Basketball team to kick off the season with Midnight Madness

By Tina Ding
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This Thursday, Caltech’s men’s and women’s basketball teams will kick off the start of the official basketball season by throwing the annual Midnight Madness event in Caltech history.

Midnight Madness is a traditional collegiate basketball event that takes place on the first day that National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) allows the sport to begin practice. With the first tick of the clock at 12:01am on October 15th, the basketball teams will do some sprints and drills to signify this commencement, but the bulk of the event is celebration.

“We want to pump up the new players on the team and get the Caltech community excited about the upcoming season,” said men’s basketball Coach Oliver Eslinger who initiated the efforts for this event.

The event, partially funded by Housing and Student Life, begins at 10:30pm with food followed by games, prizes, and giveaways at 11pm, and climaxes with the highlight of the night at 12:01am when the men’s and women’s basketball teams will be introduced to the Caltech community.

“We need to have that extra energy from our fans to add to the sum of our parts for a successful season,” said women’s basketball Coach Sandra Marbut, who recounted the crowd’s excitement when the women’s team won their first conference game in the 2006-7 season.

The men’s team this season is composed of much more experienced players than was the team two years ago.

“Senior, “We want to give the seniors a chance to have success as they finish their last season.”

The women’s basketball began recruiting eight years ago when Marbut became the coach. Over the years, she has seen the team improve with these efforts, as they go from an average loss margin of over 70 points to an average loss margin of 17 points. “It’s not our mission to win every single game,” said Marbut, “Rather, we explain, the team aims to be competitive so that the students can have a sense of pride for their underdog team.

By Casey Jao
SPORT WRITER

Admissions initiates a fly-in visit program for underrepresented high school seniors

To help diversify the undergraduate applicant pool, Caltech admissions is inaugurating its first annual “Caltech Up Close” program. Thirty carefully screened US high school seniors, all from underrepresented backgrounds, have been invited to visit and live at Caltech from the 14th to the 16th of October. Admissions hopes that these students will all leave Caltech wanting a spot in the class of 2015.

The fly-in program resembles Prefrosh Weekend but “is specifically designed not to be a replication of the pre-frosh programs in April,” said admissions director Jarrid Whitney. They will visit classes, tour JPL, attend SURF seminar day, and live with hosts in undergraduate houses. On Saturday they will meet members of the faculty and senior administration over dinner at the Athenaeum.

While both Caltech Up Close and Prefrosh weekend try to get students excited about Caltech, they target different audiences. All thirty students come from populations underrepresented in STEM fields as a whole, including women, first generation families, ethnic minorities, and people of low economic status,” said Karly Brockett, associate director of admissions who is coordinating this program.

“We wanted to be selective because we know the criterion is pretty high for our admissions,” said Whitney.

Despite the process similarity, Whitney emphasized that invitation to Caltech Up Close is independent of admission to the class of 2015. “The expectation, though, is that participants in the fly-in program will matriculate at a higher rate if admitted,” said Whitney.

“The hard part is getting them to our campus,” said Whitney.

Number of recruiters at Caltech’s career fair reflects the national economy

Plotted above in bar format are the numbers of companies at the Fall and Winter Caltech Career Fairs from 2007 to 2011. The line graph depicts the Dow Jones Industrial Average trend in this period of time. The most recent career fair, in January 2010, had 51 companies recruiting Caltech students. This year’s career fair on October 26 already has 78 companies signed up, and there are not enough spaces in the career fair to accommodate all of the interested companies.

Career fair data is obtained from the career fair archive on the Caltech Career Center website, based on lists of the companies that attended each career fair, and data from this year’s career fair was provided by the Career Center Office. For full coverage, see PAGE 6.

The number of recruiters at Caltech’s career fair reflects the national economy

Number of companies

2007-2008 Fall Winter
2008-2009 Fall Winter
2009-2010 Fall Winter
2010 Fall

0
100
200
300
400
500
600
700
800
900
1000
1100
1200

For full coverage, see PAGE 6.

Number of companies
China’s crackdown on Nobel Peace Prize recipient, unwarranted and unjustified

By Pradeep Ramesh

On October 8, 2010, Liu Xiaobo, a prominent advocate for democracy in China, was awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize. In recognition of “his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China,” recently he was sentenced to 11 years in prison for advocating Charter 08, a political reform document that called for open elections and the rule of law. In 2009, he was among the 3,000 Chinese citizens who pleaded in an open letter to the Norwegian government to grant the prize to Aung San Suu Kyi. After issuing his appeal he was added to the list of China’s intellectual dissidents. Liu’s tenacity has made him a symbol of those pursuing political change. His conviction and sentence for writing a petition in support of Charter 08 is a cold reminder of the Chinese government’s disregard for human rights and freedom of expression.

Liu Xiaobo was first imprisoned in 1989 for participating in the Tiananmen Square protests. In 1996, he was sentenced to 21 months for taking part in the 1989 pro-democracy protests at Tiananmen Square. In 2005, he was sentenced to 11 years for promoting Charter 08, a document calling for open elections and the rule of law. In sentencing Dr. Liu, the Chinese authorities disregarded the fact that the committee operates independently of the government. In sentencing Dr. Liu, the Chinese government has violated explicit provisions in its own constitution that guarantee the right to free speech and peaceful assembly. As such, the detention is legally and morally unwarranted. While the government’s economic policy has succeeded in lifting millions out of poverty, its increasing crackdown on dissent reflects the government’s discomfort and uncertainty with its newfound wealth and power. The Chinese economic miracle has bolstered the ranks of a middle-class which is increasingly agitating for greater political freedoms. It is time for China to recognize the political aspirations of its people.

In awarding the prize to Dr. Liu, the Nobel Committee offered a glaring rebuke to China’s authoritarian government, which threatened the Norwegian government with retaliatory measures, despite the fact that the committee operates independently of the government. In sentencing Dr. Liu, the Chinese government has violated explicit provisions in its own constitution that guarantee the right to free speech and peaceful assembly. As such, the detention is legally and morally unwarranted. While the government’s economic policy has succeeded in lifting millions out of poverty, its increasing crackdown on dissent reflects the government’s discomfort and uncertainty with its newfound wealth and power. The Chinese economic miracle has bolstered the ranks of a middle-class which is increasingly agitating for greater political freedoms. It is time for China to recognize the political aspirations of its people.

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On Friday night, Bruno Mars (“Just the Way You Are”, “Billionaire”, “Thrift Shop” and “Locked Out of Heaven”) was supposed to open for Maroon 5 (“This Love”, “She Will Be Loved”, “Wake Up Call”) at the Greek Theater in Hollywood.

Unfortunately, Bruno Mars was cut 2.6 grams of cocaine after his September 19th Las Vegas concert and he is now facing criminal charges. Needless to say, Mars missed his scheduled opener at the Greek Theater this past Friday. Instead, relatively unknown artist Rye Cuming— a Hollywood-handsome, smooth Australian tenor— opened the concert to a nearly meager theater. Apparently, the crowd had opted to crowd the bars downstairs instead of watching Cuming’s performance.

One Republic followed Cuming with some major hits including “Apologize”, “Stop and Stare”, and “Secrets”. All delivered with overwhelming zeal. By the time the crowd went wild, and the audience danced as fast as they could, Rye Cuming was long gone. The only difficult thing is parking. There’s a small valet lot in the street, or you can find free parking a few streets east.

After ordering the tea, I had asked the waitress what a “Red Fruit Tea” really was, and she had replied “A strong, passionfruit tea”. She couldn’t be more right— this was the strongest fruit tea I had ever tasted! For those who like the indulgent, sharp taste of passionfruit tea, this is perhaps for you.

Watson gives light-hearted advice in autobiography

By Vivian Yang

Watson gives light-hearted advice in autobiography

by Sarah Marzen and Wesley Yu

Even after just two weeks of Caltech life, freshmen who have been bounted with acronyms and colloquy are sure to know that "admissions mistakes" are inevitable. This is why we are confused as "admissions mistakes", the unlucky students who got a thick envelope in the mail in the spring of our senior year of high school only because the Caltech Admissions Office misspelled someone else’s name. We come to Caltech to surround ourselves with Nobel laureates and MacArthur fellows and bask in their intellectual aura, but we will stick more with the desserts and drinks as my friend remarked, tastes like "a giant Almond-Apricot Madeline, a Lemon Tart at home-cooked recipe.

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A look at new professors

Nicolas Wey-Gomez

BY JONATHAN AND STANFORD SCHOR

Professor Wey-Gomez spent the bulk of his childhood in Bogota, Colombia. In fact, it was not until his senior year of high school, when his parents moved to Boston to complete their master’s degrees, that he truly considered attending college in America. As Professor Wey-Gomez puts it, though, “the idea of…exploring a bit…was incredibly important,” so he decided to stay in Massachusetts to attend Brandeis University.

Initially, Professor Wey-Gomez intended to go into physics; however, during college he began to write creatively and was an avid reader. He decided to pursue a major in Latin American Studies, and then continued on to Johns Hopkins for a writing workshop and for graduate school, starting in 1986.

At Johns Hopkins, Professor Wey-Gomez focused his research on the accounts of European travelers to the New World, particularly those of Christopher Columbus.

Through these accounts, he learned the Columbus sought out a southern, tropical environment due to the prevailing scientific views of the time: that climate implied temperance, and that tropical peoples could not rule themselves. In fact, this became the topic of his most recent book, The Tropics of Empire, and continues to be a research vein that he pursues today.

Professor Wey-Gomez comes to Caltech from an illustrious teaching background, filled with high-powered schools such as Brown and MIT.

His choice to come to Caltech is due to his appreciation for tech students’ “out-of-the-box” thinking, as well as its good group of scholars for the early modern period.

This year, Professor Wey-Gomez will be teaching courses in the history of exploration and the literature of that period, and will also be leading a class in how the early modern world shaped Miguel de Cervantes’ Don Quijote.

In addition, he will be teaching a course entitled “From Angels to Monsters: Cosmology, Anthropology, and the Ends of the World,” which will culminate in a study of James Cameron’s Avatar.

Professor Wey-Gomez enjoys swimming and restaurant scouting, and has recently decided to take up hiking.

Jose Andrade

New this year in the Department of Engineering and Applied Science is Associate Professor of Civil and Mechanical Engineering Jose Andrade.

Andrade left a professorship at Northwestern in order to join the Caltech community, making the move for both professional and personal reasons. He recognized the potential to “join great colleagues and do things that are synergistic with the work that I do” at Caltech, but also admitted that winters in Northwestern were becoming too much of a hassle for him and his family. Andrade also had an offer from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology but realized that he couldn’t “screw up professionally with either school.” One of his three children was born in North California so it only seemed natural to return to the Golden State and leave winter behind.

Professor Andrade’s work revolves around using computational mechanics to model the behavior of certain geologic materials. In particular, he examines soil, rock, and concrete, all of which belong to the family of geologic materials and all of which are important to the civil, defense, and energy concerns of any country, according to Andrade. The specifics of this research range from understanding the physics of landslides to finding ideal methods for sequestering carbon dioxide underground, but the focus is always upon discovering the fundamental properties of each relevant material.

Though he now focuses intensely on his current field of work, his aspirations as a child were in a slightly different vein. Andrade was born in the capital of Ecuador and grew up watching his father work as a civil engineer. He grew to love his father’s work and joining him on sites, so when he was ready for college, eighteen-year old Andrade left South America for the Florida Institute of Technology. There, he followed a straightforward path toward his goal of becoming a civil engineer like his father, until he took a class with an unimpressive structural analysis professor. His professors in soil mechanics and mechanics of materials caused him to rethink his strict focus on civil engineering. He decided that his interests were broader than he originally assumed, so went off to Stanford to pursue a Ph.D.

Looking back on the decision to shift his career path, Andrade noted that “being focused isn’t always bad…[you just have to] recognize opportunities for reinvention.” This seems to be a mantra that Andrade bases much of his life on. He has already considered future attempts at working in politics, starting his own restaurant, and he hopes to found a foundation for children in Latin America to “directly help kids in a way that random events helped me get to where I am now.”

Outside of the office, family life and his three children take up a large portion of his remaining time, but he still manages time for a number of hobbies. Among these is cooking and entertaining: “My wife is the house chef,” he said, “and I am the house chef!” Andrade noted that his passion for cooking is one of the few things that allows him to completely separate from his work as he “becomes an engineer of cooking and forgets everything else.” Andrade is also a jogger and an avid racquetball player.

Professor Andrade is excited to be brought into the Caltech culture and will be teaching Statics and Dynamics (ME 035) this year.

Marina Agranov

Marina Agranov is joining the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences as an Assistant Professor of Economics. She only recently moved to the United States in order to complete a PhD in economics at New York University (NYU), after which she was offered a position at Caltech.

Agranov was born in Russia and attended St. Petersburg State Technical University where she learned “math and Marxism” but not the sort of economic theory that she had hoped to learn.

After receiving her Bachelor’s degree in 1999, she emigrated to Israel and began pursuing a Master’s from Tel Aviv University.

There, she found classes that would enable her to understand current economics and a warm and collaborative environment. Her desire to replicate this environment led her to attend NYU and was a driving factor in her decision to come to Caltech.

Agranov does much of her work at the interface between economics and political science, and she noted that her department itself is unique in that “there’s a lot of interdisciplinary work.”

Last year she wrote a paper (not yet published) that analyzed the effect that a two-stage election (a primary followed by a general election) has on the success of a candidate. She came up with a theoretical model of two-stage elections to test the idea that primaries hurt a party’s chances during the general election.

Here Agranov says she will be able to further test any other models by using the experimental lab on campus, which provides monetary incentives for students to act like candidates or voters in a simulation.

While she does spend a large portion of her time working at Caltech, Agranov enjoys playing piano and guitar and listening to jazz with her friends.

She is due to give birth to her first child at the end of January. Until then, her biggest challenge might just be learning how to drive, a skill that was never necessary in her former residences.

Professor Agranov will be teaching PS132, a course on formal theories in political science, and SS210, a political economics class.
It was during an art project in elementary school that Professor Gillen first developed an interest in Economics; he found the newspaper that he was working on to be more interesting than the project itself. Growing up in rural Wisconsin with his grandparents as his closest neighbors, he might not have had much of an opportunity to study the global market; however, his father encouraged his interest, even getting him a computer so that the young Professor Gillen could model his first regression of corn prices.

After high school, Professor Gillen headed to Connecticut to attend Yale University. While there, though he studied economics intensively, he also cultivated an interest in theatre. Although Professor Gillen was not the best actor or set designer, he had a keen eye for management. As such, he worked as the producer for three different plays.

Finally, Professor Gillen headed to the West Coast to attend graduate school at the University of California at San Diego. He received his PhD in 2010, and in the same year was recruited by Caltech as an Assistant Professor of Economics. As Professor Gillen puts it, his choice to come to Caltech was mainly due to its "unparalleled" emphasis on creativity. As an economist whose research spans many fields, Professor Gillen was also drawn by the freedom to pursue his varied interests.

While Professor Gillen’s research involves a number of specialized fields in economics, his main interests are econometrics, financial economics, and industrial organization. He will be teaching an investments course during the 2nd quarter, as well as a graduate course on econometrics.

Though time is scarce, Professor Gillen tries to surf every weekend. He also enjoys going to concerts in LA and is considering picking up rock climbing again.

Benjamin Gillen

Ryan Patterson is a new Assistant Professor of Physics in the Department of Physics, Mathematics, and Astronomy. Though he may be a newcomer to professorship, Patterson is no newcomer to Caltech. He attended Caltech as an undergraduate and, following a PhD at Princeton University, returned to Caltech for his post doc.

Patterson’s interest in Caltech began when he was a high school student in Mississippi. “I remember looking through the brochure,” he reminisced. “I remember getting the sense that it was a bunch of people who liked thinking and learning.” He wasn’t disappointed when he arrived, and he embraced the camaraderie he found here. His decision to return was based on the abundance of collaboration in research and the potential to work with high caliber students and faculty in his field. Patterson knew that Caltech was filled with people off of whom he could bounce ideas, and he also knew that Caltech’s administrators would be more than happy to allow him to indulge his passion for teaching.

A self-described “reductionist at heart,” Patterson works in the field of particle physics out of an interest to see how things work at their very core. His field requires a large amount of collaboration and “big machines”, so he sought out a group with smaller-scale projects with less potential for disruptive bureaucracy. That being said, his current project involving the study of neutrinos has around 140 people working on various facets of it. In his small amount of free time, Patterson occupies himself with non-fiction books; various sports including ultimate Frisbee, tennis, and basketball; board games that involve strategy; and playing the guitar. While he was an undergraduate at Caltech, Patterson actually secured three musical gigs with a group of friends, but these days his schedule does not allow time for performances.

Patterson noted he can’t imagine having any job that doesn’t provide him with an intellectual challenge like his current one does. Whether he is teaching or working in the lab the “problem you’re solving that day is always different” and that dynamic structure is what keeps him going. Professor Patterson will be co-teaching Physics 2b this year.

Ryan Patterson

At the age of 18, Professor Hunter had already begun to prepare himself for a career in physics. However, after some thought following a summer program at MIT he decided instead that he would prefer to study English. As such, the LA native made the cross-country trip to Boston to attend Harvard. Four years later, in 2002, he continued on to the University of Pennsylvania to receive his PhD.

Nonetheless, Professor Hunter still held a spot in his heart for tech schools and their students’ analytical thinking. During his summers at Harvard, and even after he went on to graduate school, he continued to teach English to MIT students.

After 12 years on the East Coast, though, Professor Hunter was ready to return to Los Angeles. Knowing its reputation for stellar academics and its wide degree of research freedom, he decided to come to Caltech.

Though he follows many of the same methods as scientific researchers, Professor Hunter’s research is certainly not something that most Techers are used to. His thesis dealt with the history of the book in America, particularly early biographies and “big machines”, so he sought out a field that requires a large amount of collaboration and “big machines”, so he sought out a group with smaller-scale projects with less potential for disruptive bureaucracy. That being said, his current project involving the study of neutrinos has around 140 people working on various facets of it. In his small amount of free time, Patterson occupies himself with non-fiction books; various sports including ultimate Frisbee, tennis, and basketball; board games that involve strategy; and playing the guitar. While he was an undergraduate at Caltech, Patterson actually secured three musical gigs with a group of friends, but these days his schedule does not allow time for performances.

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Christopher Hunter

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Number of companies at Caltech’s Fall Career Fair increase

By Rick Paul

STAFF WRITER

Roughly eighty companies have registered for Caltech’s 2010 Fall Career Fair on October 26. This represents a drastic increase over the fifty-six companies that attended last year’s 2010 Winter Career Fair, as fears of a double dip economic recession have lessened.

“We did some outreach earlier this fall to encourage employers that haven’t previously recruited at Caltech to attend the career fair and we’ve invited some companies who have recruited here in previous years to come back,” said Mandy Casani, the assistant director of the Caltech Career Development Center and head organizer of the career fair. Casani has also drawn from her previous experience of running a career fair at Marshall College, where she served as assistant director of the Development Center and head or director of the Caltech Career Development Center before coming to Caltech.

“The response from recruiters has been outstanding.” According to Casani, ten companies registered after the October 1st deadline. Five companies have been put on the waitlist due to space limitations, due to a change in location from Bechtel Mall to Brown Gym. The move was made to accommodate the library’s request to move conditions and incom-
Whittier defeats Caltech 3-0

By Rick Paul
SPORTS EDITOR

Nahavi Mendoza scored three goals to lead La Verne to a 5-0 victory over Caltech in SCIAC action.

With the win, La Verne improves to 3-5-1 overall and 3-3 in SCIAC play while Caltech moves to 1-6 and 1-5, respectively.

Taylor Hart scored the first goal for La Verne. Mendoza added two and three less than a minute apart. Mario Cisneros kicked in the fourth goal for La Verne in the 77th minute. Mendoza finished off his hat trick with less than four minutes remaining in the match.

La Verne had a 12-3 edge in shots on goal and a 2-1 advantage in corners.

Weekly Scoreboard

October 11, 2010
Men’s Soccer
vs. Soka
L, 3-0 Final

October 9, 2010
Men’s Water Polo
vs. Wash. & Jeff. @ Convergence Tournament
L, 22-17 Final

Men’s Water Polo
vs. Harvard @ Claremont, Calif.
L, 21-2 Final Claremont Convergence

Men’s Soccer
at Occidental
L, 2-1 Final

October 8, 2010
Women’s Volleyball
vs. Cal Lutheran
L, 3-0 Final
The California Tech
Caltech 40-58
Pasadena, CA 91125