrote a piece supporting Caltech’s decision to allow students to waive health insurance. I said that students with double coverage will save $2,800 each year, not a small sum in these tough economic conditions. Since then, I’ve received some valid concerns about Caltech insurance. Those concerns are addressed here.

Concern: Since students who are double covered will be waiving Caltech insurance, the smaller pool of graduate students and others who depend on Caltech’s policy will suffer higher premiums and fewer benefits.

Answer: Though there will be some changes to Caltech’s insurance plan, they will not be as devastating as you might think. This week, Human Resources received bids from insurers, which will determine the costs and benefits for next year’s plan. Though the specifics of the bids will not be released publicly until Wednesday, people familiar with the bids are confident that changes will not be significant.

“Premiums always go up, but I think we’ll be able to keep the costs from rising significantly without compromising benefits,” says Angelica Santana, the Benefits Editor at Human Resources. The Health Committee will review the bids this Wednesday. For graduate students, faculty and staff, new plans are still being put together and the Health Committee is working to minimize changes for graduate students.

Concern: If students are covered by their parent’s health insurance, they might not be as interested in science, but a significant portion of those who do not have insurance will be crushed out of them, which is a comment that prompted many in the audience to laugh and raise their hands in agreement. Students all thought that science is cool, but sometimes in the structured classes students lose sight of the coolness, learning science in what is not like they began before attending Caltech. (SEC report October 2008, page 21)

Following in the footsteps of greatness...or simply hoping for imitation?

By Travis Scholten

CONTRIBUTOR

If you look on the Caltech admissions site, you’ll find a lot of web pages dedicated to the accomplishments of Caltech’s faculty and alumni. From founder Robert Millikan to Gordon Moore, from Frank Capra to Linus Pauling and Richard Feynman, nearly everyone that has contributed to scientific progress is mentioned. What is not said is the impact of those who have contributed to science. This is the case at Caltech. It’s still on the table, students and administrators are still working out the effects of the opt-out system. “It’s still on the table,” says Sargent, who will not suffer because of change either. In the event of an emergency the Institute will make sure students do not have lapses in care,” says Prof. Sargent.

Concern: What happens to a student if he or she is one who loses insurance in the middle of the year? For graduate students, faculty and staff, new plans are still being put together and the Health Committee is working to minimize changes for graduate students.

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There are few who can imitate his style and manner of instruction, but the role of a professor at this school has never been just to convey information; it has been to inspire students to be bold, to be curious about new things and foray down new paths of inquiry. Instead of drowning students in facts and forcing them to digest huge quantities of information, faculty should focus on ensuring that not only do students understand the fundamental principles of the subject at hand, but also that they are also able to synthesize in creative ways this information and apply it in unique ways.

Administration: The role of administration has always been to take a ‘big picture’ look at the Institute, and develop the policies and procedures that enhance student life. I would challenge the administration to look at its policies and genuinely consider the possibility that some are actually stifling student creativity and expression. (The Core Curriculum is always something that comes up, so I don’t feel I need to club that horse over another.)

Students: The purpose of this school. It is our duty to ensure that the changes we feel need to be made are actually done. The current ASCIT restructuring plan is an example of such positive change.

I feel that too often students don’t say something about an issue that is bothering them because they feel nobody will listen to them anyway. We need to move past this roadblock, because otherwise nothing will ever change.

“I feel that too often students don’t say something about an issue that is bothering them because they feel nobody will listen to them anyway. We need to move past this roadblock, because otherwise nothing will ever change.”

Write to tech@caltech.edu with your thoughts.

What are you waiting for?
The California Tech

You can click your heels, but there’s no place like Caltech

By Lauren Stolper

As director of study abroad and as someone who just graduated with a degree in Edinburgh many years ago and lived on the ground of St. John’s College for several months more recently, I enjoyed reading the opinion piece on study abroad that Marissa Cevallos and Joel Nikolaus wrote regarding study abroad. I would like to elaborate on one point Joel made and on a second, both authors made.

Joel characterizes the “climate” of Caltech as being cold and distant and he was not referring to the cold of Caltech but to the social climate of the university. This is the 10th anniversary of the Caltech’s exchange with Cambridge which started in January in 1999, when four students were flown to Cambridge in January. It was cold, but they enjoyed their experience. In 2002, the program has now allowed over 100 Caltech students to spend a term in Cambridge and return to tell the tale. Entering any large university (10,000 students for Cambridge and 20,000 for Edinburgh including graduate and undergraduates in various programs, e.g. medical school, law school), is going to be very different from the academic village of Caltech. (Note that former President David Baltimore very aptly characterized Caltech as being one of the last academic villages in the very best sense of the word, in a speech at the Caltech Village or community.)

At any large university other and have neither pass. As director of study abroad and as someone who did a graduate exchange with Cambridge, which was one of the last academic villages, and as one of the last academic vil- lages I have been visiting, I find it interesting that things seem more distant or aloof to me there.

At Cambridge discussion happens in smaller, more intimate settings, and bigger lectures and conferences are more formal. I find this interesting because I am still saying, “As for other meeting people, I have met with my ‘par- ent’ Alex Mansfield. He is a re- ally nice guy. He has been very helpful. Even before I got to St. Catherine’s he answered so many of my questions. People are really nice and very accommodating, it is really great. I really like the pro- cess.”

Matt Thill ’09/Math muses, “My classes have been pretty terrific, supervisions can range from tedious to the material well explained.”

We need a new plan, but not this one

Proposal to restructure ASCIT still needs work

By Noah Tanabe

As you’ve all no doubt heard, the election next Monday is going to be an important one for ASCIT. In addition to the presidential and vice presidential elections, we will also be voting on whether to seek ASCIT of the students. If you are a current member of the ExComm since I expected that students would want to see what the students want. Corpora- tion meetings are still available, but you can give input directly to the BoD (most of us live within 200 yards of each other). I’d rather see an independent oversight committee with a repre- sentative in each House was creat- ed and on a second, both authors made.

I’ve never heard that increasing the number of students in a meeting makes it more effective. Frankly I was expecting to see more differ- ences. For the election timeline, I put the BoD elections as far back as possible considering the fiscal year that will end in May. I thought the new BoD has to decide and approve a budget by then. In the new BoD we simplified, their roles clearly de- fined, and to create even more work for the ExComm. I made a decision to create an independent oversight committee with a repre- sentative in each House was creat- ed and on a second, both authors made.

I’d rather see an independent oversight committee with a repre- sentative in each House was creat- ed and I can do anything you have.

Finally, regarding the excel- lent proposal on study abroad that I wrote about study abroad helping one to be a better person, I would like to switch from a weather to a literary comparison. I suggest we are the students of Dorothy and her trip to the Land of Oz.

Dorothy longed to find adven- ture and left her family’s farm to see the world. Unfortunately, she picked a bad day to go westward with a twister to Oz where she had many adventures and made new friends, as well as meeting some folks not to her taste. We all know that at the end of her visit Dorothy chants the phrase, “There is no place like home,” and is transported back to Kansas and her family’s farm.

While she returns to the same landscape and people, her voyage to Oz has developed her perspec- tive and her own character. She now appreciates what she once took for granted and has a more charitable view of the place from which she came.

The voyage of study abroad may not take students as far as Oz, but they can have a voyage that changes their perspective. And my thanks to Joel and Ma- rissa for their thought provoking opinion pieces.

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Features

Olivettes get a tasty, healthy upgrade

By Eric Chang
STAFF WRITER

Did you notice an improvement in the taste of Caltech’s Olive Oil this year? You’re not the only one. Last year’s Caltech Olive Oil came from olives that were completely infested with fruit fly larvae, causing the olives to rot. But in 2008, facilities began to spray the olive trees to kill fruit fly larvae. According to Olive Harvest coordinator Erin White, less than 10% of olives are infested after being sprayed. “Our total approach to spraying for these trees has changed,” said White. “We used to treat them as ornamental trees whereas now we treat them as fruit trees.”

The trees are sprayed with Spinosad GF-120, an EPA and FDA approved organic product derived from bacteria in the fermentation process of Jamaican rum. This new approach must abide strict regulations from the California Department of Agriculture, including making monthly reports of how and what is being sprayed on the olive trees and an annual inspection.

Spraying regulation follows a campus-wide trend. With the help of new Sustainability Programs headed by John Onderdonk, grounds-keeping practices on campus are becoming more organic and environmentally friendly. “A lot of people think we use a lot of chemicals, but we don’t,” said Delmy Emerson, Director of Facilities Management. “The amount we use is a little.”

Olive trees will continue to be sprayed with Spinosad GF-120 every seven to ten days, because the chemical naturally breaks down after a few days. Spraying is set to stop a couple weeks before the start of the Olive Harvest to allow the chemical to break down before olives are picked. In April, a low-cost and organic method will be used to further decrease the fruit fly infestation.

Holey water bottles, filled with water and two to three yeast tablets, will be hung from each olive tree to trap for the fruit flies. Fruit flies are attracted by the yeast tablets or but unable to escape from the bottle. Other factors could have affected the new taste of Caltech’s Olive Oil: the blend of the various green, red, purple, and black olives, the percent content of fatty acid and peroxide in the oil, and the sunlight and temperature conditions the olive oil is subject to.

Blue Bloods: read for another bite of vamp love

By Sarah Marzen
STAFF WRITER

Who doesn’t like a trashy vampire romance novel? Maybe a lot of you. But that’s not the point. The true trashy vampire romance novel never reached its true potential. The overly romantic tweens often grab a few innocent bystanders along the way.

In case you haven’t heard, trashy vampire series are more popular than ever due to a very popular vampire series called Twilight. Someone even made a hit blockbuster movie from the first book, and the star of the movie was Robert Pattinson. The British actor who played Cedric Diggory in the fourth Harry Potter movie. But sadly enough for Twilight fans, the Twilight series is finished. Stephenie Meyer is pulling a J. K. Rowling and capitalizing on Twilight’s success by writing a second version of Twilight. Someone’s success doesn’t really matter. The conflicts of Twilight are solved. Now, it’s time to move on.

Over Winter Break, I perused through Borders and found a new vampire romance series to latch onto: Blue Bloods!

The series is a fusion of Twilight and the TV show Gossip Girl. All of the vampires are beautiful and or handsome, slender and/or built, and rich from seemingly endless endowments that were started hundreds of years ago. Supposedly, blue bloods also have highly developed aesthetic senses, and do their best to cultivate the bratva “red bloods” via fashion shows, art galleries, and indie movies.

I don’t want to spoil the small amount of plot that the series contains (and really, who cares what the plot is anyway), so I’ll just say this: the blue bloods are in danger from the “silver bloods”, an even more dangerous race of vampires. This conflict will drive the entire series. There’s a mysterious prophecy, an undercover predator, forbidden love, and lots of feeding.

You may or may not be wondering, how does Twilight compare to Blue Bloods? Why do people actually read these vampire romance series anyway? What makes one trashy series better than the next?

I’ve never met a single guy who liked reading these novels, so I’ll answer the question from a girl’s perspective.

The primary draw of a vampire romance novel comes from the ability of the reader to identify with the girl heroine. If the girl lead is unappreciated and wonderful, then the series will be more successful. Blue Bloods essentially creates four heroines. If you don’t identify with the nice, shy, unpopular main heroine, then you can bond with any of the three supporting heroines, who range from popular and pitifully bitchy to once-powerful and wise! Melissa de la Cruz was one smart writer.

The secondary draw comes from the dreaminess of the guy hero—if he’s hot and unattainable, you’ve got a hit. Why unattainable? Well, usually the readers of these novels have crushes on the popular guy in school who is “out of their league” and probably already dating the head cheerleader. Making the guy lead unattainable allows tweens to live their romantic dream lives vicariously through the girl lead.

There are two main men in Blue Bloods. The handsome, talented, and conscientious King-of-Highschool is Jack Force, a blue blood who’s in a committed relationship with his sister. (How’s that for unattainable?) Ollie is the sweet, sensitive, loyal, non-vampire best friend who wants more than friendship. Again, Melissa de la Cruz presents the reader with options— you can fantasize about Ollie or Jack— making the series palatable to a larger pool of people.

If you read through this entire “book review”, then you might enjoy Twilight or Blue Bloods. Check something out at a bookstore near you.
Grandview Palace II: quick and greasy
by Andrew Freddo and Dahna Almasco

Overall Grade: B-

Introduction: Problem – After a busy long weekend, we didn’t have time to go out for dinner, but still wanted to provide a food review. Solution – Ordering Chinese delivery from Grandview Palace II.

Goal: The last time we ate Chinese food was dim-sum at Empress Pavilion in Chinatown. How does Grandview Palace II compare for a dinner much closer to home?

Stockroom Options: Overall, Grandview Palace II has the same choices as any other Chinese take-out restaurant, including chicken, beef, and seafood options. There are also special combinations and complete lunch meals.

Materials and Cost: To start, we ordered steamed dumplings ($6.50). We then had orange chicken ($10.50) and the sizzling seafood hot plate ($10.50). Lastly, we had pan-fried triple delight noodles ($8.75).

Observations:
There were 8 dumplings in the order, more than enough for a couple of people. Unfortunately, the wrapper was very doughy and thick. Still, the filling tasted very fresh, like it was made right when we ordered. There were fresh greens inside, along with the meat, which was redeeming. The orange chicken was very refreshing and full of citrus flavor. There were even orange peels mixed in! Upon opening the package, the orange smell permeated the room. Though the chicken was fried, it was not overly crispy. There also was a bit of spice in the dish, too, which was good to compliment the sweet orange flavor.

The sizzling seafood hot plate was not true to its name: it did not arrive sizzling. It did not even arrive very hot, only lukewarm. Some of the fish pieces were way too big for a single bite, though fresh. Most of the vegetables also were good, with the notable exception of the mushroom rooms. These were extremely rubbery and left a bad aftertaste.

Finally, the triple delight noodles needed to be mixed very well before eating. The top layer was extremely crispy, with soggy layers below. All the sauce, meat, and vegetables were located in this bottom layer. Overall, the flavor was bland and greasy; it was overly filling and not worthwhile to eat much with the other available options.

Delivery Specifications:
One positive aspect of Grandview Palace II was its delivery. The food arrived within 25 minutes, even shorter than the 30-45 minutes that was estimated! The restaurant knew exactly where to go when we mentioned Caltech, and the ordering experience was very pleasant overall.

Conclusion:
Though the first impressions of Grandview Palace II were very good, the food did not completely follow through. Each item had some redeeming quality, but, save the orange chicken, was too greasy to fully enjoy.

Tips:
When ordering from Grandview Palace II, try to avoid the more oily sauces, instead ordering the meat dishes.

ASCIT Elections Reminder: Nominations and Sign-Ups for ASCIT President and VP remain open on the Olive Walk until Tuesday, January 20 at 5:00 PM.

Notice of Bylaw Amendment Vote:
On January 26th, there will be a vote on the most recent proposed bylaw change. Polls will be open from 10:00 AM to 11:59 PM. For more details, see the below information on the bylaw changes and consult a recent email from the Elections Chairman, which includes links to detailed information, questions or concerns? Contact the Elections Chairman, Jason Cerundolo, at jrc@caltech.edu.

This is a short summary of the bylaw amendment. The proposed changes in this amendment are very extensive, and everyone is strongly encouraged to read through the text of the actual amendment.

-Bylaws updated to reflect current situation, specifically with regards to technology.
-Excomm and Election Committee are combined into a Review Committee, appointed by the IHC.
-BoD operations pertaining to funding approvals, staff, voting, resolutions and policies are better defined.
-Excomm has drawn up new versions of the bylaws.

For either to be on the ballot for this coming year, a petition with signatures president’s approval must be in by the 30th, but Excom’s will only be included if there are clear distinctions. In any case it needs to be publicized and there should be some public forum to discuss the issue. Might be able to combine with the currently planned pre-elections party/barbecue.

ASCIT Dues: Caleb recommends increasing ASCIT dues by $5 a year, due to adjustment for inflation and new expenses. Allocation of new funds would among other things go to the Tech (required 10%) and an increase in multi-house funding.

Motion to approve an increase of ASCIT dues. VOTE: Passed (6-0-1). Bylaws prohibit increasing dues without student approval so the issue will be addressed again at the next meeting.

Coffeehouse Hours: Need to make sure that BoD members are always there during publicized times. New coffeehouse hours will be Monday 10:30-11:30 and Wednesday 12:00-1:00.

ARC Chair Report:
Student Faculty Conference: One of the dance clubs needs to be contacted about securing Ramo for the day of the conference.

Screening Room: Now reopened. The combo is (4-45-3).

ASCIT Meetings:
Some discussion about moving meetings to a more accessible time and location for students. Currently set to remain in SAC 15. Next meeting will be Tuesday evening at 10 pm.

Meeting adjourned: 11:45 pm

Submitted by Joel Nikolaus, ASCIT Secretary
A bigger chunk of tuition will now go toward ASCIT and IHC

Both ASCIT and the IHC voted last semester to increase student dues.

But not to fear—according to IHC Chair Chris Watson, the House due increase will not raise the cost of mandatory fees.

Instead, $35 of the students' payments pays toward Caltech's general budget. Currently, students pay $459 every year towards the general budget.

ASCIT dues are now $30 per term, instead of $25 per term. The extra money will be used to “cover freshman lunches at the Ath, help fund Caltech Y events, more multifaceted event funding,” and a couple other things, said ASCIT Chair Mary as an email.

Forty percent of women admit

A new study from the National Science Foundation reveals that “a work of art” that had been carefully preserved for centuries is now a “tweaked...hard to replace.”

“Alexander, the piano’s chief technician, had the damage was phenomenal.”

The piano emerged as just a work of art” that had been carefully preserved for centuries. The piano emerged as being a “complete replacement.”

The pianist was to use replacement piano for incoming students.

Scholarships are being discontinued, but really “a work of art” that had been carefully preserved for centuries is now a “tweaked...hard to replace.”

The pianist was to use replacement piano for incoming students.

This year, Caltech will have eliminated for financial aid. This year, Caltech will have no more merit scholarships.

The change will allow financial aid to expand need-based financial aid.

This year, Caltech will have no parental contribution for families. According to Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Erica O’Neal.

The pianist was to use replacement piano for incoming students.

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As for the piano, said Mr. Hennessy, “the damage was phenomenal.”

IMSS technicians toiled through the Christmas holiday to restore functionality by December 29. Alex劷, the piano’s chief technician, had the damage was phenomenal.”

The pianist was to use replacement piano for incoming students.

A new study from the National Science Foundation reveals that “a work of art” that had been carefully preserved for centuries is now a “tweaked...hard to replace.”

“Mr. Alexander has fond memories of the Dabney piano, which underwent surgery by some of the finest Steinway technicians,” said Bing. The soundboard, action, hammers, and case all underwent extensive restoration.

Initially installed in the Athenium, the piano migrated to Dabney and then Dabney. During 2003 and 2009 renovations have been delayed.

The pianist was to use replacement piano for incoming students.

“organizers are already thinking about follow-up events, from book readings to informal discussions at Red Door Café. Although the forum is organized and geared towards the Caltech community, students from nearby schools are invited, and the open to the public is the event to open up there” in terms of playing science and religion.

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At Caltech’s first Veritas Forum on February 5th, Director of the Human Genome Project Francis Collins will speak about the intersection of science and religion.

Flyers publicizing the event filled campus with messages about science and religion can be seen across campus, and have already provoked correspondind “Villitas Forum” flyers. Messages on the Villitas Forum flyers range from quotes about an iPhone from “Jesus” to Voltaire’s famous quote, “A witty saying proves nothing.”

Organizers of Veritas Forum are upset, as long as the Veritas Forum flyers aren’t covered up by the Villitas Forum flyers. “It’s not that big a deal,” said Dahyed Wing, who is in charge of gathering feedback about the forum and who knows the people who put up Villitas flyers. “They’re just acknowledging that the Veritas Forum flyers are just witty quotes.”

Some students have interpreted the Villitas flyers as protestations of the Veritas Forum—skepticism that the Veritas Forum will actually be an open discussion, given Collins’ and Veritas Organizaion’s Christian affiliation. But Veritas Forum organizers hope that “it [the Forum] will lead to more openness.”

“He’s [Collins] really popular mainly because he’s so open to discussions,” said Sunny Chan, one of three Veritas Forum organizers.

“Caltech’s piano was right up there” in terms of playing science and religion.

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Addie Hupuzinski, a graduate student at the Soror S. Ferrell, said of the release of the new SURF speaking competition this last Thursday. After narrowing down to eight finalists, the winners were 1st Evan Galwick, 2nd Mitch Wang, and 3rd Kimberly Scott. Both Galwick and Wang had spent time working with their mentors prior to the summer. The lesson is to take away (assuming you want to give your SURF presentation 4 times) it is commitment.

In the end, Chameau’s message was hopeful. “The best institutions, because they have the best people, find ways to get more than their fair share of resources,” she said.

As to the library, University Librarian Kimberley Douglas declined to comment on specifically which programs will be reduced. As an example of the kind of sacrifice that might need to be made, she mentioned the $10,000 required to reserve an iPhone from “Jesus” to Voltaire’s famous quote, “A witty saying proves nothing.”

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**News**

**January 20, 2009**

**ASCIT bylaw change to come to a student vote next week**

*By Joel Nikolaus*

*Staff Writer*

Download the original attachment

Over the next couple weeks the student body will be faced with not one, but two chances to essentially rewrite the current ASCIT by-laws.

Current IHC secretary Dvin Adalian sent a formal petition, along with over 300 undergraduate signatures, to the BoD yesterday morning. As stipulated in the ASCIT by-laws such a petition must be put up for a vote, currently scheduled for the 26th.

Since then, the ASCIT Excomm has finalized its own version of new by-laws and plans to also submit a petition. Alternatively it can seek approval from the current BoD.

There are a number of differences between the two plans. Among them, Dvin says that his plan will better "connect the houses to ASCIT," and that by creating an interhouse review committee the "houses are a good way of providing accountability." He sees his plan as conforming to the current student mentality rather than the other way around.

Noah Tanabe, Chairman of AS CIT Excomm, says Excomm's plan's placement of elections is an important difference. The plan would explicitly accommodate house elections and also includes review committee similar to the current Excomm.

The two plans originally included more significant differences, but during collaboration over first term Excomm has incorporated many new ideas from Dvin's version of the bylaws. Noah says that "some of the ideas when played out as thought exercises proved to be pretty silly," and that Excomm has a "different vision than last summer."

Still, while many differences were worked out and "a lot of ideas included," Noah says that he found the collaboration to be one-sided and that Dvin was unwilling to include some of Excomm's better ideas in a compromise.

Dvin says Excomm was still clinging to the old ASCIT and that "in the end it was not fixing the bureaucracy."

The commitment to such differences is strong enough that there are still two different versions of the by-laws, but those differences underlie the otherwise strong similarities and shared motivations.

Both Noah and Dvin say that ASCIT is broken and both sets of bylaws are aimed at making ASCIT more efficient and more accountable, by streamlining the structure and more clearly defining responsibilities.

Both are confident that their respective plan is the right way forward. Dvin says there has been substantial effort to "reach everyone and give everyone a chance to make changes," including individual members of Excomm and most members of the student government.

He says that there is "more respect for change from the outside," and sees his version of the by-laws as such an outside proposal. With the support for the petition "far exceeding what was needed" he is confident it will gather enough support.

Noah finds it "interesting that Excomm is so closely associated with ASCIT," and he thinks that regardless of that perception Excomm can get its plan approved.

"If it is a good plan it will pass. Trust [students] to see that for themselves."

Regardless of which plan students choose to go forward with (if any at all), Noah and Dvin agree that both plans are "a step in the right direction."

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**Martin Luther King, Jr. Week (Jan 20 - 24)**

**Inaugural Address Breakfast - President Barack Obama**

Tuesday, 7 AM - 10 AM, Chandler Dining Room

*Video: “Martin Luther King: I Have a Dream”, Wednesday, 12 Noon -1 PM, Center for Student Services, 2nd Floor (Lunch Provided, RSVP Requested)*

**Keynote Luncheon: “Principles of Community Organizing & Civil Rights” by Victor Griego, Jr.**

Thursday, 12 Noon - 1 PM, Dabney Lounge

*Lunch Provided - RSVP Required*

**Video Presentation: I Have A Dream - 1963 March On Washington, Friday - All Day, Center for Student Services, 2nd Floor & The Caltech Y**

**MLK Service Project**

Saturday - Meet at The Caltech Y

*These programs are sponsored by the Cultural Programming Group, which is comprised of representatives from the Caltech Women’s Center, Office for Minority Student Education, International Student Programs, the Caltech Y, and Office of Campus Life.*
Dear Dr. Smart,

I’m short and people are making fun of me for it. What should I do?
Sincerely, Napoleona

The fact that people are making fun of you signifies that they harbor insecurities. Obviously, you’re better than them at something and they’re jealous so they lash out at your shortness. If you screwed up your life by taking shots of espresso back to back every week since you were four it’s no business of theirs. Since they are trying to mess with your psyche, you have the right to return fire. Find and exploit any weaknesses they possess. If one of them is a germaphobe, then cough all over their hand towel before their very eyes. If one of them is in a relationship and is easily jealous, then steal his or her significant other (bonus points if you and the significant other are of the same sex because that is sure to make the bully uncomfortable). If one of them is middle-class, insult the fact that he or she is too rich for financial aid but too poor to afford paying tuition. Remember: everybody has a sweet spot and if you hit it in just the right way, all your dreams will come true.

Dear Dr. Smart,

People say I look very suspicious, even when I’m not doing anything suspicious at all. I can’t help it, but my natural demeanor seems to give people the wrong impression. Worse, I can’t even get away with suspicious activities because they always think I’m up to something. Is there some way I can get away with pranks and schemes without giving them away?
Yours truly, Sketchy McSkeetcherson

Yes, Sketchy, this is an easily solved problem. You need plastic surgery so your face no longer looks suspicious. That way, nobody would suspect you, especially when you’re actually doing something worthy of suspicion. You’ll get away with anything, possibly even murder, depending on how much you spend on the surgery. Also you will be more attractive and confident, and you will end up a more successful person.

Dear Dr. Smart,

I get bored easily. I am considering World of Warcraft but everyone says it’s really addictive. So there must be a better way. How should I spend my time?
Yours truly, an obvious moron

World of Warcraft? More like Crack of WarCrack. As I always say, everybody needs a vice. A good vice can be a drug, like marijuana, a dessert, like key lime pie, or a video game, like Call of Duty. However, some vices do more harm than good. Crystal meth and heroin, for example, are drugs that will be bad vices. Likewise, World of Warcraft is a terrible choice for a vice. It’s extremely addictive and not at all worth the time invested into it. There are so many alternatives that will be more rewarding. If you end up overweight, lazy, and seated at the computer for hours on end playing WoW, you have a problem and you need help. If you can, by some miracle, limit your gameplay to maybe two or three hours a week, you might be fine. Likewise if you can manage, by some miracle, to limit your crack consumption to one rock a week, you may as well enjoy a crack vice.

Comics: XKCD week

by Randall Munroe

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