



Office of Student Experience  
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Dear Incoming Students:

I hope everyone is having a great summer! My name is Vanessa Tejada and I am the Director of Residential Experience in the Office of Student Experience (OSE). I work alongside the 2024-25 Interhouse Committee (IHC) to organize Rotation. On behalf of the OSE and IHC, welcome to Caltech!

The IHC is made up of the president and/or chancellor from each House as well as the chair and the secretary. The IHC helps manage Caltech's process for new students to obtain House membership known as Rotation. Together, IHC communicates information, coordinates activities and events, and ensures that everything is running smoothly for the Houses and the new students during this process. Throughout Rotation, the IHC and OSE will be a resource to you and will support you as you make decisions about the house system, housing, and membership options.

**Rotation takes place this year from September 25<sup>th</sup>- October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.** Rotation consists of scheduled meals and events that help you get to know the houses as well as the house system. It is a completely voluntary process, and you may participate at any level that works best for you. Some people attend everything, others only attend some of the events. Whatever your preference may be, we invite and encourage you to participate to a degree that feels right for you.

There's a good chance you've heard a little bit about Rotation, but I realize that you may have questions about the process. My hope is that the rest of this email will address as many of the nitty-gritty details of Rotation as best as possible. If I miss any points, you are more than welcome to reach out to me for more information. I have listed more information about how to contact me and others at Caltech under the resources question at the end of this letter.

Rotation can be one of the most special aspects of your first year at Caltech. The more you understand the process, the easier it is to manage. With that in mind, the IHC and OSE has created this FAQ to help guide your understanding and clarify how rotation works. The IHC will review and expand upon this information during an Orientation session in September. Hopefully, the following will help you get started:

### **QUESTION 1: WHAT IS ROTATION?**

Rotation is the process by which new undergrads get to visit houses, meet new people, and make decisions about their housing and house membership.



## **QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE HOUSES?**

The Houses are eight separate, co-ed residential communities. All the houses are equipped with double occupancy bedrooms, bathrooms/showers, kitchenettes, laundry facilities and common spaces. Some Houses have single occupancy rooms (but not all), and they are not guaranteed. The Houses provide much more than a place to live. The “Houses” are communities that cultivate social connections and a family-like environment. Each House has unique traditions and activities, and over time each House has developed its own personality. The eight Houses include: Avery, Blacker, Dabney, Fleming, Lloyd, Page, Ricketts, and Venerable.

## **QUESTIONS 3: WHAT IS THE BECHTEL RESIDENCE?**

The Bechtel Residence is not a House, but it does provide housing for our entering students. Bechtel has suite living which means students enjoy a single bedroom and will share a bathroom, living room, dining area and kitchenette with others in the suite. Some entering students have already opted to live in Bechtel for their first year, (a process that took place over the summer), and you will be given the option to pick into Bechtel during rotation. Bechtel students are eligible for a full membership in a House, if they choose.

## **QUESTION 4: HOW DOES ROTATION WORK?**

All new students begin by moving into temporary housing within the various Houses/residencies for their first two weeks at Caltech during Orientation and Rotation. Rotation begins Wednesday, September 25th. Then, each day of Rotation students can visit Houses at an assigned dinner (more on that later), and at some point, during Rotation, each House will host some type of activity/event that is open to everyone. These events are a blast and are a fantastic way to see more of a House’s personality! In addition to these opportunities, students will also have “free dinners” where they may go to whichever House they prefer, and there will be dessert hours where students may mingle amongst the Houses. All events are optional. Our primary goal is to use Rotation as a way for each student to find a community on campus where they feel welcome.

## **QUESTION 5: WHAT IS A HOUSE “DINNER”?**

During the school year, Houses regularly have dinners in their dining hall. During Rotation, these dinners are served “family-style” by student waiters who help the dining process go smoothly. These dinners take on different traditions and games and are a great way to become familiar with the personalities of the people and the culture of that community.

The food served comes from “open kitchen”, one of the aspects of the Caltech dining plan that is no additional charge. There are a variety of options that are considerate of dietary restrictions and limitations, and if needed, Caltech Dining Services can prepare special meals in advance upon request.

To ensure a quality experience for everyone, the IHC tries to evenly distribute new students across the House dinners by assigning them a dinner schedule. Hence each student will



have an assigned dinner at each House to give everyone equal exposure to, and opportunity to interact with, each of the Houses. These assignments/schedules will be available once you arrive to campus prior to the start of Rotation. Dinners are casual, laid-back and no-fuss, so students are encouraged to wear whatever they're comfortable with!

All dinners are optional, and if you choose not to go to dinner, there will be other food options available on campus.

### **QUESTION 6: WHERE WILL I LIVE PRIOR DURING ORIENTATION/ROTATION?**

For your first two weeks at Caltech, you will have a temporary housing assignment – that is unless you have opted to make Bechtel your permanent assignment. For those with a temporary assignment, you will either be assigned to Bechtel or one of the Houses. New students will be asked to fill out a survey prior to their arrival on campus so that if you are assigned a roommate in your temporary housing assignment, you can be matched according to lifestyle, gender identity and preferences. These temporary assignments are for two weeks only. We recommend that you do NOT entirely unpack because at the end of Rotation, you will move into your permanent room for the rest of the year. On the night that students receive their House membership, they will also pick a room/roommate. This process is facilitated by the House itself.

Families are welcome to help students move into their temporary housing in September. However, for the second move at the end of rotation, although families are welcomed to return to help move their student into their permanent place, Caltech has a process in place where there is an abundance of upperclassman volunteers excited to help new students move into their House.

### **QUESTION 7: WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN ROTATION?**

All rotation events are optional and voluntary. That said, we encourage participation in Rotation, as it is a fun, exciting tradition we are eager to share with you!

### **QUESTION 8: WHAT IF I LIKE MULTIPLE HOUSES?**

That's ok! So do we! You can be a member of multiple Houses to participate in their events, and Houses often host activities open to the entire undergrad community. At the end of Rotation (a process itself that will be described in further detail below), new students are sorted into one of the Houses where they will live for their first year, however, after Rotation, students may get memberships to other Houses, and can live in these Houses in future years.

### **QUESTION 9: WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF A HOUSE?**

Students are not required to be in a House. If a student chooses not to be a House member, they are considered "unaffiliated". If this is your preference, you may indicate it at the end of Rotation, and if you change your mind later you are still welcome to get a House membership later during your time at Caltech.



### **QUESTION 10: HOW DOES ROTATION END?**

Ok, it's Wednesday night and you just got back to your room after your last Rotation event. Now what? Our hope is that over the course of Rotation, you get a sense of each of the Houses enough so that you can rank them in order of where you'd most like to live or affiliate. You will receive a survey from Caltech that will allow you to submit your house rankings. Then, Thursday and Friday, all the student rankings are run through a computer algorithm that considers each student's rankings. Then, Saturday evening (October 5<sup>th</sup>) the Fleming Cannon fires, and new students receive envelopes containing their House membership and living assignment! Each House holds a welcome event that night for their new members. Lastly, on Sunday all the upper-class students will help you move!

### **QUESTION 11: WHAT IF I NEED ADA ACCOMMODATIONS DURING ROTATION?**

If you need help with accommodations during rotation, or at any time during your time at Caltech, please reach out to Caltech Accessibility Service for Students. They are in the Center for Student Services, room 105, by appointment. You can also email the office at: [cass@caltech.edu](mailto:cass@caltech.edu)

### **QUESTION 12: WHAT'S THE GENERAL TIMELINE FOR ROTATION?**

- **Wednesday, September 25th through Wednesday, October 2nd:** Dinners/Lunches/Rotation Events
- **Wednesday evening after the last Rotation event, October 2nd:** new student House rankings are due by 10:00 p.m. through an online link.
- **Thursday and Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>:** Student rankings are run through the algorithm.
- **Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm:** Fleming Cannon fires and students are welcomed into their Houses.
  - Room picks occur at **10 pm**.
- **Sunday, October 6<sup>th</sup>:** Moving Day
  - **10am-12pm:** time for students to pack their belongings in their temporary room.
  - **12pm-2pm:** rooms fully cleaned by vacating students.
  - **2pm-4pm:** incoming students move into their new rooms.
  - **9pm:** House/residency meeting with RA

### **QUESTION 13: IS ROTATION AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS?**

The IHC and OSE work closely with our Title IX and Equity, Center for Diversity and Inclusion, and Caltech Accessibility Services offices to ensure that Rotation is welcoming, inviting, and fun for all students at Caltech. We have many resources available and numerous ways we keep tabs on the wellbeing of new students during Rotation. This includes Peer, Title IX and Health Advocates, Advocacy Committee representatives, Residential Life Coordinators, Resident Associates and FCCs who are all trained on how best to support new (and returning) students. These resources will be discussed again in September as well as during orientation.



#### **Question 14: WHAT IF I AM A FIRST YEAR TRANSFER OR EXCHANGE STUDENT?**

First year transfer and exchange students can still participate in rotation. For new transfer students, rotation will still be the same process as the first-year students, and you will have the ability to either opt into Bechtel or decide to live in a house.

For exchange students, you will go through rotation for affiliation only. You will be assigned a room on campus, and you will need to stay in that room post-rotation.

#### **QUESTION 15: WHAT IF I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS:**

If I can be a resource, please contact me at [vtejada@caltech.edu](mailto:vtejada@caltech.edu) or check out our [website](#). Feel free to also contact the IHC at [ihc-24-25@googlegroups.com](mailto:ihc-24-25@googlegroups.com) and their [website](#).

#### **QUESTION 15: HOW DO I CONTACT THE RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THIS EMAIL:**

- [Office of Residential Experience](#)
- [Caltech Center for Inclusion and Diversity](#)
- [Equity Office and Title IX](#)
- [Caltech Accessibility Services for Students](#)
- [Undergraduate Dean's Office](#)
- [Caltech Dining](#)
  - If you have any dietary restrictions, please email [specialmeals@caltech.edu](mailto:specialmeals@caltech.edu)

Ok. That was a lot. I'm hopeful that the above was at least somewhat helpful in addressing any initial questions about the Rotation process. The IHC has asked that you all fill out this [Pre-Rotation Survey](#) to get to know you better by Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. At the end of the day, we just want you all to be excited to come to Caltech and find a community here, because we're all excited to welcome you into it. Rotation is one of the most fun and long-standing ways to do this, and if you still have questions, please ask!

We look forward to meeting you all!

On behalf of the OSE and IHC,

Vanessa Tejada  
Director of Residential Experience