

# Caltech Graduate Studies Office

June is a special month for us in the Graduate Studies Office as it marks two important transitions: the official send-off and celebration of our most recent graduates as well as the time in which we start to welcome the new incoming students to Caltech.

The summer before graduate school can be a busy time, so we want to help you stay on top of important information. To that end, this monthly newsletter will prepare you for all the issues you will need to prepare yourself for the start of the academic year in September. We will publish this newsletter monthly and hope you will find it helpful. If there is any additional information we can provide, please feel free to contact us right away at [gradofc@caltech.edu](mailto:gradofc@caltech.edu).

In this newsletter, you will find the following: a welcome from Dean Chan, new policies at Caltech regarding vaccination status, announcement of the New Student Start-Up Loan, information on the Office of Residential Experience, a welcome note from both the Housing Office and International Student Programs (ISP), as well as important dates.

Throughout the summer, we will also be hosting Zoom drop-in hours, so please stop to say hello, connect with your fellow classmates, or get those burning questions answered. Our first Zoom will take place on July 12 (7–9 a.m. PST) followed by July 20 (5–7 p.m. PST) and July 29 (7–9 a.m. PST). A reminder and a Zoom link will be sent by email a few days before the scheduled date. August Zoom drop-in hours will be announced in the July newsletter.

For more information about life at Caltech, lectures and events, and Caltech news, please check out our main website at [www.caltech.edu](http://www.caltech.edu).

We look forward to having you become part of the Caltech community and can't wait for your arrival in Pasadena this fall.

## The Graduate Studies Office Staff

*David Chan*

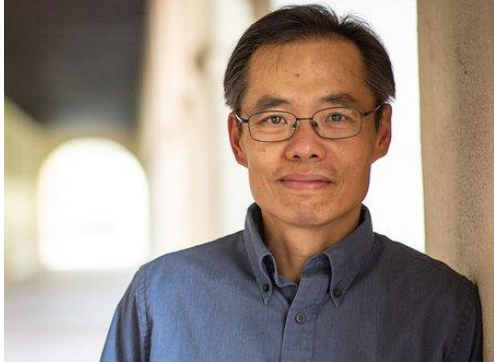
*Natalie Gilmore*

*Claudia Andrade*

*Helen Duong*

*Jacob Dalton*

# Welcome from Dean David Chan



Dear Members of Caltech's Incoming Graduate Class,  
Welcome to Caltech! I am honored to serve as the Dean of Graduate Studies and as a resource for all of you. I have been dean since October 2020, and I am also a professor in the Division of Biology and Biological Engineering. My lab studies mitochondrial dynamics. I have been at Caltech since 2000, and I appreciate the Institute's mission to answer some of the most important questions in science, technology,

engineering, and math. Our focus and small size position us to be the leading center of discovery. This is an exciting place to be, and I am glad you are joining our effort.

As a class, you have so much to be proud of—your accomplishments are stellar and your efforts are impressive. We cannot wait to work with you very soon. Here is some information on your incoming cohort:

- 305 MS and PhD students (203 in science and 102 in engineering)
- 39% Women
- 43% International
- 31% Underrepresented students\*

*\*Underrepresented student categories include all US Citizens or Permanent Residents who self-identified as one or more of the following: American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

I also write to introduce you the Graduate Studies Office. The office is dedicated to ensuring graduate student support and success. Our team is experienced, dedicated, and committed. From admission to graduation, our mission is to support and to promote the personal and academic development of all graduate students. We work closely with faculty and staff within the various options to monitor academic progress, advise students with diverse needs, and administer a wide range of financial support for graduate students including emergency funds, support for graduate student parents, dependent health care reimbursements, and external and internal fellowships.

We encourage students to consult with the Graduate Office when needed, regardless of the issue. The graduate deans and Graduate Office staff also work closely with the [Graduate Student Council](#) and the various [Student Affairs](#) offices.

The office is staffed by a faculty dean, myself; associate dean R. Darrell Peterson, who will be joining Caltech in August 2021; assistant dean Natalie Gilmore; recruitment, outreach, and admissions coordinator Helen Duong; financial analyst Claudia Andrade; and administrative

assistant Jacob Dalton. I encourage you to reach out to any of us during your transition to Caltech and throughout your graduate school career. Our office is located on the second floor of the Center for Student Services. While our office has been working remotely the last 15 months of the pandemic, we expect to be operating in person by early September.

- David Chan [dchan@caltech.edu](mailto:dchan@caltech.edu)
- Natalie Gilmore [ngilmore@caltech.edu](mailto:ngilmore@caltech.edu)
- Claudia Andrade [candrade@caltech.edu](mailto:candrade@caltech.edu)
- Helen Duong [hduong@caltech.edu](mailto:hduong@caltech.edu)
- Jacob Dalton [jdalton@caltech.edu](mailto:jdalton@caltech.edu)

The Institute continues to respond to the pandemic, addressing concerns in the academic, research, and physical environment as they arise. Fall instruction will be in person, and classes are not expected to have a remote option. However, we have developed safe practices for education and research, and have created tools to keep you updated and informed. I expect every graduate student will do what is necessary to care for our community and to stop the spread of this virus. To that end, I have outlined some important information here for you to review and take action.

- The Institute has adopted a vaccine policy that requires all students living in Caltech housing to be vaccinated. Once one or more COVID-19 vaccines have been fully approved by the Food and Drug Administration, COVID-19 immunization will be required of all members of the Caltech community. I have included a link to the policy for your review.
  - [Student Vaccination Policy](#)
- The Institute has also adopted a Student Health and Hygiene policy.
  - [Student Health and Hygiene Policy](#)
- Caltech has developed a website with current information on our policies and plans. Please stay connected and check this website regularly.
  - [Caltech Together—Coronavirus Information: Resources and Support](#)
- The Institute does have travel, isolation, and quarantine space for students who require it. There is a process for accessing this space. Please contact the Housing Office to notify them of your travel plans, so we can guide you on the necessary steps for quarantine.

Lastly, I want to let you know that the Institute will host its 2021 Orientation program for incoming graduate students September 20–22. The program includes a campus-wide convocation, graduate student information, and our annual teaching and learning conference. The Orientation program will consist of both prerecorded sessions, posted online in early September for asynchronous viewing, as well as live, synchronous events that are presented via Zoom or in-person. That schedule will be forthcoming. Finally, we hope to have some in-person opportunities for people to meet and connect. We will provide more information on that when the time nears.

Again, welcome and thank you for joining our community. We look forward to our continued discussions this summer and an opportunity to connect live at Orientation. I hope you enjoy the summer newsletter and learning about the different offices and resources we have highlighted here for you.

## New Student Start-Up Loan

For many students, relocating can incur unexpected costs and often presents a financial burden. To help alleviate this burden, Caltech offers a 0% interest loan of \$2,500 to incoming students. The loan funds will be disbursed through the Bursar's Office starting on Monday, September 20, 2021, and repayment begins in April 2022 over the course of 18 months. New students interested in applying for the loan should complete and submit the [response form](#) no later than **July 19, 2021**. Further instructions will then be sent regarding the loan application documents and the disbursement of funds.

## The Office of Residential Experience



**Welcome, incoming graduate students.** The [Office of Residential Experience](#) (ORE) is one of the many offices dedicated to supporting graduate students, developing a fun graduate student community, and helping you make new

friends and colleagues during your first year.

The ORE group consists of students and staff who live on campus and help with all things related to your experience. We also have a team of professionals who support and facilitate clubs, organizations, activities, and events—all with the hope of making Caltech a special place.

In this newsletter, we would like to introduce you to some of the people you will meet as soon as you arrive on campus. We are also happy to address questions or concerns prior to your arrival.

In graduate housing, there are three Resident Associates (RA), the Catalina Community Associates (CCA) and a Residential Life Coordinator (RLC). The residential staff strive to enhance the living experience of residents by providing opportunities for social interactions, programs that support the multifaceted aspects of graduate life, and serve as a voice for graduate students in the greater Caltech community.

RAs are Caltech graduate students who are here to assist you with adjusting to Caltech and Pasadena, navigating roommate interactions, and serving as a knowledgeable resource of the services Caltech provides.

The CCAs are student volunteers who live in graduate housing and work with the RLC and RAs to provide a voice for resident needs as well as plan social events that help facilitate a vibrant community. If you have event ideas or want to help host events, please email [gradras@caltech.edu](mailto:gradras@caltech.edu).

The RLC, Isabel Peng, is a live-in professional staff member who supports graduate students full time. Isabel oversees the residential experience of graduate students living in Caltech housing and is here if you need support with adjusting to campus life, accessing information about campus resources, or need someone to speak with about housing or personal issues. If you have any questions about the residential experience before you arrive, please email [ipeng@caltech.edu](mailto:ipeng@caltech.edu).

One of the ongoing programs that we offer in ORE is called *What Matters to Me and Why*. In this program, staff, faculty, and other campus professionals share their values, decisions, challenges, and life lessons. There were eight installments of this program and all were interesting and helpful. Attached [here](#) you will find some highlights from this series. We hope you will join us next year for these talks, and we look forward to learning what matters to you and why.

## Housing Office

This is an important time for students to learn more about their housing options and how Caltech's Housing Office supports residents through that process. To that end, we wanted to introduce the team in the Caltech Housing Office.

- Maria Katsas is the director of housing with over 25 years of housing and residential life experience and almost 20 years at Caltech. She works closely with ORE on many aspects of the student experience in our housing.
- Stephanie Berrocal is the graduate housing manager with over 25 years at Caltech. She works on all aspects of graduate and postdoc housing, and also partners with ORE to assist residents with their varying needs.



- Elizabeth De La Torre is the senior housing coordinator with over five years of experience at Caltech. She mainly works with graduate and postdoc leases but assists Stephanie with graduate lottery housing as well.

Please find info on the housing website or reach out to ask for whatever help you need at [housing.caltech.edu/Grads](https://housing.caltech.edu/Grads).



## International Students Programs

International Student Programs (ISP) is ready to assist in advising international students on immigration-related matters such as visa acquisition, employment authorization, extensions of stay, and more. In addition, ISP provides programs that assist international students in adjusting to life in the United States. ISP plans and promotes events that celebrate international education and cultures of the world, addresses cross-cultural adjustment, and provides opportunities for international students to establish a sense of community at Caltech.

ISP associate director Laura Flower Kim was recently featured in a #CaltechTogether post. Check it out here: <https://magazine.caltech.edu/post/socaltech-laura-flower-kim>. If you like Laura’s T-shirt, you’re in luck, because all new international students will receive an ISP “Hello” shirt!

## Calendar and Important Dates

- July 12: Graduate Studies Zoom Drop-in hours (7–9 a.m. PST)
- July 19: Deadline to apply for the New Graduate Student Start-Up Loan
- July 20: Graduate Studies Zoom Drop-in hours (5–7 p.m. PST)
- July 29: Graduate Studies Zoom Drop-in hours (7–9 a.m. PST)
- August 15: Deadline to confirm vaccination status
- September 1: Graduate students begin arriving for fall term; fall health coverage begins
- September 16–17: International Student Orientation
- September 20–21: Graduate Student Orientation
- September 22: Caltech’s annual Teaching and Learning Conference
- September 27: Last day to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research course
- September 27: Start of fall term and first day of classes\*
- October 26: First paycheck for students receiving a stipend through Caltech

\*Fall instruction will be in person, and classes are not expected to have a remote option.

# Contact Us

Website: [www.gradoffice.caltech.edu](http://www.gradoffice.caltech.edu)

Email: [gradofc@caltech.edu](mailto:gradofc@caltech.edu)

Address: 1200 E. California Blvd.

Mail Code 230-87

Pasadena, CA 91125

Hours: Monday–Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.