To all members of the Caltech community,

Since 2001, the Caltech Postdoc Association (CPA) has served the professional and social needs of the CIT and JPL postdoctoral communities. This report details the activities and finances of the CPA for fiscal year 2008-2009. This report also outlines future programming possibilities for the next year and describes the budgets required to achieve these programming goals.

The CPA fills a unique niche at the Institute. While postdoctoral scholars at CIT and JPL benefit from working with many of the world’s most prolific faculty, several key areas involving professional and personal development have historically been underrepresented. Along with providing a strong voice advocating for positive change, the CPA offers postdocs a range of programming to supplement their research agendas and provide opportunities to build synergistic mutual support networks. By working closely with the administration, and important campus agencies (e.g. Human Resources and the Career Development Center), the CPA has made significant progress in bettering the postdoctoral experience at the Institute. Our programming includes after lab social hours, family events, professional development seminars and workshops, and alumni networking events. We also poll the needs of the postdoc community through online surveys.

As noted within this report, our Career and Social oriented programming continues to grow, including more events reaching out to a wider campus population. Over the past year we have partnered with the Graduate Student Council (GSC), the Career Development Center (CDC) and the Caltech Alumni Association (CAA) to co-sponsor programs of mutual interest. We have also organized regional programming with the Postdoc Associations at UCLA, USC, and the City of Hope. These on and off campus partnerships, which will continue over the next year, allow us to increase our programming while sharing costs. The programming described in this report builds on the CPA’s strong tradition of community by bringing together and improving the Caltech experience for postdocs from all divisions.

On behalf of the CPA, I thank the many faculty, administrators, and staff who support our efforts. I also thank the Office of the Provost for financial and logistical support. Indeed, all of our programming, activities, and events are a direct result of the shared vision between the CPA and Provost. Finally, the postdocs who volunteer and serve the CPA and their community deserve extraordinary praise for their work. With your continued support, we look forward to another year of postdoc oriented programming.

Best regards,

Chris Gandhi, CPA Chair 2008-09
I. Mission statement and membership

The Caltech Postdoctoral Association seeks to foster a sense of community, provide resources for career and personal development, and provide a framework for representation on campus and in the local community for postdoctoral scholars from all departments of the Institute.

All CIT, JPL, and affiliate postdocs are considered members of the CPA and as such are welcome to attend or organize CPA sponsored events. The CPA is an all-volunteer organization. We do not charge dues or maintain a membership roll, instead relying on a list of postdocs provided by HR to communicate with our membership. The CPA is governed by an Executive Board, which is composed of the Chairpersons of our several standing committees as well as a Treasurer and Board Chair.

Members of the CPA Board and Committees (outgoing)

Chris Gandhi, Executive Board Chair, Advocacy Committee Chair

Matthew Johnson, Treasurer

Lindsay Bremner, Social Committee Chair

Social committee members:
Bahar Bingol
Bin Zhuang
Katherine Fishwick
Limei Zhang
Ladan Lynn Foose
Nick Chapman
Robert Koenig
Anthony Sladen
Xoana Troncoso
Kunio Sayanagi
Joris Vankerschaver, Career Committee Chair (starting 12/08)

Steffen Brinckmann, Career Committee Chair (10/08 –12/08)

Kunio Sayanagi, Membership and Communications Chair

Ornah Becker, Ex Officio (Ombudsperson)

Yvonne Banzali, Ex Officio (CDC)

Members of the CPA Board and Committees (incoming)

Kunio Sayanagi, Executive Board Chair and Advocacy Committee Chair

Matthew Johnson, Treasurer

Kenta Asahina, Social Committee Co-Chair

Fokko van de Bult, Social Committee Co-Chair

Katherine Fishwick, Career Committee Chair

Xoana Troncoso, Membership and Communications Chair
II. Committee Reports

CPA Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy committee improves postdoc quality of life by working toward positive change within the Institute. This past year Advocacy focused on issues identified as important to postdocs as reported through the CPA postdoc survey.

Advocacy has worked with the Caltech administration to address issues in the areas of salary, benefits, visa renewals, and housing. At the request of Professor Campbell, Advocacy spoke before the Faculty Board in early 2008 regarding the postdoc experience at Caltech. Follow up meetings were held with HR and the Office of the Provost to further discuss postdoc issues. We’ve maintained an active dialogue with Human Resources whom we meet with once a month. In 2009, in consultation with the CPA, HR revamped their postdoc literature, orientation, and website to better serve postdoc needs. We’ve also strengthened our relationship with the Ombudspersons Office, the Career and Development Center, the Staff and Faculty Consultation Center, and the Caltech Alumni Association. However, due to the loss of the Ombuds Office and reorganization of the CDC, we no longer actively liaise with those offices. Our priority for the upcoming year is to engage with the CDC and assess the likelihood of continuing to program with them and to seek a replacement capacity to fill the hole left by the closure of the Ombuds Office in conflict resolution, where needed.

Over the past year Advocacy has continued to compile quantitative data on the Caltech postdoc experience, and we are thankful for HR’s support, access to their data, and their analysis of postdoc demographics. In 2008-2009 we investigated the creation of a postdoc exit survey. We initially planned to jointly administer the survey with HR and CDC; however, those plans were put on hold indefinitely due to the campus reorganization. Our plans to administer another campus-wide postdoc survey were also put on hold as the infrastructure and accounts to host the survey were housed within CDC. We are investigating conducting a survey solely with CPA resources. Based on FY06-FY08, Advocacy anticipates that the survey design, implementation, and analysis will total approximately $1000.

CPA Career Development Committee

The CPA Career Development Committee continues to offer diverse programming to support the career-related goals of Caltech postdocs. We are pleased to report that our events have experienced significant participation not only by postdocs, but also from graduate students and research staff.

Our events fall into three categories: (1) successful job searching, including academic, industrial,
and non-traditional careers, (2) professional development, such as grant writing, negotiation, or public speaking, and (3) personal development, including work-life balance. These events range from informal brown bag lunch workshops to formal workshops and seminars.

This year, the CPA held 5 career events. The first was a day-long workshop on Project Management led by Franklin Covey focusing on developing management skills applicable to the lab. We hosted Jean-Luc Doumont at Caltech for two events this year. The first event focused on Graphing quantitative data followed by a daylong workshop on effective teaching methods. The second event was a talk on structuring scientific papers. The expenses from the second visit were shared with other universities in the area. We had two events focusing on careers outside of academia: a talk by Toby Friedman on career opportunities in the life sciences and a panel on science journalism made up of authors and journalists working for a variety of media outlets.

Most of our programs occur on a regular schedule. For example, the Career Conference, Forum, and Interviewing Panel are yearly events. In addition to these regular events, for FY10 we plan on holding a grant writing workshop, additional scientific writing and communication seminars, and a project/time management seminar.

Due to a turn-over in the board members, and the re-structuring of the CDC, this year’s programming was sparser than anticipated. Using last year’s expenses as a baseline, and accounting for an increase in programming as compared with this year, we will require approximately $11,000 for fiscal year 2009-2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project management seminar</td>
<td>$2667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphing quantitative data and Teaching is not learning” workshop</td>
<td>$3459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuring your scientific paper</td>
<td>$1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career opportunities in the life sciences</td>
<td>$885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Journalism panel</td>
<td>$65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,578</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Table 1. Career Expenses 2008-2009
CPA Social Committee

The Social Committee organizes events for postdocs and their families. We provide a framework for postdocs to

- Adjust to life at Caltech
- Meet other postdocs outside the work/lab environment
- Promote a healthy sense of community at the Institute

With these goals in mind, we host social events open to the postdoc and larger Caltech communities. Some highlights of the past year our outlined below.

CPA Social Hours

We continue to hold Social Hours on the first Friday evening of the month at the Recreation Rooms of the Catalina student apartments. We invite postdocs from all divisions to join us for a casual evening of food, drinks, and occasionally live music. Social Hours provide a great way to begin the weekend and provide an opportunity for postdocs to interact with each other outside of their labs. When advertising Social Hour we encourage postdocs to bring along lab mates who are new to Caltech. Unfortunately, the cost of Social Hour continues to increase due to rising food costs. To lower our costs we now buy food at local grocery stores or have delivery pizza as opposed to catering the event as we have in the past. CPA Social Hour continues to be one of a few ongoing campus wide events where postdocs from all the divisions can meet each other in a social setting.

Off-campus events

We organize a wide variety of outings to free and ticketed events across the LA area, including trips to Shakespeare in the Park, the Disney Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, the Dodgers, the ballet and a whale-watching excursion. The CPA partially subsidizes ticket costs, works to obtain group or other discounts wherever possible, purchases the tickets upfront, and arranges public transport or carpooling for anyone interested in participating. We have also hosted the Feuerzangenbowle holiday event, been bowling, watched “The Big Bang Theory” filming, picnicked on Echo Mountain, and visited Descanso Gardens, amongst other trips. Partnering with the City of Hope and USC postdoc associations, we held a gathering at the Yard House for National Postdoc Appreciation Day, providing a venue for postdocs at various institutions to connect and network.
Annual CPA Barbecue

Held on September 20 in Tournament Park our annual barbecue was again a great success. Approximately 140 postdocs and their families attended this year (210 people in total). The barbecue was catered by Bar-B-Que Express, with the CPA providing supplementary snacks and drinks. Children were entertained this year by a live magician, a clown, several games, and two structurally non-compromised piñatas. We also held a raffle, with prizes donated by several local businesses (including Cherry On Top, Hamlet, and Tazza Bianca) and a Roomba vacuum cleaning robot as the grand prize.

A summary of our expenses follows.

Table 2. Social Expenses 2008-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Social Hours</td>
<td>$3,465</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feuerzangenbowle holiday event</td>
<td>$518</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA/GSC family barbeque</td>
<td>$146</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA Bowling night</td>
<td>$104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus events: Descanso Gardens, Hollywood bowl, Disney Hall,</td>
<td>$734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romeo and Julliet play, Seafarers play</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon Festival*</td>
<td>$300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postdoc appreciation day happy hour with USC and COH</td>
<td>$250</td>
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<td>Dodgers night</td>
<td>$158</td>
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<td>Annual BBQ</td>
<td>$4,758</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carpool gift certificates and supplies</td>
<td>$405</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,837</strong></td>
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Using last year’s expenses as a baseline and considering these estimates of future costs, we will require approximately $11,000 to cover our programming for fiscal year 2009-2010.
CPA External Affairs and Outreach

The CPA maintains active external affairs and outreach components which increase our visibility and communication with on and off campus organizations involved in postdoc related issues. External affairs represents the CPA in the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA), the Caltech Alumni Association (CAA) where we serve on their programming committee, and is an affiliate member of the University of California Council of Postdoctoral Scholars (UC-CPS) serving in an advisory capacity. External affairs also liaises with HR and other campus organizations such as the CDC. This year, external affairs and outreach, sent a representative to the NPA meeting in San Antonio, held a backyard cook-off BBQ with the CAA featuring Prof. Ponzy Lu, and organized a series of monthly round table lunches with HR, Staff and Faculty Consultation, the Ombuds Office, and the CDC. Unfortunately, our current relationship with the CDC is undefined, but we would like to work with their office again.

CPA Organization and Logistics

The CPA has undergone several organizational changes over the past year. Most notable was the near simultaneous turnover of our outgoing Chair and several key committee members. We have also added a new Communication and Membership Committee Chair to enhance our visibility in the Caltech postdoc community. Throughout these organizational changes, continue to build continuity within the organization through our online depository of important documents, financial statements, and CPA presentations. Also, thanks to the help of the Office of the Provost, we have secured an on campus storage facility available. The storage facility has greatly simplified the logistics of organizing social and career events.

We have also looked into self-administering our website. During the 2008-2009 academic year, our website (cpa.caltech.edu) underwent a major redesign. In the past, our web presence was mostly static with only a few revisions. Our new website takes advantage of a new hosting service from IMSS which allow us to easily update the content of our website, minimizing the man hours and costs associated with maintenance of our current site, and allowing the website to act as an effective repository of up to date information relevant to postdocs. We’ve also initiated a Facebook presence and already have over 150 members.

Our brand new CPA website cost $180 for the first year to cover the site hosting expenses.

In addition to website maintenance we have costs associated with our round robin meetings, recruiting, liaisons with external postdoc associations and other incidental costs. For FY 2009-2010, we request $4000.00 for maintenance and an update to the site that will contain additional information for new postdocs.
Report from the Treasurer

For Fiscal Year 2008-2009, we are grateful for the $26,000 contributed by the Office of the Provost. A breakdown of our spending by category is tabulated below. In the coming year, we plan to expand the number of career events organized by the CPA. We also anticipate that our organizational expenses will be larger than they have been historically due to our increased interaction with other campus entities such as HR. However, for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 we anticipate that the present level of funding will allow us to maintain our programs at current levels.

Cash flow activity for 2008-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Office of the Provost</td>
<td>$26,000</td>
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<td>Project # PROV.PDA Award # OAIC.000001</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>$8,578</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>$10,837</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>$3,580</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Caltech Postdoctoral Association Budget Request Fiscal Year 2009-2010

Career $11,000

Social $11,000

Organization $4000

Total funding request $26,000