

PMA Undergraduate Student Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

13th March 2020

In attendance:

- **Physics:** Morgaine Mandigo-Stoba, Shu Fay Ung, Nathan Suri
- **Mathematics:** Sara Fish, Arushi Gupta, Aru Mukherjea, Allison Wang
- Jason Alicea (Physics Option Rep), Lynne Hillenbrand (Astronomy Option Rep)
- Nam Ung, Freddy Mora

Remote instruction and plans for spring term

- Lab courses
 - teach.caltech.edu has some ideas, such as identifying learning outcomes and trying to satisfy those without a physical lab setup
 - Task forces exist for labs, large lecture classes
- Piazza for every class
 - Platform allows discussion between instructors and students, and among students, as well as uploading course resources and announcements
 - Concerns from Ma department over its misuse in the past
 - Can be mitigated using the “Anonymous to classmates but not instructors” feature
- Facilitating collaboration
 - List of other students in the class should be provided to all students in each class
 - Collaboration policy should be very clear to discourage honor code violations
 - Possibly ask the BOC to send out a note on this
 - Tools that could be used: Messenger, email, online whiteboards, Overleaf, etc
- Senior Thesis
 - Major concern, as close to half the seniors in Ph need to complete this to graduate, and it is difficult to conduct original experimental research remotely
 - Provost has promised that no one will be prevented from graduating
 - Possibility of theses written based only on the first two terms of work
 - Option reps can contact people to discuss individual situations
- Lectures should be recorded so as not to disadvantage those in different timezones
 - Ideally, or if the class allows, lecture notes or a textbook should also be provided
- Logistics of submitting add/drop/conflict cards need to be worked out
 - Set up an online system, or just use emails
- Possible cancellation of non-lab courses
 - Won't happen unless it can be helped, teach.caltech.edu will have the most up-to-date information
- Deadlines and late policies should be made much more flexible to allow for home situations
- Ideas floated
 - Move everything to P/F
 - Give everyone 9 free units to fulfil graduation requirements
- Plans for PE classes?
- Everyone needs to set up Caltech VPN, or Caltech needs to make resources accessible everywhere
- Office Hours
 - Instructors or TAs can set up dedicated times to send emails, or host OH through

videoconferencing or Piazza

- Need a (possibly central to PMA) way to submit course feedback throughout the term
- Research
 - Termttime research for credit will be difficult for labwork but still possible for e.g. Math or Astronomy
 - Unclear what will happen to SURFs
- Grading
 - Implementing platforms like Gradescope will be useful
 - Accountability required to ensure TAs grade in a timely fashion
 - TAs could have access to possible sources of plagiarism (e.g. Stack Exchange) to check for honor code violations

Action items

- Send out an update on the mission statement (Nathan)
- Send list of ideas from last week's meeting to the Division Chair/EOs