

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE TRIP

Student-Faculty Conference

April 6, 2009

The Plan



- Learn about ourselves
 - ▣ What are our shortcomings?
- Learn about other schools
 - ▣ How do schools with similar problems deal with them?
- Give recommendations based on findings
 - ▣ How can we adopt and modify other schools' methods to fit Caltech?

The Preparations



- Interview head of Caltech student service departments to learn more about Caltech
- Compile a list of things each Trip member wants to focus on
- Research what to look at for each school

The Trip



- Harvard – similar in academic standards
- MIT – similar in academic standards, tech school
- Olin – tech school, small size
- Williams – small size, secluded location
- Yale – similar in academic standards
- Princeton – similar in academic standards
- Swarthmore – small size
- Haverford – small size, strict honor code

Areas of Recommendations

- ❑ The House system
- ❑ North Houses reconstruction
- ❑ Student support networks
- ❑ Social life and alcohol
- ❑ Alumni relations and development
- ❑ Academics
- ❑ Student self-governance



Recommendations – the House System



- ❑ 4-year housing is a strength of many schools, Caltech included
- ❑ Randomized housing assignments would be inappropriate to Caltech
- ❑ Caltech should not have Freshmen-only housing, as it undermines one of the fundamental benefits of the House System

Recommendations – New North Houses



- ❑ Swing houses during construction of new buildings
- ❑ More rooms to accommodate more on-campus living
- ❑ Mix of singles, doubles, and suites
- ❑ Lounges and kitchens in central locations, easily accessible
- ❑ Kitchens with enough space for a table and chairs and possibly a couch
- ❑ Smaller, rectangular courtyards
- ❑ Roof decks

Recommendations – Support Networks



□ Health and Counseling

- Health Center should retain its current operating hours
- Less wait time for appointments with outside experts
 - Orthopedic doctors, dermatologists, etc
- Counseling Center should be better advertised
 - Health Ads should be more pro-active rather than purely reactive

□ Support Network

- Clearly define the basic duties of the UCC across Houses
- More academic guidance and counseling
 - Princeton's Half-time Retreat

Recommendations – Social Life



- Promote inter-college interactions with neighboring schools
- Move Rotation activities to one week earlier so as to not overlap with classes
- Student bartending for registered parties rather than trained bartenders

Recommendations – Alumni Relations



- Administration should encourage development of the recently created House endowments
- Close communications between Campus Life and Alumni Affairs
 - ▣ Regular meetings between Campus Life, Alumni Affairs, and student government
 - ▣ Keep alumni updated on undergraduate activities
- New alumni should be encouraged to donate soon after graduation
 - ▣ Alumni more likely to donate if their friends who graduated right before them also donated

Recommendations – Academics (1 / 2)



- Institute an incentive system to increase TQFR response rate
- Set standards for teaching quality and consequences for poor teaching
- Curriculum for first two years should allow for more flexibility and exploration

Recommendations – Academics (2/2)



- Advising quality should be evaluated
- Expectations of advisors and advisees should be clarified
- Struggling students should be monitored to allow for preemptive/preventative action
- Introduce more classes that encourage development of communication skills

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Questions?

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