Students Sans Borders

By Monalina Mukhopadhyay
STAFF WRITER

Coffeehouse Shall Return

Late Night Eatery Shall Return Second Term

By Casey Jao
STAFF WRITER

Until this term, students hungry for a late-night snack could visit Coffeehouse, a café run by students all week long from 10pm to 2am at the Red Door. But Coffeehouse never opened its doors this term. Dining Services director Peter Daily decided this past summer to reinstate a longstanding policy that requires a CDS employee to oversee the student workers. Thanks to a prolonged hiring process, plans for opening this term fell through.

Coffeehouse is set to re-open Sunday, January 10th, according to senior Max Jones, the student manager. “People should talk to Nadia Iqbal or me if they have any new menu ideas,” he said.

“Three years ago there was always a dining services employee working with the students at the coffee house. We are returning to that procedure this year,” wrote Daily in an email. Historical reasons aside, Daily decided to reinstate oversight of Coffeehouse because of the liability associated with non-employees using Caltech-owned equipment to sell food. Complaints about the food quality also motivated the decision, said Jones.

Daily remarked that dining services staff float between the houses to observe student grill masters on Thursday steak nights. “They are observing what is being cooked, how it is being cooked, food handling and answering any questions the [grill masters] might have,” he wrote.

Hiring a new employee to work during the Coffeehouse hours from 10pm to 2am “has taken a bit longer” than expected, said Daily. As a result, “They’re in the process of hiring,” with some potential candidates lined up. “The fact that they are taking so long is costing students [who want to work] money,” said Jones. The presence of the CDS employee also means that fewer space will be available for student employees. As a further consequence, Coffeehouse will only open five days a week compared to the seven previously.

New Student Taught Courses go to Faculty Board

Investing, American Libertarianism, and Conversational Thai Courses Proposed

By Joel Nikolaus
STAFF WRITER

After a full fall, this student taught courses are poised to make a return to campus.

There are currently three courses in the pipeline: a course on the history of modern Libertarianism, an introductory course on finance and investing, and a course on conversational Thai.

All three have already received the approval of the Curriculum Committee and pending approval by the Faculty Board, will all be offered to students next term.

While the courses are in theory offered every term, there is a lengthy approval process beforehand that involves developing a syllabus, finding a faculty mentor, gaining the approval of both the Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Board. As such, there were no student taught courses this fall.

“For a course to be offered in a term we really need to start talking about it at the end of the first month of the term before... There is a process,” said Dean John Hall. “It is hard to do over the summer.”

Assuming all courses are approved, the number of student taught courses offered during winter term this academic year is already equal to the total number of student taught courses offered last year.

“Small numbers but not insignificant,” said Hall, the main administrator in charge of the student taught courses. He hopes that the program will continue to grow. “I expect something like this will take time... We have to think ahead of time, get into the mindset.”

Dean John Hall

This year, the Academic and Research Committee advertised student-taught courses by email in the first week of this fall term. The finance course showcased some of defining qualities of student taught-courses. “A lot of people go into finance,” said Zungan, a double major in economics and mechanical engineering. “This course does a great job of blending the academic nature with a fun applied look.”

The class will involve hands-on homework where student use online software, students to build and portfolio. “You actually get to go out and buy the stocks,” said Zungan.

“I expect something like this will take time... We have to think ahead of time, get into the mindset.”

By Monalina Mukhopadhyay
STAFF WRITER

Caltech celebrated the university of science and the benefit of exchange, both of students and of thought, across borders by marking the November 16-20, 2009 as International Education Week.

A joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the Department of Education, International Education Week is an annual five day program that involves colleges, universities, schools, business associations, embassies and community organizations to promote and celebrate international exchange and education. Caltech’s IEW was hosted and promoted by the International Student Programs Office.

The event was kicked off on Monday with a noon-time seminar on ‘SURF-ing Abroad’ where undergraduates Veronica Anderson, Thomas Kwok and Anton Karmart spoke of the experience of spending a summer in another country working at a research lab, either through direct exchange or with an independent mentor.

The SURF Office, the event also had ‘SURF Director Candace Rypsi in attendance. Currently, Caltech has summer exchange programs with the National University of Singapore, the University of Iceland, the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and several universities in Hong Kong, including the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. The exchange program with University of Iceland began in 2007, and Veronica Anderson was the first Caltech exchange student under this program.

Tuesday’s event, titled ‘Fulbright scholar’ had graduate students Daniel Hurtado Sepulveda (Mechanical Engineering, Chile), Arnar Bjornsson (Civil Engineering, Iceland), and Batten Rydenfelt (Physics, Sweden) sharing their experiences as Fulbright scholars and their thoughts on the future. There is one of the most prestigious exchange grants for US students, which is open in 27 countries and with 51 commissions.

On Wednesday, grad student at Harvard, Hamik Mukelyan, spent 40 days in the Himalayas, ‘Footloose and Pilgrimage’ was held in the Catech Y Lounge at noon

Noevent involving international education at a scientific institution could go without the mention of Galileo Galilei, specially in this year. The Keck Institute of Space Science symposium Series of ‘Close-Up: The History and Scientific Tale of Galilei’ by professor Righini, a livelong Galileo-phile, is the author of the book ‘Galileo: Among science, faith and politics’ from which he has developed this lecture, both in Italian, and in English for this event.

Friday was spent in the memory of Caltech alum and former Robert H. Goddard Professor of Jet Propulsion at Caltech Triwen Hsue Shen who passed away on the 31st of October, 2009. Hsue-Shen was co-founder of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and ultimately returned to China, where he was a pioneer of the Chinese Missile Defense Program and was popularly known as the ‘King of Rocketry’. The event was hosted by the Caltech C, with a special presentation by Professor Emeritus Theodore Wu.

The course on Libertarianism takes a more traditional approach. Organized by senior Joseph Antognini, he plans to give lectures on the different subgroups of the Libertarian movement. Students would be required to complete outside reading much like other history courses.

All the courses students receive three, Performance, and Activity credits and are taken pass-fail and typically meet once a week. Student instructors receive a stipend like all TA’s. All the courses have advisors and homework.

The opportunity to offer student taught courses will be reviewed by the Faculty Board at the end of this academic year, according to the Academic and Research Committee (ARC) Chair Andrey Poletayev.

By Joel Nikolaus
STAFF WRITER

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By Evans Boney

Contributeur

I'll begin by mentioning that a copy of this opinion piece has been sent to the regional IRS office, with a letter indicating the pertinent information about the institute tax code. Caltech is supposedly a non-profit, but I see little difference in how we've handled the crisis and how for-profit corporations handled it. Our commitment to the growth of our endowment appears different little different from the profit-motive of so many corporations.

Corporations cut their low-end work force while defending the bonuses and high wages of their executive workers. Only one executive position was cut (Tim Chang), out of around 100 total job losses. The highest paid person at the institute in 2008 was our VP for Business and Finance. No pay cut necessary, the performance of our endowment has been outstanding under his leadership. And, as indeed is the most important part of the institute, our then-president does not need to even discuss it when the stock market crashes.

At that point, the job security of the underlings can be in play. No need to discuss the import of a bookstore to an already (and astoundingly) overstocked campus library. And we also got a nice chunk of money.

But for some reason I've missed the recent check-ins from our leadership, perhaps apprised of the Institute financial situation. For some reason, when we're going back to the black, it's not as important that we add some jobs back as it was when were going back to the black, they all have kinds of public forums about last way. At least we don't have any problems with liquidity anymore... let's see our company's great success!

Here are some not-for-profit principles that we've long since put into practice:

Student Mental Health and Underrepresented Students (for some reason I've never heard of a bookstore to an already (and astoundingly) overstocked campus library. And we also got a nice chunk of money.

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By Anthony Crook and Huzang Wang

It might be too hard to start thinking about your post-Caltech future at the moment. Maybe you’re a freshman who doesn’t know how to tell if you’ll stay for college. Maybe you’re a junior and you will need to figure out your life in the real world, and you will be most successful if you start thinking about it early.

Our experiences may be relevant to you since they happened so recently; we both graduated from Caltech in 2009 with chemical engineering degrees. Nevertheless, our experiences may be relevant to those who are considering the grad school option.

Those of you who are not considering grad school might be tempted to stop reading. Before you do that, keep in mind that many people decide to apply to grad school after pursuing other opportunities, or the other way around. Some of our friends even took a year off after Caltech and are now in grad school this year. Students naturally go to grad school because Caltech is amazing, but it is still an undergrad class. After all, we have 300 active professors and only 900 undergrads. Our professors are top leaders in their fields. We have collected 32 Nobel prizes, and anyone in the academic world has heard of someone at Caltech. On the other hand, few companies will give you a reference from our senior class of 2009, and our Career Development Center has just suffered major cutbacks. In short, Caltech is an amazing place, but less so when it comes down to grad school. Our advice is not about whether you should or should not apply to grad school specifically because they are familiar with your academic record and your interests. You can also contact the graduate admissions officer in your field of interest, and he or she will give you some useful advice specifically to those who are considering the grad school option.

Over all, we have 300 active professors at Caltech (during a SURF, for instance), and we suggest students to set with no time to think about their research, and it is important to give them the appropriate advice. We encourage you to start thinking about your post-Caltech future, and we will give you some useful advice especially to those who are considering the grad school option.

For instance, you are applying to grad school in the near future, here is a brief explanation about the entire application process again, but how good advice will help you make smart decisions and give peace of mind.

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On the corner of Hill and Colorado, right next to Jack in the Box, a new boba place recently opened up – Tea Spots. Since we’re always up for some bubble tea, we decided to drop by and see what snack food they had in addition to drinks. When you walk in, the atmosphere is almost that of a coffee shop. They have couches and tables you can sit at to enjoy your meal and maybe get some work done on their free Wi-Fi! We snacked on potstickers ($2.73), shrimp wonton soup ($4.99), fish ball noodle soup ($5.99), and fried pork steak ($6.25). We also enjoyed almond milk tea and peppermint milk tea ($2.25).

The bite-sized potstickers come 7 to an order, and are a great to eat if you are not too hungry or as a starter for the rest of your meal. We asked for medium spice, and the red spice that was on them definitely gave a pretty big kick! Beware if you’re sensitive to hot foods. Fortunately, they were not too oily or greasy.

The shrimp wonton soup had a lot of noodles, maybe a bit too much. The wontons had whole shrimps inside, not chopped up processed shrimp. They were pretty fresh and not too rubbery, and there were enough of them for the big bowl of soup. The fish ball noodle soup had the same base as the shrimp wonton soup, and again there was too much liquid and noodles, which diluted the fish flavor. The white fish balls were good, but the taste was overall a bit too simple and bland.

Lastly, we had the fried pork steak, which came with rice, vegetables, and a boiled egg. The pork itself was way too fatty; when we bit in, we often got a chunk of fat, which was very unappetizing. The crust had the same red spice as was on the potstickers, and that part of the dish was good. As for the portion size, there was enough for a dinner if you are hungry. They have a lot of other such combination platters there.

There were a lot of boba choices at Tea Spots, and the variety was good to select from. The quality of the boba was comparable to other places where we have enjoyed it (though definitely much better than Beard Papa’s). Overall, if you want to take a break to go and study off-campus, head over to Tea Spots. Ask the cashier for the code for the free Wi-Fi and you can be hooked up! Tea Spots is definitely the kind of place you should go to for a quick snack or late-night boba (they’re open until 12 or 1 AM!). So next time you need a spot of tea…head to Tea Spots!

Grade: B
Walking Time: 15 minutes
Price Range: $
Just Can’t Resist

Difficulty: Easy

“Okay, you are putting down those resistors and going outside for a while” (227.) Take a break from work and do a puzzle – have less number and more color in life!

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Top Submissions to Wolfram|Alpha from Caltech

Data provided by Wolfram|Alpha Academic Outreach Team

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Chess Club President

At the recent Tal Memorial Tournament in Moscow, Vladimir Kramnik (rating 2786) placed first in a field of 10 of the 13 highest rated players in the world. Kramnik was the classical world chess champion from when he defeated Garry Kasparov in 2000 until 2007. He is known for his excellent defensive play, which is showcased in the game of the week, a draw with Vassily Ivanchuk (rating 2757) from the last round of that tournament. Had Ivanchuk won this game, he would have taken first instead of Kramnik. Playing white, Ivanchuk generated a very dangerous attack against the black king and seemed likely to break through, but Kramnik defended excellently and accepted a draw to win the tournament after reaching a superior endgame position.

6. e5

This is the Queen’s Gambit Declined, one of the most popular openings. Though black could capture white’s c4 pawn on move 3, he chooses not to as this gives up some control of the center and allows white to play e4 uncontested, setting up a nice duo of pawns in the center. Ivanchuk’s 8. e5 is the first move of the game relatively unexplored at high levels, giving Ivanchuk a bit of a preparation advantage as he presumably would not have played this move without having studied its consequences before the game.


12. dxc5 Re8 14. a3 Bxc5

The knight’s position on c3 means that the pawn fork on b4 does not win a piece. (15. b4 Bb6 16. bx5 Bxa5) and the pin on the c3 knight means that it will be lost.

15. O-O O-O 16. Rad1 Be7 17. Qe2 Qc7 18. Qe4 g6

White has forced black to weaken the position of his king with ...g6, justifying an attack on the kingside. In general, moving the pawns in front of the king is undesirable if the opponent intends an attack as there will be unprotected squares behind them. Since pawn moves are irreversible, these weaknesses are permanent and allow the opponent to make plans of attack based on them.

19. Qf4 Kg7 20. Ne2 Bc6 21. Nf4 Rg8

A nice defensive move, giving the king the option of running to f8 and allowing the bishop to come to f8 in some variations if h6 requires defense.

22. Nd4 Kh7 23. h4 Qxe5 24. h5 Kh8 25. Nxe6 Nxc6 26. hxg6 fxg6 27. g7+ Reg7
28. Ng6+ Kg8

After a complicated sequence of moves black has survived the attack and holds an advantage going into the endgame. Kramnik accepts a draw as it wins him the tournament.

29. Nxe5 12/12

Though it was Kramnik who took home first prize at the tournament, it was Magnus Carlsen who while tying for second with Ivanchuk set a new record by moving into first place on chess.liverating.org, a website that keeps track of players’ ratings between releases of the official FIDE ratings list. At 18, he is the youngest ever to achieve this.

The Caltech chess club meets on Friday nights at 8pm in Page dining hall. Players of all levels are welcome; we are happy to teach. If you want to play out the game of the week but are unfamiliar with the notation look at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algebraic_chess_notation for an explanation of how it works.

Problem of the Week
Contributed by Rob Rosenberg

White to move and mate in 4

Solution to previous problem:
1. Rcg3+ Bxg3 2. Rch+ Kf7 3. Qb6+ Ke7 4. Qe6+ Kd7 5. Qd8#
Upcoming Games

December 2, 2009
Women’s Basketball
vs. La Sierra
5:30 PM

December 2, 2009
Men’s Basketball
vs. La Sierra
7:30 PM

December 4, 2009
Swimming & Diving
vs. Claremont
3:30pm

December 5, 2009
Swimming & Diving
vs. Whittier
10:30am

December 5, 2009
Women’s Basketball
vs. Johnson & Wales (CO)
5:00 PM

December 14, 2009
Women’s Basketball
at Hope Int’l
5:00 PM

December 16, 2009
Men’s Basketball
vs. North Park
7:30 PM

December 19, 2009
Men’s Basketball
vs. Pacific (Ore.) @ Cal Lutheran
1:00 PM Cal Lutheran Classic

December 19, 2009
Women’s Basketball
vs. Knox @ Claremont M-S
4:00 PM Caltech Claremont Holiday Classic

December 20, 2009
Women’s Basketball
vs. Buena Vista @ Claremont M-S
2:00 PM Caltech Claremont Holiday Classic

Men’s Basketball Opener

By Evans Boney
Contributor

The men’s basketball team lost their home opener to West Coast Baptist this Saturday 66-50. Caltech was led by Freshman Mike Edwards with 19 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists and 2 steals as well as Junior Ryan Elmqvist, who tacked on 11 points and 5 caroms. Danny Galdamez led the travelling Eagles with 19 points, including several crucial first half three pointers that helped initially widen the deficit.

Caltech (0-2) fought back to narrow the gap to one, but the shooting of the Eagles overwhelmed the defense of the Beavers and West Coast Baptist seemed poised to coast to victory with a halftime lead of 36-23. In the second half, turnovers marred an impressive effort from the Beavers on the glass. Caltech outrebounded the Eagles 36-30, including 14-9 on the offensive glass, a strong performance led by Freshman Alex Runkel who pulled down 9 boards and Freshman Ethan Boroson, who pulled down 7 boards, as well as pouring in 5 points, 3 blocks and 2 steals. In the end, West Coast Baptist pulled away as the Beavers uncharacteristically missed free throws down the stretch. Caltech had nine more free throw attempts than their opponents, but only hit three more.

“I expect us to hit free throws, though, and we didn’t do that. Otherwise, it would have been a different outcome.” Caltech Coach Oliver Eslinger said. “We came out with great focus on the defensive end and forced them to call a TO. And I was certainly pleased with the reboarding effort, something we emphasized after being beaten on the boards in the first game.”

Also on the positive side, Coach Eslinger noted the community support for the team: “A positive is the chemistry. We have a great bond, and we are all working towards developing this program into a great one. And the fans and community have a part in that, too. When I glanced in the stands, I saw students, faculty, alumni, friends, family, and random folks from Pasadena. That is simply awesome.”

On the future of the team this season, Coach Eslinger commented on the upcoming game against Whitman, this Tuesday at 7:30 PM at home: “Whitman has a good program. They have a great recruiting class, so lots of new players, just as we do. Plus, they have very good returners, so I think they will be well prepared and talented. If we take care of the ball and make shots we are supposed to, we will be fine.”

The Weekly Scoreboard

November 5, 2009
Men’s Soccer v. SOKA University of America L (2-1)

November 13, 2009
Men’s Water Polo v. Whittier L (11-5)

November 15, 2009
Men’s Water Polo v. La Verne L (16-6)

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Ask The Frosh

Dear Frosh,

My roommate acts like he is high all the time even though he is not. He stares at spots on the ground and mumbles nonsense. What should I do?

Hmmm, this is a toughie, but fortunately we’ve heard of this problem before. Presumably, your distress over the matter is due to the incongruence between your roommate’s current state and the way he’s acting, so the obvious way to resolve the issue would be to make your roommate high. However, drugs are bad, and the easy choice isn’t always the right one, so we’ve done a bit more research.

Not having been high ourselves, we looked up cannabis on Wikipedia and discovered that people who are high most often experience “feeling happy, feeling relaxed, feeling silly, feeling scared, or not being able to think clearly…and getting hungry.” The description basically matches how we feel on a typical Sunday when we haven’t started our math homework yet, so maybe your roommate’s a frosh? If that’s the case, there’s not much you can do, except maybe help with Problem Set 7, problem 1c.

If it’s specifically the staring that bothers you, you could insist that your roommate wear sunglasses all the time. That way, you’ll never know what he’s looking at! As for the mumbling, whenever he says something nonsensical, dress up like a lemur and prance around singing “Turkey in the Straw.” It will put things in perspective; we promise!

Hi Frosh,

Recently I have developed a large fear of opening doors and going through doorways. I also have a sneaking suspicion that all my friends are trying to kill me. What should I do?

Signed,
Paranoid

Hi Paranoid,

We know you’ve heard it before, but the old adage still rings true: if your friends are trying to kill you, they’re probably not your real friends.

If doors scare you, you can always go through windows instead! Then you can keep everyone guessing, and they can’t kill you if they don’t know where you are! Plus, windows are smaller, so they’ll make you feel more secure. Windows also tend to lead to the more scenic routes out of your room, which will expand your horizons and let you see the beauty in life once more.

“Ask the Frosh” is a weekly advice column for all members of the Caltech community. Email all your problems to askthefrosh@gmail.com.