Imposters, All of Us

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Contributing Writer

There are a lot of commonalities among students at Caltech. As a small school at the forefront of research, there is a certain level of excellence of its applicants and has the ability to select only those who show it. No one managed to get here without a great deal of passion, intelligence, and determination. The people who come here are used to being at the top, no matter where they were. But Caltech is a whole different environment, many people were used to being the best, and now half of them are below average.

Intelligence and high performance have been part of many students’ identities for as long as they can remember. How many of us were “the Smart One” in high school? To suddenly lose that to not become a core part of what makes someone who they are, and leaves them in a state of crisis. This is why impostor syndrome is described as a condition where one believes, in spite of external evidence and praise, that they are much less competent, intelligent, and deserving than people perceive them as being. Success and respect are not the result of hard work and positive attributes, but rather luck and deception. It’s a crippling thing to live with. Impostor syndrome means living without confidence or self-worth. It’s feeling ashamed by every compliment you’re given because every time someone compliments you it feels like you lied to them. It’s feeling guilty for your successes, feeling like you stole them from someone who actually deserved them.

It’s not surprising to anyone that this is a problem here, but the extent is much greater than most people realize. In my days as a UCC, I spoke to many people about these feelings. It’s a strange thing to have half a dozen people in a week tell you they think they’re the worst in their class. Definitively alone, this can’t be true, but that doesn’t stop many people from feeling that way. See, we have this strange culture at Caltech, where people are willing to express quite openly the struggles they face, but not that they are actually struggling. It’s someone talking about how they’ve been running on 4 hours of sleep a night all term, are taking 51 units, and are totally fine. The irony is in how often people compare themselves to other “successful” people, who, only privately, admit to the same feeling.

So we live in this interesting world where everyone around us seems to have it just as bad or worse, but is cruising along just fine. The sentiments I heard expressed were not just “I feel like I’m barely getting by,” but also came with “and I feel like I’m the only one.” It is this last part which is perhaps the most damaging. It leaves people feeling like they’re weak and incapable of handling their problems and stresses. As if it isn’t bad enough to have to deal with the struggles in our lives, we have a culture that makes us feel bad about feeling bad.

We need to be better about these things, about admitting when we’re overwhelmed, about talking about what we’re all going through, about supporting each other instead of putting each other down, about swallowing pride, letting down the facade, and admitting that we’re drowning. Maybe it doesn’t solve the first set of problems we’re dealing with, but it helps so much to know we’re not alone. Both to not feel like we’re each the only one’s suffering, but also to provide support and commiseration for each other. If we’re going to all have to get through this place, let’s at least do it together.

D.C. Science Policy Trip

ALEX CUI
Page Editor

A group of 6 undergrads and 14 graduate students along with Caltech Y staff went to Washington DC from Dec 13 – 17. D.C. was freezing cold, with record low temperatures, but make no mistake – the city was scrambling to prepare for the one of the most unpredictable administrations in history, and everyone we talked to was trying to prepare for it.

We got the inside look from influential scientists-turned-policy makers, like the director of DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) Arati Prabhakar, the director of the NSF (National Science Foundation) France Córdova, and the director of the National Institute of Deafness and other Communicative Disorders (and previous Fleming President!) James Battey. Some of the funding agencies were prepared to change the way they communicate to Capitol Hill to get the funding they need. Others, like the Assistant Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Kei Koizumi, were concerned about whether or not the Trump administration would take notice of their advice like the Obama administration had. Overall, it was a scene of calm uncertainty. The White House could only do so much to affect science policy in the US. Ultimately, much of the science funding was in the hands of relatively more consistent Congress.

So how do these academics get into the world of policy? It turns out everyone’s story is different. One alumni took a one way bus to Washington DC and knocked on the doors of senators until he got a job. Others, like James Battey, work as PIs in government labs and slowly worked their way up the bureaucracy. Others, like DARPA head Arati Prabhakar, were leaders at universities, who were then recruited into the public sphere. Once you’re in, it’s not easy to stay employed. The election cycle means that many of the science analysts in the OSTP have less than 3 years of experience in their current job, and don’t know where they’ll be employed next until a few months before your current contract ends. Nonetheless, many are confident they’ll find a new position somewhere, and are willing to follow very non-linear career paths.

While Caltech is sometimes considered an overly theoretical space, it’s no coincidence that the heads of the three of the biggest science funding agencies, NSF, DARPA, and ARPA-E, are female graduates from Caltech. Alumni credit their broad education for helping them understand the science behind policy across all fields, but they also credit a desire to make a more human, more direct impact on the world, than what they could do in academia. The role they play is critical, as these agencies generally have the independence from Congress to choose where their funding goes, and drive the direction of scientific innovation. After hearing these stories, many of the Teachers on the trip were convinced that science policy was the path for them. With the greatest challenges in science ahead of us, the need for brilliant, science-literate minds on the Hill will not die down anytime soon.
The Caltech Y Column serves to inform students of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. The list is compiled by Katherine Guo from information given by the Caltech Y and its student leaders.

Founded by students in 1916, the Y was organized to provide extracurricular activities planned and implemented by students as an opportunity to learn leadership skills and discover themselves. The mission of today’s Y remains the same—to provide opportunities that will prepare students to become engaged, responsible citizens of the world. The Y seeks to broaden students’ worldviews, raise social, ethical, and cultural awareness through teamwork, community engagement, academic achievement, and leadership. More information about the Caltech Y and its programs can be found at https://caltechy.org. The office is located at 505 S. Wilson Avenue.

Upcoming Events

   - Wednesday  | February 8th | 12:00 to 1:30 pm | Location to be announced | RSVP
   - RSVP: https://goo.gl/forms/UyTmxx5vKAMaxXos

Michael Nacht served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs (2009-2010), for which he received the Distinguished Public Service Award, the Department’s highest civilian honor. He also served as Assistant Director for Strategic and Eurasian Affairs of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (94-97), during which time he participated in five Presidential summits—four with Russian President Yeltsin and one with Chinese President Jiang Zemin. Nacht currently holds the Thomas and Alison Schneider Chair in Public Policy at U.C. Berkeley and is Chair of the Policy Focus Area for the Nuclear Science and Security Consortium led by the Berkeley Department of Nuclear Engineering. He is the author or co-author of six books and more than eighty articles and book chapters on nuclear weapons policy; regional security issues affecting Russia and China, the Middle East and East Asia; cyber and space policy; counter-terrorism and homeland security; international education; and public management.

The Caltech Y Social Activism Speaker Series Committee is hosting the lunch seminar with Professor Michael Nacht to discuss recent international developments in nuclear weapons policy as a part of a Nuclear Winter Series. As tempers flare and tensions rise across the globe, open dialog on nuclear arms is more important now than ever.

Watch for more programs within the series this winter term. Programs coordinated by the Social Activism Speaker Series were made possible with generous support from the Alumni/Alumnae Fund and the Caltech Y.

2. Hathaway Sycamores
   - Volunteer at Hathaway Sycamores, a Magnet School Science Fair in Glendale.
   - Compensation will be in the form of free lunch on the day(s) of service, networking with other scientists and the joy of having volunteered.
   - We are also open to any donated prizes you think elementary school-age children might want for first, second, third prize and honorary mentions.

RSVP: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw3PUghqlAA

People can reject food, abstain from sex, and control their thirst, but they cannot keep from falling asleep. And yet, we know remarkably little about why we sleep or how sleep is regulated.

Beyond the Y

1. Rev. William Barber, President of the North Carolina NAACP
   - Wednesday  | February 1  | 7:00 pm | Thorne Hall – Occidental College in Eagle Rock | Free
   - On Facebook event page: https://www.facebook.com/events/6438307531014

Rev. Barber is the president of the North Carolina NAACP and leader of the Moral Monday movement, a multi-racial, multi-generational interfaith movement that has led protests at the NC General Assembly around issues of injustice, including voting rights, gun violence, immigration reform, school funding, LGBT rights, the minimum wage and workers’ rights, and others. Hundreds of activists, including Dr. Barber himself, have also engaged in non-violent civil disobedience to expose what the politicians in North Carolina are trying to do in the dark.

The event is sponsored by Occidental College and several student groups and cosponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in LA, the LA Alliance for a New Economy, the LA County Federation of Labor, the Black Worker Center, and LA Voice. Martin Luther King spoke in Thorne Hall in April 1967, 50 years before Rev. Barber’s talk.

Rev. Barber’s speech to the Democratic convention last summer made headlines around the world. If you weren’t able to see it then, here’s a link to that speech: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw3PUghqlAA

2. Science Fair Judges Needed
   - Wednesday 6th - 9th | 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM (Flexible Hours) | Glendale, Ca
   - Volunteer judges are needed for Franklin Magnet School Science Fair in Glendale.
   - Transportation available and we will feed you too! Graduate students preferred but all welcome to apply.
   - The times are flexible and you don’t have to be present for the whole time slot.
   - We are in need of 12 volunteers to judge our students’ projects/submissions. Ideally these volunteers will have a solid background in science and/or currently work in a science-related field. Another preference is that the volunteers not be related to any children at our school to ensure impartiality when awarding prizes.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you or any of your colleagues would be willing to commit to this awesome event that fosters a love of science in our youth. Please email Mary at mbehar@gmail.com immediately if interested: Time is running short. Compensation will be in the form of a free lunch on the day(s) of service, networking with other scientists and the joy of having volunteered.

Vice Provost’s Office Hours

Vice Provost, Chief Diversity Officer, and Professor of English, Cindy Weinstein, offers weekly office hours. This is an opportunity for undergraduate, graduate students, and postdocs to meet and discuss topics pertaining to the Council on Undergraduate Education; Caltech accreditation; the Staff and Faculty Consultation Center; Student-Faculty Programs; the Center for Teaching, Learning and Outreach; the Caltech Diversity Center; and the Libraries. There are four 15-minute appointments available per hour. Please sign up in Parsons-Gates room 104, or call the Vice Provost’s Office at ext. 6339.
To view past survey results, please visit: arc.caltech.edu

and click on "Surveys" in the bottom left.
Join the Meditation Mob!

Tuesdays, 12:00 - 12:50

Want to learn more about mindfulness meditation? It’s a great way to improve your attention and to become more grounded in the present moment.

There’s no religious component. We use secular, evidence-based meditation techniques.

We meet in the small room just off the lounge in Winnett. All students are welcome, from total beginners to more experienced meditators.

Mailing list and MP3 archive: counseling.caltech.edu/students/meditation

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Just some of the lowest lending rates and highest savings rates in the nation... and a state-of-the-art eBranch for easy, convenient online and/or mobile access to your account. We’re the overwhelming choice for financial services among the entire Caltech family. If you haven’t yet joined, call or visit us online or in person today. You belong here.

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Must qualify for CEFCU membership to join. Minimum $5 deposit and one-time $5 membership fee due upon opening any CEFCU account. Federally insured by NCUA.
While the seniors took center stage, sophomore Brent Cahill stole the show with his clutch performance in the game’s final two minutes. Shortly after Al-Rayes fouled out after pacing the Beavers with 11 points and 11 rebounds, Cahill took it upon himself to hit the big shots his team needed to keep themselves in the game. Cahill first drew a foul on Daniel Rosenbaum before following it up with two big free throws. He then drove nearly coast-to-coast on a layup to give the Beavers a two-point lead. After Glenn LeBaron hit two free throws on a jump shot, Cahill hit the game-deciding jumper from about 15 feet out. The shot marked the final two points of a stirring 20-point game for the sophomore.

The Sagehens never scored a basket from the field after 1:41 of game time and were held scoreless for the game’s final 3:59 minutes. Fellow freshman Aaron Ayres took over for the Beavers in the second half and scored nine of the team’s final 11 points.

Cahill’s spectacular showing did not come without a hint of controversy. Minutes following a technical foul called on Al-Rayes, Cahill turned himself a technical foul with about 12 minutes to go. The foul came at a costly time, as Caltech was already mired in a 12-point hole. Al-Rayes and LeBaron each had four fouls and the margin of error began to grow sluggish and smaller. To make matters worse, the Sagehens made all four of the free throws stemming from the technicals, providing them with a little extra confidence to almost complete a comeback in the latter portion of the second half.

“I didn’t want those calls, any of the calls, to affect our mental state,” Eslinger said. “I knew that even though we can always improve in various situations that what was most important was keeping the guys stable and getting them to come back more resilient.”

After holding both LeBaron and Al-Rayes out for much of the second half, Eslinger brought his seniors back into the game with two minutes to play. Though. Both Shadow Don lined up a jump shot, Cahill hit the game-decider from more than 15 feet out. The shot marked the final two points of a stirring 20-point game for the sophomore.

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Counseling Center Groups and Workshops
Winter Term 2017

The counseling center is excited to announce our workshops for the Winter term:

**Workshops**

- **Catalyst**: A 3-week workshop teaching general coping skills
- **Refresh**: A 1-hour workshop teaching how to get better sleep
- **Emotion Lab**: A 1-hour workshop to recognize your emotions better
- **Spark**: A 1-hour workshop to cope with procrastination and work avoidance.

**Groups**

- **Social Confidence**: A 7-week week group for anyone who’d like to be more comfortable and less anxious in social situations. Pre-screening required; see the webpage for more information. Begins 1/23.
- **Mindfully Resilient**: An 8-week group focused on reducing the risk of relapse for depression and anxiety. Pre-screening required; see the webpage for more information. Begins 1/12.

For the full list of workshops, dates, and times, visit: [counseling.caltech.edu](http://counseling.caltech.edu) and follow the link to the new classes and workshops.
2017 CALTECH UNDERGRADUATE WRITING PRIZES

Each year the division of Humanities and Social Sciences awards a number of prizes for undergraduate writing. Consider submitting your work to be recognized and rewarded for your work as a writer.

Submit your writing this year for these prizes:

MARY A. EARL MCKINNEY PRIZE IN LITERATURE
Awarded to the best original poetry and fiction. Submit up to three poems. Fiction should not exceed 12,000 words – one submission.
Prize amount: $500.00/exec category

GORDON MCCLURE MEMORIAL COMMUNICATIONS PRIZE
Awarded to the best academic writing in three categories: English, History and Philosophy.
Prize amount: $500.00/exec category

HALLETT SMITH PRIZE
Awarded to an outstanding essay related to the work of Shakespeare.
Prize amount: $500.00

Copies of last year’s prizewinning writing are stored in CaltechTHESIS, and they can be viewed by following links from this writing center webpage: http://writing.caltech.edu/community/prizes

Submission Guidelines:
Deadline: April 4th, 2017

Only currently enrolled full-time students may submit. Entries should be double-spaced PDFs. Winners will be announced in June, and winners’ names will be in the commencement program. Winning writing will be archived using CODA through the Caltech Library. Email entries to Sini Elvington at elvington@caltech.edu, noting the prize to which you are applying in the email subject and filename.

Crossword

Across
1. Travel through water
5. Large African antelope
8. Journey
12. Giant
14. Lubricant
15. Letting agreement
16. Part of a Roman amphitheater
17. Appropriate
18. Dream state, initially
21. A quick run
24. Tantrum
25. Acidic fruit
28. Harry
31. Baseball glove
32. Mythological Titan
33. Bed linen
34. A flat float
35. Exam by word of mouth
37. Suspiration
39. Door or gate fastener
40. Lawsuit
41. Floating mass of ice
42. Express audibly
43. Homeless cat
44. Counterweight used to obtain net weight
46. Story
47. Set of twenty
50. Lacking hearing

Down
1. Celestial body
2. Finishing line
3. Part of a list or collection
4. Landed estate of a lord
5. Successful scoring attempt
6. Richmond
7. Radical
8. Written matter
9. Complain bitterly
10. Small island
11. Look searchingly
12. Umbilicus
13. Deadly
14. Awry
15. Deadly
16. A drawback not immediately obvious
17. In the past
18. A drawback not immediately obvious
19. Mistake
20. Leg joint
21. Angry dispute
22. Unit of play in squash
23. Dream state, initially
24. Dismissal from office
25. Tantrum
26.酸性(chemical)
27. Painted
28. Acidic fruit
29. Baseball glove
30. Mythological Titan
31. Bed linen
32. Mythological Titan
33. Bed linen
34. A flat float
35. Exam by word of mouth
36. Suspiration
37. Door or gate fastener
38. Ryzen
39. Door or gate fastener
40. Lawsuit
41. Floating mass of ice
42. Express audibly
43. Homeless cat
44. Counterweight used to obtain net weight
45. Be victorious
46. With great loudness (music)
47. Durable aromatic wood
48. Be victorious
49. With great loudness (music)
50. Lacking hearing

Project IDEA.
inspire discover express accept.

Caltech’s creative assignment for your week.

What would you do if you saw a dancing pancake?

What is a crazy idea you have? Tell it to someone. Write down your idea and their reaction.

Write the phone call you wish to have. Format it as a dialogue/script in first-persons.

Ah, how’s it--Me: Bye.

What is something you never want to forget?

Please send all responses to totem@caltech.edu.

Last time: What is something that interests you? Make a playlist with at least eight songs for someone. A collection of music that makes you think of them when you hear the songs, or songs they might like. Send us the song names and who you choose them for. Have you ever given up something? Given up on something? Make a poster or banner of encouragement and hang it up. It could be for someone in particular or for anyone. Use at least 4 different colors and send us a picture.

For more, go to https://www.facebook.com/CaltechTotem.
Dear Anonymous

I am sad and alone

me too

sad but not alone

Answers to current crossword (pg 7)

http://puzzlechoice.com

The California Tech
Caltech 40-58
Pasadena, CA 91125

February 20, 2017

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