

# Caltech Graduate Studies

Newsletter #1  
July 18, 2022

Greetings new Caltech graduate students! The summer before graduate school can be a busy time, so to help you stay on top of important information, we have put together a series of newsletters. The newsletters will introduce you to many of Caltech's organizations and resources, provide you with important reminders, and make sure that you have all the necessary tools for a successful beginning to the academic year in September. If there is any information we can provide that is not covered in the newsletter, please feel free to email us at [gradofc@caltech.edu](mailto:gradofc@caltech.edu).

In this first newsletter you will find the following: Welcome from the Dean, New Graduate Student Start-Up (NGSS) loan, CITI research ethics training course, and a brief introduction to the Office of Residential Experience, the Housing Office, and International Student Programs (ISP), as well as Important Dates.

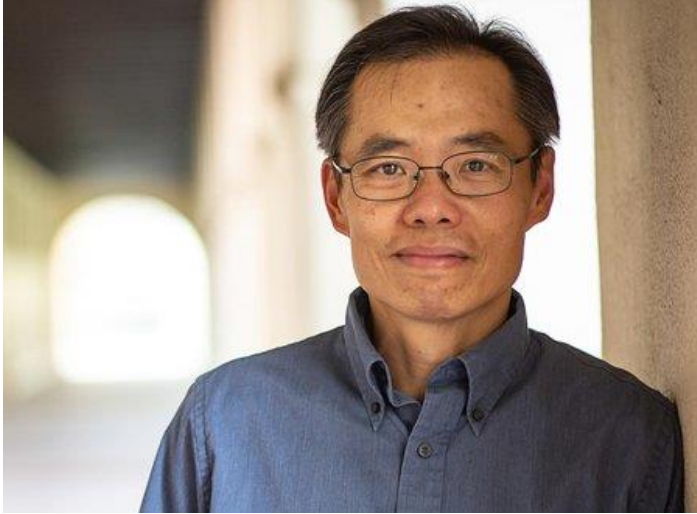
Throughout the summer, we will also be hosting Zoom information sessions with special guests from across the campus who will provide you with additional information and answer any questions you may have. The schedule of these meetings and other events will be posted on our website for new students located at [gradoffice.caltech.edu/incoming](https://gradoffice.caltech.edu/incoming).

For more information about Life at Caltech, Lectures and Events, and Caltech News, please check out our main website at [caltech.edu](https://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.

*David, Darrell, Natalie,  
Claudia & Helen*

## Welcome from Dean David Chan



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 allow us to be a leading center of change, while maintaining a close-knit community. This is an exciting place to be, and I am glad you are joining our effort.

This incoming class has so much to be proud of – your accomplishments are stellar and your efforts are impressive. We are excited to work with you very soon. Here is some information on your incoming cohort:

- 266 MS and PhD students (162 in Science & 104 in Engineering)
- 33% Women
- 48% International
- 25% Underrepresented Minorities within the domestic pool

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, knowledgeable, and committed. From admission to graduation, our mission is to support and promote the personal and academic development of all graduate students. We work closely with faculty

and staff within the various graduate 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, David Chan; associate dean, R. Darrell Peterson; assistant dean, Natalie Gilmore; recruitment, outreach and admissions coordinator, Helen Duong; financial analyst, Claudia Andrade; and an administrative assistant. 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 of Student Services, and is open for visitors Monday to Friday, 9 am – 4 pm, and via email at [gradofc@caltech.edu](mailto:gradofc@caltech.edu).

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- Darrell Peterson [rdpeters@caltech.edu](mailto:rdpeters@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)

Finally, I want to let you know that the Institute is working hard to address the issues caused by the pandemic. Instruction is in-person, and we have developed safe practices for education and research and have created tools to keep you updated and informed. In addition to fully complying with vaccination and boosters, every graduate student participating in in-person classes or living in Caltech residences is required to submit two samples each week for surveillance testing. Our community is committed to doing what is necessary to contain the spread of this virus. To that end, I have outlined some important information here for you to review and take action.

- [Student Vaccination Policy](#)
- [Student Health and Hygiene Policy](#)
- [Testing Requirements](#)
- [Caltech Together – Coronavirus Information: Resources and Support](#)

Lastly, the Institute will host its 2022 Orientation program for incoming graduate students on September 19-21. The program includes a campus-wide convocation, graduate student information sessions and breakout groups, and our annual teaching and learning conference. Some of orientation will be online and available to view in early September, whereas other aspects of the orientation program will be in-person. The schedule will be forthcoming. Finally, there will be several social events for people to meet and connect.

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

Best wishes,



David Chan

Dean of Graduate Studies; Professor of Biology

## New Graduate 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 \$3,000 to incoming students. The loan funds will be disbursed through the Bursar's Office starting on Monday, September 19, 2022, and repayment begins in April 2023 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 18, 2022**. Further instructions will then be sent regarding the loan application documents and the disbursement of funds.

# CITI Research Ethics Training Course

Training in Responsible Conduct of Research is required of all students. You can complete this requirement online through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program course. This can be done by logging on to [Access.Caltech](https://access.caltech.edu) using your Caltech username and UID, and following the link "Research Ethics Education (CITI)", and then under Main Menu/My Courses add the course titled "Required RCR Training for Students and Postdocs". The course takes about an hour to complete and the results are automatically transmitted to Caltech. You are only required to complete this training once during your graduate program. You are asked to complete the training module no later than the start of the fall term (September 27, 2022).

## Office of Residential Experience (ORE)



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.

Our team 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 offer 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 right away when you arrive. We are also happy to help with questions or concerns you have prior to coming to campus.

In graduate housing, there are 3 Resident Associates (RA), the Catalina Community Associates (CCA) and a Residential Life Coordinator (RLC); all whose purpose is 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 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 serves graduate students full-time. The RLC oversees the residential experience of graduate students living in Caltech housing and is here if you need support with adjusting to campus life, providing 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 professionals all introduced us to their values, decisions, challenges, and life lessons. There were 8 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.

# Caltech Housing Office



This is an important time for students to learn more about their Housing options and the office that supports these decisions. To that end, we wanted to introduce the team in the Caltech Housing Office that is here to support you now and after you arrive.

- 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 5 years of experience at Caltech. She mainly works with graduate and postdoc leases, but assists Stephanie with graduate lottery housing as well.
- Maria Katsas is the Director of Housing with over 25 years of Housing and Residential Life experience and 20 years at Caltech. She works closely with ORE on many aspects of the student experience in our housing.

Please find additional information on their website [housing.caltech.edu/Grads](https://housing.caltech.edu/Grads).

# International Student Programs (ISP)

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, address cross-cultural adjustment, and provide opportunities for international students to establish a sense of community at Caltech. ISP Associate Director, Laura Flower Kim, was featured in a #CaltechTogether post. Check it out here: [magazine.caltech.edu/post/socaltech-laura-flower-kim](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"!



## Important Dates

- July 15: Deadline to confirm vaccination status and submit health forms
- July 18: Deadline to apply for the New Graduate Student Start-Up Loan
- August 15: Deadline for forms (Student Patent and Computer Software Agreement, Multimedia Release, W-4). See [gradoffice.caltech.edu/incoming](https://gradoffice.caltech.edu/incoming) for copies of the forms and where to submit them.



- September 1: Graduate students begin arriving for Fall term; Fall health coverage begins
- September 15-17: iBegin@Caltech - International Student Orientation
- September 19-21: Graduate Student Orientation
- September 19: New Graduate Student Start-Up loan distribution begins
- September 21: Caltech's Annual Teaching and Learning Conference
- September 23: Complete viewing of online Orientation modules
- September 27: Last date to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research course
- September 27: Start of Fall term and first day of classes
- October 14: Add Day - Last day to add classes for fall term
- October 26: First paycheck for students receiving a stipend through Caltech

## Contact Us

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

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

Address: 1200 E. California Blvd., MC 230-87, Pasadena, CA 91106

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