Jonas Peters researches chemical transformations for food, fuel, and fertilizer.

Recently, Peters spoke with us about his research, his childhood, and how a stint as a college football player contributed to his career as an academic.

What are your main research interests?

Our group is interested in chemical transformations that are relevant to feeding and fueling the planet. There are two efforts on this campus in artificial photosynthesis that would accomplish the goal of delivering liquid fuels via artificial photosynthesis.

What role does your work play in "fueling the planet"?

Our group is interested in the chemical transformations that are relevant to feeding and fueling the planet. There are two efforts on this campus in artificial photosynthesis that would accomplish the goal of delivering liquid fuels via artificial photosynthesis.

What makes your research unique?

In all of our projects, we try to advance new concepts for catalysis, and to test these concepts. For us, it is the conceptual advance that is most exciting, rather than the longer-term possible applications. But on a day-to-day basis, we are also excited about making cool, fundamentally new types of molecules—one that is just interesting and in front of us—and that we characterize and use them to ask interesting chemistry questions. So it’s fair to say that while catalysis drives the problems we work on, we’re also very interested in making new molecules that push the boundaries of what we know can be made, what we know cannot be made, and why. This has been the essence of chemistry as a discipline for a long time.

What excites you most about your research?

I think what I find most interesting is when my coworkers and I discover fundamentally new molecules, or an unexpected chemical transformation, that represents a whole new set of possibilities for us to think about and explore.

Something that distinguishes me from many people in so many other disciplines is that often chemists create—via the synthesis of new molecules—the problems that they then study. That’s certainly true of my research. You can make molecules that are similar to other things you’ve made, but once in a while a student or a postdoc will come in with something that is fundamentally new and conceptually different, and these moments inspire a ton of ideas that can pave the way for literally years’ worth of interesting work. Probably the most exciting moments for me are when students and postdocs open up brand new territory that sort of gives us past a logjam in thinking and instead swimming in an exciting new current.

Can you tell us a little bit about your background?

I grew up in Chicago. My parents have had a remarkably wide range of jobs through the years, but when I was a kid the most memorable was when we had a small diner in the city. I washed a lot of “glassware” there and helped out in various ways. I grew up in the city’s North Side, went to Chicago Public Schools, and then went to the University of Chicago for college. So I actually didn’t leave the city until I was 22. I played football in high school and for my freshman year in college, and I was really awful.

Ironically though, sports provided a means for me into higher education. I finally applied to the University of Chicago because their football coach contacted me, which in retrospect was incredible, given just how bad at football I really was. Without that encouragement, I wouldn’t have applied there, because I would have assumed that I wouldn’t have been accepted on academic merit. In fact, the dean of admissions there consciously confided to me that I just barely was accepted into their college—just by the skin of my teeth.

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< 100 words about the world this week – topics sorted from good to bad

by The Tech Eds

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$414 million fund by US & UK to help poor vulnerable to climate in Asia

New Jersey rebuilds

13 months after Hurricane Sandy, NJ has repaired most damages

China launches rocket

1st robotic lunar rover (“Jade Rabbit”) for China launched in rocket

Black Friday sees crowds

97 million Americans took advantage of Black Friday deals this year

Workers killed in fire

7 dead in Chinese-owned clothing factory in Italy that caught on fire

Massive pileup in MA

70-car accident in MA due to icy roads resulted in at least 35 injured

NYC train derailed

4 killed, 60+ injured in train derailment caused by speeding in Bronx

Continued on p. 3
Food with Mannion!

Do you like eating food?
How about free food at nice restaurants?
Ever want to tell the world exactly what you think of said food?
The Tech will be beginning a new column to chronicle the foodie experiences of new writers every other week...The Catch: They’ll be going head-to-head with Tom Mannion who will be reviewing the same restaurant. If you have ever thought you were more of a gourmand than our resident master chef, now’s your chance to prove it!

Email us for a spot on the list at tech@caltech.edu

The California Tech

The Tech is published weekly except during vacation and examination periods by the Associated Students of the California Institute of Technology, Inc. The opinions expressed herein are strictly those of the editors of the Tech. Letters and submissions are welcome; e-mail submissions to tech@caltech.edu. All rights reserved. The Tech assumes no responsibility for columns or letters submitted for publication. Letters and submissions are welcome; e-mail submissions to tech@caltech.edu.

Editors-in-Chief:
Jonathan Schor
Stanford Schor

News Editors:
Neera Shah
Nehaly Shah

Photography Editor:
Alex Hsu

Circulation Manager:
Michael Puchnick
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Write articles for the Tech

get paid up to $30

News

The California Tech

2 December, 2013

Last week’s ASCIT Minutes*

*(Since there was no meeting during the break)

Minutes for November 19, 2013. Taken by Catherine Jamshidi
Officers Present: Zach Rivkin, Connor Coley, Malvika Verma, Connie Hsuhe, Michelle Tang, Catherine Jamshidi
Guests: Connor Rosen, Margaret Lee
Call to Order: 9:05pm

President’s Report (Zach):

• In my candidacy statement from April, I advocated for student leadership to take a level headed approach with the administration and focus on increasing student mental health resources. The process has usually been successful, and the most recent and largest accomplishment is an evening hours pilot program. After half a year of civil discussions with Kevin Austin, Leslie Nye, Tom Mannion, Annelia Sargent, John Dubrirt, plus many other invaluable participants, along with a recent hardline passionate Faculty Board presentation, a limited evening hours trial will go into effect until the end of this academic year. This is an incredible step forward for the Caltech safety net and auspiciously points towards a positive shift in relations between students and student affairs. I hope to see further improvements during the next half of ASCIT’s term and in the years ahead. Significant thanks goes to those mentioned above along with the student leadership, the Head UCCs, and especially to the IHC Chair Connor Coley for spending an innumerable number of hours and offering constant support through the entire process.
• Club funding has been completed.
• The ASCIT retreat and midyear reviews occurred. Survey responses were very helpful for framing discussions and supplying appropriate feedback.

Officer’s Reports:

• V.P. of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair: Malvika):
  o Meeting with Provost Online Education Committee
  • Flipped classroom vs. online courses
  • Faculty don’t want to dumb down standards
  • Concrete proposal: CS0
  o The second Student-Faculty Lunch was this past Thursday. We have continued to see a large amount of interest in this program from both students and faculty.
  o The ARC is interested in adding a compliments section to the ARC Concern Box on Donut.
• V.P. of Non-Academic Affairs (IHC Chair: Connor):
  o The IHC is working with Jon Webster and Dining to enter nutrition information of food options. If you’re interested in helping us with data entry (for some money), send me an email. We’ll likely begin around winter break.
  o Invite your professors to your house dinner! It’s a great way to get to know them in a non-academic context.
• Director of Operations (Connie):
  o Remember that you can still register a new club anytime! Apply at clubs.caltech.edu
• Treasurer (Monica):
  o We finished Club Funding and I will be publishing the breakdown of the 2013-2014 budget on Donut.
• Social Director (Michelle):
  o The Ice House comedy show event will likely be made a termly event.
  o Page Interhouse: Daft Punk was this past weekend.
  o The Wallpaper. concert will be Friday, December 6th, at 9PM on Bechtel Mall (just west of Millikan).
  o The Ice House comedy show event will likely be made a termly event.
  o Page Interhouse: Daft Punk was this past weekend.
  o The Wallpaper. concert will be Friday, December 6th, at 9PM on Bechtel Mall (just west of Millikan).
  • There will probably be an after-party (details to follow) with a Snap Yourself! Photo booth.
• Secretary (Cat):
  o I sent out all of the club funding decision emails and tried to provide reasoning for our decisions. If any clubs have any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask!
  o I’m working to schedule ASCIT meetings for 2nd term.
  o Connor Rosen and I have created a follow-up survey to gauge trends in feedback on the student experience. It should take no more than 5 minutes to complete and there will be several Amazon Gift Cards awarded to randomly selected people who responded to the survey.
  Go fill it out!!
  o I sent out all of the club funding decision emails and tried to provide reasoning for our decisions. If any clubs have any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask!
  o I’m working to schedule ASCIT meetings for 2nd term.
  o I’ve posted all of the recent minutes on the Donut Website and have compiled a list of action items to follow-up on for each BoD member.

If anyone has any questions or concerns about a section of the minutes please email the appropriate officer. We are happy to answer any questions.
Meeting Adjourned: 10:53 pm

Meeting Adjourned: 10:53 pm
Hi everyone! This is the Caltech Y Column, designed to inform you about the Y and the opportunities we provide for you. This week, I will inspire your passions by participating in our programs or leading your own.

Upcoming Events:
1. Ice Cream Competition!  
South Houses: Wednesday | December 4th | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Caltech Y

The Caltech Y is hosting a Fosselman’s Ice Cream Competition! Prizes will be sponsored by Tom Mannion! The houses will be competing to create the best flavor of ice cream, and the winner will get their ice cream flavor featured at CDS dinners in addition to $2000 for the house residence director. The second place winner will win $1100, and there will be additional prizes from the Caltech Y.

2. The Caltech Y Science and Policy Series: A Discussion with Professor Susan Hackwood  
Tuesday, Dec 3rd | 12-1:30 p.m. | Avery Library | Lunch is provided, but space is limited | Priority is given to students

Susan Hackwood is a professor of electrical engineering at the University of California, Riverside and the Executive Director of the Center for Science and Technology (CSTT). After naming the electroswetting effect while working at AT&T Bell Labs in the 1980s, she became the founding director of the Bourns College of Engineering and consequently the first woman dean of a US major research university. In addition to her academic research in cellular robotic systems, Dr. Hackwood has continually acted on her strong interest in science policy through initiatives such as the Center for Computational Research and Technology, by chairing AACs committees, and now through heading the CSTT that advises the state of California on all aspects of science and technology from biotechnology to intellectual property.

Please join us for a Q and A discussion with Dr. Hackwood after a brief introduction to her accomplishments and experiences. Please be aware that parking permits are expected to stay for the duration of the event. Lunch is provided.

3. Adventure 101: Winter Sports in Southern California  
Friday | December 6th | 12:00 noon – 5:00 PM

Are you looking for some fun and local winter activities, but think that Southern California only offers summer sports? Think again!

Did you know that there are actually six areas within two hours of campus where you can even see one from campus?

Come find out about different types of winter sports activities here in Southern California.

If you have any questions at all, feel free to contact the Caltech Y at (628) 395-6163 or caltech.y.101@caltech.edu.

Feel free to drop by at one of our weekly meetings at the Caltech Y (505 S. Wilson, next to CEFCU), Mondays at 12:00 noon. Lunch is provided. Go to http://caltech.y.lis.if/ to subscribe to announcement lists for upcoming events.

The Caltech Y Science Policy Series provides an opportunity for students to learn about science policy and how to participate in it. The series will be held monthly and is designed to introduce opportunities and information that can help students expand their research repertoire. The Caltech Y offers many outdoor adventures, organized and led by Caltech students and open to all, from the novice to the seasoned enthusiast. The Y-Outdoors committee is open to any student interested in helping to lead the events. Send questions to: y.caltech@ caltech.edu if you are interested in joining the committee.

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MALVINKA VERMA
ARC Chair

Dear fellow Techers,

Short: Fill out your TQFRs!  
Free to see Long if you have time.

Long: In a recent survey of undergraduates, we were asked “What do students think of teaching at Caltech? What could be done to improve teaching quality at Caltech (if needed)?” Many of you wrote that the quality varies from professor to professor and from TA to TA. We noted the efforts of the Academics and Research Committee (ARC) and Center of Teaching, Learning, and Outreach (CTLO) that have been persistent but not 100% effective. You all agreed that students know how they learn best and believed that agreed that students know how they learn best and believed that students know how they learn best and believed that professors should do change hands from professor to professor; and of course graduate students do not stay forever, so TAs change as well. It was not clear from the comments about a course so the new professor or new head TA can read them and design the course to include student feedback.

We have many outlets for student feedback in our courses—outlets that the professors themselves. For short-term changes in your courses, you should use some or all of these. But, in the long-term, collect and remember all your thoughts for the course and put them in your Teaching Quality Feedback Report (TQFR). Professor John Dabiri, chair of the Faculty Board, was a graduate student at Caltech and is one of the most popular professors here. He lives in Avery as a Faculty in Residence (FIR). Professor Dabiri says, “Aside from my own mid-term questionnaire that I ask the students to complete, the TQFRs are the main tool I use to improve my classes from year to year.” Although feedback comes too late to help the students currently enrolled in the class, it ensures that future classes will benefit from a better course experience.”

Sometimes, courses do change in opposite directions, it’s useful for the students to see one from campus?

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Committee Charge

December 1, 2013

As Chair of the Faculty, I appoint this ad hoc committee to review the policies and procedures that facilitate undergraduate self-governance at Caltech, and to formulate recommendations to make the tradition to be sustained.

Although the charge is inherently broad, I ask that, among the many topics that may be addressed, you specifically formulate a recommendation for a procedural structure for implementation of the Honor Code as it applies to non-academic issues. This structure should respect the role of the undergraduate Conduct Review Committee, the Administration’s mandate to enforce Institute policy, and the Institute’s obligations to adhere to state and federal law.

In instances where procedures currently exist, the committee may choose to simply reaffirm those processes.

Within the context of an overarching governance structure, the committee may wish to address specific issues related to enforcement of Institute policy that have arisen in recent years, e.g. sexual policies, prankings, house parties, access to campus facilities such as the steam tunnels, etc.

I have coordinated to form an ad hoc Faculty Board committee chaired by Professor Paul Asimow (Vice President for Student Affairs) and four other faculty (including an undergraduate alumnus), four student leaders, and four key staff from across campus. My charge to the committee is reprinted below. Feedback for the committee can be sent to the chair asimow@gps.caltech.edu.

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Daytona's eponymous album blends retro and modern styles

With their full-length self-titled debut album released on November 19th, Daytona has entered the music scene as yet another indie band with guitar riffs and airy vocals. All three members played together while living in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and began performing together after again separately moving to Brooklyn, New York in 2011. After putting out their Storm So Long EP in 2012, the band signed to a record label and began recording their first album. Between the EP and the album not much has changed, with the group maintaining just about every aspect of their sound, but presenting it with much higher quality recording, mixing, and balance, with all of their remarkably intricate layers coming through to the listener's ears. The LP is also twice as long (as one should expect), but its 37-minute length can work against it, as the songs start to sound a little too similar by the end.

The album starts off with a heavily delayed clean guitar playing the main theme to opener "The Road" which is quickly joined by a slightly overdriven guitar playing the verse that comes in every now and again, the vocals are always a little bit out of tune, and this emphasis on the human element serves the overall texture of the sound well.

The next song, "New Foundation," is one of my favorites on the album. Critics have called Daytona's sound "Afro-Caribbean," and the reasoning behind that is apparent on this track. Between the beat backing the verse that could be mistaken for Vampire Weekend the marimba fill that comes in every now and again, the backdrop is an acoustic guitar and retro drum part, this demonstrates the other side of Daytona's songwriting, mixing the new with the old, and following a decisive progression throughout the song from the almost joking quite a bit different in tone, with contrasting meters regarding someone the singer loves, and a slower, downtempo instrumental backing. With the occasional acoustic guitar and retro drum part, this showcases all of Daytona's best elements and keeps them short and sweet, building to a bittersweet climax. However, I mentioned before, as the album still has four more tracks, we get into some serious repetition. "Old Friend" sounds like a rehash of "Lighthouse," and while I was excited at first by "Metropolitan" when it started off with a serious groove and took advantage of the human element and even after that, the twilight kept the sky bright until the sun rose again a few hours later. We were able to hike deep into the park till late at night, set up a tent and cook food. Not only did we experience the nature in Seward and Denali, but we also learned about different cultures in the museums. Watching a culture show performed by the natives, I could better experience Alaska culture. I confirmed that the art that the Alaskan people do is much more interesting than what we know.

Daytona will probably be unimpressed by this album due to its reliance on a small amount of songwriting techniques and unbalanced use of repetition to pad song lengths, I feel that Daytona is a band for them not set until 11:30pm, and even after that, the last chapter of the four years at Caltech offers several opportunities to travel or study abroad and I could feel the immensity of Mt. McKinley.

Ultimately, Daytona is a solid first release for Daytona. While a well-established band should be able to create an album with much more variation and experimentation, Daytona sticks to what they're comfortable with, and that's all right. Their blend of retro and modern styles, layered sounds, and surprising depth of room to expand in the future. While veteran fans of similar acts like Vampire Weekend or Best Coast will probably be unimpressed by this album due to its reliance on a small amount of songwriting techniques and unbalanced use of repetition to pad song lengths, I feel that Daytona is a band for them to watch for and to look forward to their future efforts.

Seniors go on a journey to explore Alaska’s nature

As graduating seniors, Chang Sub Kim and I wanted to end the last chapter of the four years at Caltech with a special experience. It was the last summer before heading to graduate schools, and we did not want another research job like SURF (the next 5 years or so will be dedicated to just that) or an internship in the industry. Instead, we wanted to explore the world we have never encountered and go on an adventure. When it was our time to choose the destination, we easily decided on Alaska. We have both had ambitions for the North because of the glaciers, both fairly simple. More than half a minute into the song, the vocals are finally brought in, with a chorus of either two or three voices singing the lyrics in unison at all times. Here Daytona does something unusual of most modern rock bands: the separate vocalists sing every available as a chord, which adds a surprising depth and even if it can be overpowering when compared to three instrumental parts that never stop repeating their riffs. In typical genre fashion, the vocals are always a little bit out of tune, and this emphasis on the human element serves the overall texture of the sound well.

The next song, "New Foundation," is one of my favorites on the album. Critics have called Daytona's sound "Afro-Caribbean," and the reasoning behind that is apparent on this track. Between the beat backing the verse that could be mistaken for Vampire Weekend the marimba fill that comes in every now and again, the vocals are always a little bit out of tune, and this emphasis on the human element serves the overall texture of the sound well.

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Interestingly, the sea was not salty but it leaves me feeling good about Daytonas future as a band.

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Answers to last week’s crossword puzzle from puzzlechoice.com

Caltech Public Events is now hiring student ushers. $15 per hour to work concerts, performances, lectures, films and parties.

No experience needed, no hard labor, flexible schedules.

*Requirements: Caltech student, Positive attitude, Friendly personality

To apply email Adam Jacobo (ajacobo@caltech.edu) or call (626) 395-5907

For info on Caltech Public Events visit: www.caltech.edu/content/public-events
Women’s basketball grabs first win of the season

GoCaltech

After a slow start, the Beavers turned on their offense with a strong post presence in rallying a 73-61 win over Crown College at Occidental on Friday afternoon.

"After a worrisome start to the game, we were able to compose ourselves and get down to business," said head coach Sandra Marbut. "We did a lot of good things tonight led by our post players. We will enjoy this win for a brief moment and carry the momentum into Saturday's game."

After an ominous start, the Beavers grabbed control and found an offensive rhythm. Caltech missed their first eight field goal attempts as Crown jumped out to a 10-0 lead less than four minutes into the game. A three-pointer by Esther Du broke the scoreless drought and began a run of seven unanswered points in spurring the offense.

Caltech continued to chip away at their deficit and took their first 64-61 lead in the half. For the rest of the half the Beavers outscored Crown 34-32 to take a 98-91 halftime edge. Du went 4-for-5 from the floor in the half, including two three-pointers, during her 10-point half.

Crown rallied in the second half and took a 59-57 lead with 14:50 left in the contest. Over the next five-plus minutes the lead changed hands three times with three ties. A three-pointer by Michelle Wong with 9:49 gave the Beavers a 50-48 lead. It was a lead they refused to relinquish but fought to keep.

With 5:25 left in the game, a lay-in by Kate Lewis gave Caltech a 58-56 lead but the Storm got within four points on three occasions down the stretch yet couldn’t get their deficit down to a single possession. The Beavers sealed the win by hitting nine of their final 10 shots from the charity stripe.

Grace Leishman posted her first career double-double with a career high 19 points while corralling 12 rebounds. Fellow post player Lewis also posted a double-double with a 16-point, 16-rebound effort in the second collegiate contest.

Du chipped-in a 14 point, six-rebound, five-assist performance to aid in the winning cause.

Weekly Scoreboard

Women’s Basketball vs. La Sierra
L, 55-63 Final

Women’s Basketball vs. Crown @ Occidental
W, 73-61 Final

Men’s Basketball vs. Whitman
L, 87-73 Final

Women’s Basketball vs. Linfield
L, 85-55 Final

Caltech baseball team hosts local event for community’s youth

GoCaltech

On Saturday, November 18 members of the Caltech baseball team, hosted a unique endeavor involving new baseball technologies while serving a local youth baseball team.

"Being the top technological school in the world we should be doing everything possible to gain exposure to the most cutting edge baseball teaching technology available," second year head coach Matthew Mark said. "In addition, it is always great to support baseball at the community grass roots level."

The Pasadena Elite 14-and-under team coached by Mark Davis took part in the event. A representative from Easton brought their "Hitlab" equipment which is a new swing analysis system that uses radar to focus in on key hitting traits to pair a player to a specific bat that will offer the best chance at success.

Caltech’s season begins on Feb. 9 when they will host Pacifica in a doubleheader beginning at 11 a.m.
Unoriginal Jokes

What did the toy store sign say?

Don’t feed the animals...

They are already stuffed!

Acquired Taste

Why are these Chandler drink dispensers so slow?

For more photos, videos, and archives of previous issues, check out the Tech website!

tech.caltech.edu