



Office of Student and Family Engagement
Residential Experience
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September 16, 2026

Dear Incoming Students:

Welcome to Caltech!

My name is Vanessa Tejada and I am the Director of Residential Experience in the Office of Student and Family Engagement (SFE). I work alongside the 2026-2027 Interhouse Committee (IHC) to organize Rotation. On behalf of the SFE and IHC, welcome!

The IHC is made up of the president and/or chancellor from each House as well as the chair and secretary. They help manage the process through which new students join Caltech's House system known as Rotation. Together, IHC communicates information, coordinates events, and ensures things run smoothly for both Houses and the new students throughout the process. During Rotation, both the IHC and SFE will be here to support you as you learn about the House system, housing and membership options.

Rotation this year takes place from September 23rd- September 30th. It includes scheduled meals and events designed to help you get to know the Houses and the broader House system. Rotation is completely voluntary. You can participate as much or as little as you would like. Some people attend everything, others only a few events, and some choose not to participate at all. Whatever your preference, we invite and encourage you to engage in a way that feels right for you.

Rotation can be one of the most special parts of your first year at Caltech. The more you know about the process, the easier it is to navigate. The rest of this email is here to provide you with the key details and hopefully answer some of the questions you might have. The IHC will also review and expand on this information during an Orientation session. If I miss anything, feel free to reach out. I have included contact information at the end of this letter.

For now, here is a helpful starting point:

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS ROTATION?

Rotation is the process by which new undergrads explore the eight houses and the Bechtel residence, meet people and decide where they might want to live or become a member.



QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE HOUSES?

Caltech has eight co-ed residential communities: Avery, Blacker, Dabney, Fleming, Lloyd, Page, Ricketts, and Venerable.

Each House has its own personality, traditions, and activities. While most Houses offer double occupancy rooms, some also have triple occupancy options. A few single rooms are available, but these are limited and not guaranteed. All Houses typically included shared bathrooms, kitchenettes, laundry, and common areas.

The Houses provide much more than a place to live. The Houses are communities that cultivate social connections and a family-like environment.

QUESTIONS 3: WHAT IS THE BECHTEL RESIDENCE?

Bechtel is not a House but it is a vibrant residential option. It features suite style living, single rooms with shared bathrooms, living rooms, dining areas and kitchenette. You will have a chance to pick into Bechtel during Rotation. Students who choose Bechtel are eligible for a full membership in a House, if they choose.

QUESTION 4: HOW DOES ROTATION WORK?

All new students are placed in temporary housing. During Rotation, you will attend assigned House dinners and optional evening events to get to know each House. There are also “free dinners” and dessert hours, where you can explore more on your own. Rotation is all about helping you find a community where you feel at home.

QUESTION 5: WHAT IS A HOUSE “DINNER”?

During the year, Houses serve regular family-style dinners in their dining halls. During rotation, these are extra special: fun traditions are shared, and it is a great way to experience each House’s vibe.

Dinner assignments are given to make sure everyone gets equal exposure to, and opportunity to interact with, each of the Houses. You will receive your personal schedule the night once you arrive to campus and 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!

Have dietary needs? No problem- please email specialmeals@caltech.edu in advance and we will make sure we have food options available for you during your house dinners.

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

You will receive a temporary housing assignment for the first two weeks. This could be in Bechtel or a House. We suggest not fully unpacking as you will have to move into your permanent room after Rotation. Room picks happen the night House memberships are announced. This year room picks will be on Saturday, October 3rd, 2026.



Families are welcome to help with the initial move-in, and we have plenty of upper-class volunteers ready to help with the second move!

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

Totally okay! Rotation is optional. But we do encourage participation. Rotation is a great way to get involved and meet your peers.

QUESTION 8: WHAT IF I LIKE MULTIPLE HOUSES?

That is great! Many students do. While you will be placed in one House at the end of Rotation, you can join additional Houses later and live in them in future years.

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

That is also fine. You can remain "unaffiliated." If you decide later that you would like to join a House, you are welcome to do so at any point during your time at Caltech.

QUESTION 10: HOW DOES ROTATION END?

On Wednesday, September 30th, you will rank the Houses in order of preference via an online form that will be sent to your Caltech email. The online form is due by 10:00 PM and **EVERY** student must fill it out, even if you did not participate in Rotation or if you do not want to become a member of a House.

On Saturday, October 3rd, the Fleming Cannon fires on the Olive Walk at 5:00PM, and students will receive their House assignments! That night, Houses host welcome events, room picks happen at 10:00PM, and the next day is Move-Day!

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. You can email the office at: cass@caltech.edu

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

- **September 23rd - September 30th:** Dinners and events
- **September 30th-10:00PM:** House rankings are due
- **October 1st and October 2nd:** Algorithm is ran
- **October 3rd - 5:00PM:** Cannon fires!
 - **10:00PM-** Room picks
- **October 4th- Move Day**
 - 8:00am- 10:00 AM: Start packing your belongings
 - 10:00AM-12:00PM: Students can pick up new room pins
 - 12:00PM-2:00PM- Actively moving to new rooms
 - 9:00PM- Welcome meeting with RAs

QUESTION 13: IS ROTATION AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS?

Yes! The IHC and SFE work closely with our Equity and Title IX, Center for Diversity and



Inclusion, and Caltech Accessibility Services offices to ensure a safe and welcoming experience for all students. Resources like the RA's, RLC's, Peer Advocates, Title IX Advocates, Health Advocates and FCCs are here to support you throughout Rotation and your time at Caltech.

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

You can still participate! Transfers go through the Full Rotation process. Exchange students go through Rotation for House affiliation only and will stay in their assigned room post-rotation.

QUESTION 15: WHAT IF I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS:

- Reach out to me at vtejada@caltech.edu
- Contact the IHC at ihc-2026-2027@googlegroups.com
- Check our website(s) for more information

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

- [Office of Student and Family Engagement: sfe.caltech.edu](http://sfe.caltech.edu)
- [Caltech Center for Inclusion and Diversity: ccid.caltech.edu](http://ccid.caltech.edu)
- [Equity and Title IX Office: equity.caltech.edu](http://equity.caltech.edu)
- [Accessibility Services for Students: cass.caltech.edu](http://cass.caltech.edu)
- [Undergraduate Dean's Office: deans.caltech.edu](http://deans.caltech.edu)
- [Caltech Dining: dining.caltech.edu](http://dining.caltech.edu)
- [Interhouse Committee \(IHC\): ihc.caltech.edu](http://ihc.caltech.edu)

Whew that was a lot.

Hopefully this gives you a better understanding of Rotation and helps answer your initial questions. Most of all, we want you to feel excited to join the Caltech community. We are thrilled to welcome you! Rotation is one of our longest running and fun traditions, and we cannot wait to share it with you.

See you soon!

On behalf of the SFE and IHC,
Vanessa Tejada
Director of Residential Experience