PMA Grad Student Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2018

Committee members in attendance
Physics: Alex Dalzell, Eric Morgan, Matt Orr, Ashay Patel, Rajashik Tarafder, Yanjun Xu
Math: Angus Gruen, Tamir Hemo, Neeraka Kulkarni, Luciana Xiao
Astrophysics: Dillon Dong, Anna Ho

Committee members not in attendance
Physics: Shreya Anand
Math: Forte Shinko
Astrophysics: Mia de los Reyes

Meeting led by Sofie Leon. Mika Walton also in attendance.

Introduction - Sofie
This is the first meeting of the PMA Grad Student Advisory Board (SAB) for the 2018-2019 academic year. The purpose of the student advisory board is to give graduate a clear channel to have their voice heard in the division. The committee will meet approximately every 4-6 weeks to discuss issues relevant to the student experience and ideas for new or improved programming in the division. The committee will meet with the division chair 1-2 times per year.

Highlights of outcomes from last year’s SAB - Sofie
- Piloted candidacy info session in physics and math, to continue in 2018-2019
- Introduced a few events including
  - Diverse careers panel with PMA PhD alumni
  - PMA Talk Swap
- Input on prospective visits
- Input on division-student communication (website, newsletter, etc)
- Help with PMA NASA/NSF Title IX Audit visit

Goals for the Winter-Summer 2019 – proposed by Sofie
- 2 alumni/professional development events (e.g. careers panel, CV/resume or personal website workshop)
- 2 division wide social events (e.g. talk swap, weekend trip)
- Continue candidacy into sessions and expand to astrophysics
- Improve website for current student audience and forums for overall student communication

Open discussion on ideas for programming
- Student-faculty relations
  - Resources for students related to advisor issues
  - Introduce an event on professional interaction with advisor, how to deal with issues that come up
- Role of the Thesis Advisory Committee
Questions about the role of the committee, how do students interact, what is the committee supposed to do?
Address these through an event? Or email/website

- Division-wide town hall
  - In collaboration with the GSC, several members of the SAB are also GSC members
  - Townhall tentatively scheduled for January 22nd with pre-survey to be issued to all PMA grad students before winter break
  - Details to come from GSC/SAB members

- Mentorship programs
  - Bring back peer mentorship program in physics and math, already exists in astro
  - Start with an event/mixer like was done in 2016, mentors/mentees submit their preferences after the event, pairing is sent via email
  - Make sure there is a clear way to switch mentor/mentee later in the year
  - Especially important for incoming G1s, could make this part of orientation week

- Prospective visits
  - Differing opinions on the value of student panels vs. 1:1 discussion with current students
  - Caltech does not have a presence on sites like gradschoolshopper.com, which may be more heavily used by international applicants
  - Website is severely lacking admissions information, difficult to navigate
  - Research categories are buried and difficult for students to identify the type of work done at Caltech and by which professors
  - Add survey for students who accept Caltech’s offer for feedback on the prospective visit

Next steps
- PMA Town Hall coming in January, stay tuned for details and survey from GSC/SAB members
- Prioritize goals and come up with a proposed programming for 2018-19, Sofie to lead with input from SAB via email
- Distribute plan to PMA grads via email and website