



# 2021 OFF-CAMPUS SURF & SURF EXCHANGE INFORMATION SESSION

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS WORKSHOP IS FOR CALTECH STUDENTS ONLY

# Agenda

- Overview of off-campus SURFs
  - Eligibility
  - Identifying and contacting a mentor
  - Funding
  - The application process
- Overview of SURF Exchanges
- Expectations and requirements



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# Eligibility: Applicants must be...

a Caltech student

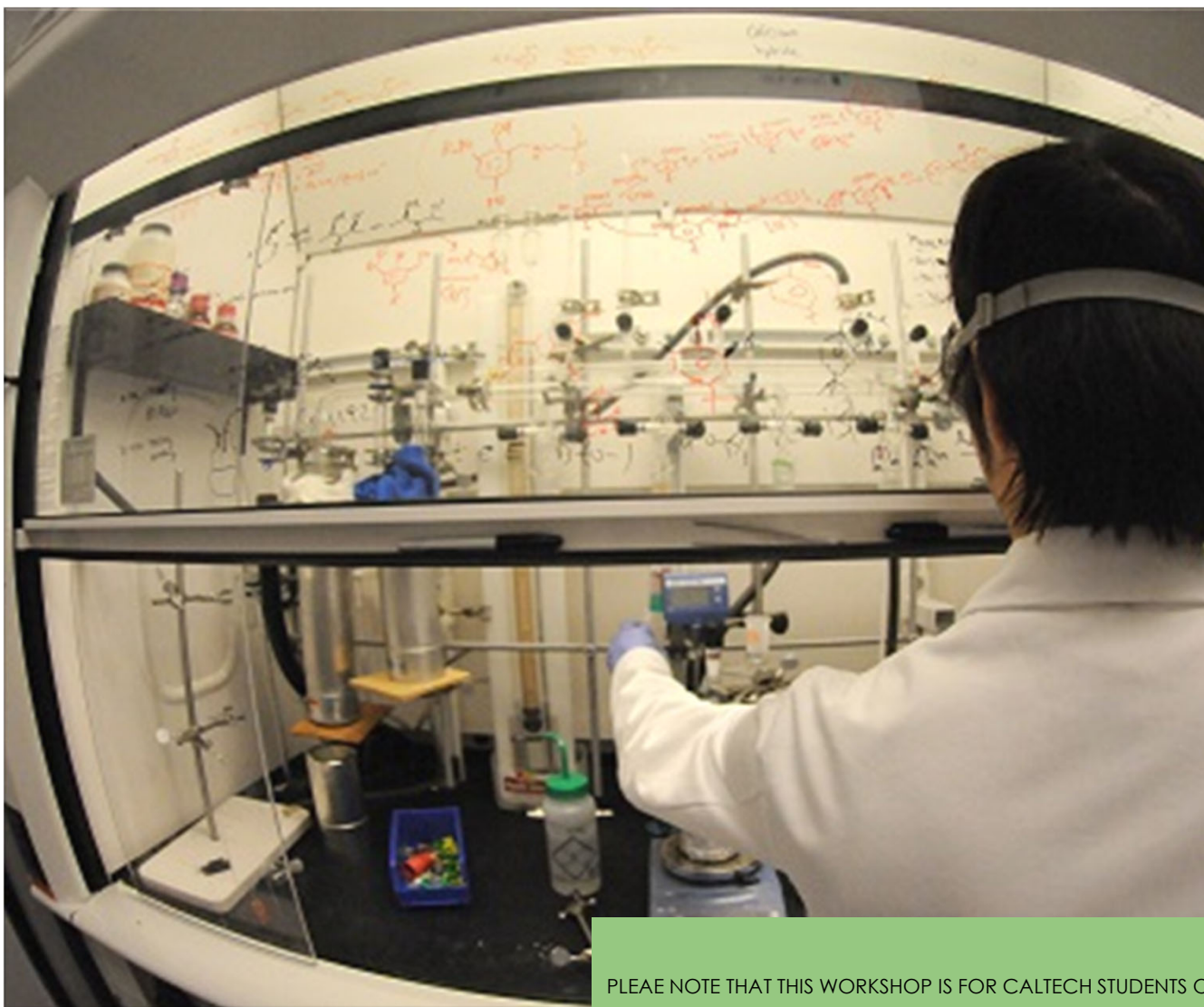
a continuing undergraduate eligible for fall term registration

have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 (2.5 for Exchanges)

complete spring term at Caltech (or another school approved by the Dean)

not be under disciplinary sanction

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## Finding an off-campus SURF

Use your academic network. Talk to your advisor, previous research mentor, professors, postdocs, and graduate students.

Determine schools you are interested in attending and browse their websites. Look for Caltech alums who are on the faculty.

Look through list of option seminars. Attend if possible.

Come by the SFP office to discuss possible mentors.

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# First contact

- Be professional
- Have confidence that you have something to offer, but don't act entitled
- Provide adequate information about yourself—but not too much
- Learn something about the research topic in advance and state your interest in it
- Request additional references
- Request a meeting
- Review interview guidelines on SURF website

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SFP offers cost-sharing for the most competitive proposals



Mentor pays for all research related costs



Student pays for travel, housing, etc.

## Funding

Refer to SURF in first email and include link to SURF website

If mentor is interested, then share information on funding

Focus on putting together the strongest application and proposal possible

# Associate Mentors



All off-campus SURFers need to identify a Caltech faculty member to serve as an associate mentor.

The associate mentor should be in a similar research area.

Associate mentors will:

- Review the student's research proposal and provide feedback to SFP about the suitability of the project and student match
- Assist the students with any research challenges

The Associate Mentor does not have any financial responsibility for the student's financial award or research costs

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# Application process

- The application
- The research proposal
- Two recommendations (not from your mentor or associate mentor)
  - At least one from a faculty member
  - We will solicit a mentor and associate mentor evaluation after an application is submitted

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# Research proposal

The proposal explains:

- what you plan to do in your research
- why this work is necessary or desirable
- specifically, how you will do it
- and persuades, by your preparation and by force of argument, that you are the right person for the job.

- ❖ Clear guidelines are available on the SURF webpage.
- ❖ Attend proposal writing workshops at the Hixon Writing Center.
- ❖ The proposal will be reviewed by someone in your general field.

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Questions?



# SURF Exchanges

- University of Iceland
  - Located in Reykjavik
  - Strong in biomedical and earth science research
  - Students pay for travel and housing; but UI will arrange for housing
  - English widely spoken
- Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology
  - Located in Gwangju, about 200 miles south of Seoul
  - Undergraduate program modeled after Caltech
  - Strong in chemical engineering, materials science, applied physics
  - Students pay for travel; GIST arranges and pays for housing
  - English is spoken in labs

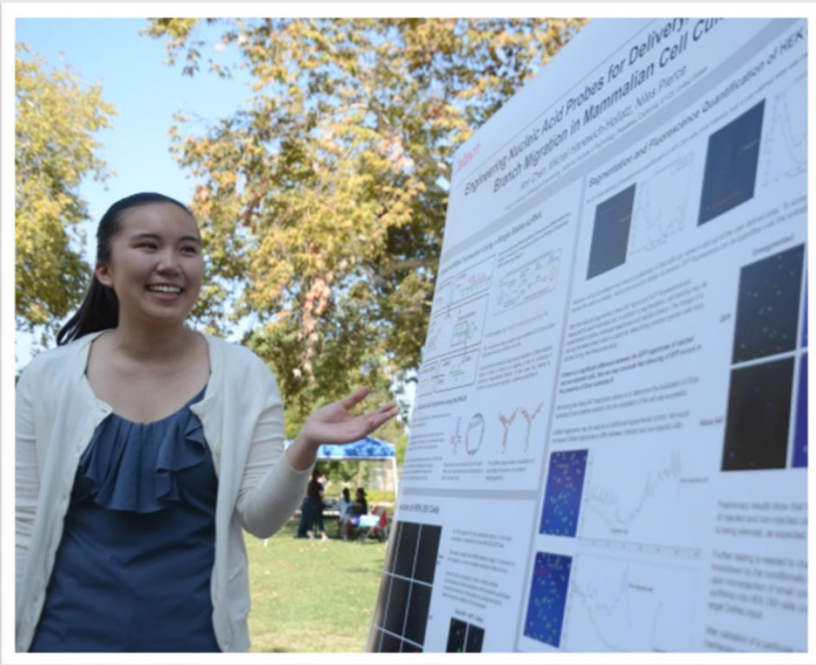
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# Application process

- Hardcopy application due March 1
- Personal statement about research focus and why the exchange location fits that interest
  - Applicants do not need to find a mentor or write a proposal in advance
  - With your input you will be matched with a faculty mentor
  - Once matched students will write a project plan due in May
- Two letters of recommendation from faculty
- Unofficial transcript
- Interview

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# Expectations and requirements



- Students need to manage all visa requirements, travel, and housing
- Conduct projects on a full-time basis for a ten-week period. Different schools, cultures, and mentors may have different definitions of what full-time means.
- Complete two interim reports, an abstract, and a final paper.
- Must give a final oral presentation at Caltech and maybe at host school.
- Attend any safety sessions required by host school.
- Complete any additional requirements of host school.
- Serve as an ambassador, actions are guided by the Honor Code, host site school policies, and local law.

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