

The SPeaker



Welcome to Sidney Pacific!

Nicholas Triantafillou, Sidney Pacific President 2016-2017



To all of our new residents, welcome to the Sidney Pacific Graduate Community (Sid-Pac for short, SP for extra short)! To those of you who have been around for a while, we're glad you're still here. We're in for an exciting year here at SP - a grand reopening of sorts - as we return to full capacity and full strength after a year of renovations. During your time in SP, I hope that you will take advantage of everything SP has to offer. SP officers run a wide range of events to suit almost any interest: from academic and cultural discussions to

massive dance parties. We have a talented and diverse student body: future world leaders across a wide range of academic disciplines and from many different cultural/religious/ethnic groups. We have great resources in the building: several pianos, a laundry room, and a games room featuring a new arcade machine. We have an excellent house staff who help to keep the common spaces clean and are quick to respond to repair requests. And we have awesome heads of house who are happy to talk about anything and are especially valuable as a source of advice from a post-grad school perspective.

More than anything else, I hope that you'll join the sp-helpers mailing list and volunteer at a few SP events. It's the easiest way to engage with the SP community and make this place feel like home. For me, SP's weekly coffee hour prep - a chance to practice my knife skills on vegetables and melons while feeding SP residents - was the carrot that drew me into the community, helped me through weeks when grad school life was rough, and led me to make friendships that I'll treasure for the rest of my life. For you it might be flipping burgers at a barbecue, watering the plants on your floor, or using SP igroups funding to organize events of your own for your fellow residents. With few exceptions, SP events are entirely graduate student run and organized, and SP officers and helpers together make them happen. And it's easy to help at SP - no prior commitment is required and even half an hour makes a big difference.

I also want you to remember that there are many resources available here to help you adjust to SP and to MIT. You can reach out to your community leaders: including hall councilors, officers, the SP executive council (spec@mit.edu), and heads of house (sp-headsofhouse@mit.edu) for support. We're happy to respond to any questions and concerns, whether they are related to SP or not. Enjoy orientation. We look forward to meeting you. Wishing you the best during your time at SP and MIT!

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Contribute to the Speaker!

Do you enjoy writing short stories, poetry or prose?
Do you enjoy painting, drawing, or photography?
Submit to the SidPac Speaker *Creative Corner* to show off your talent and compete for a prize!

If you are interested in providing a news article as well, let us know! Submit writing, photographs, scans or ideas to:

sp-newsletter-chair@mit.edu

Feature: CoSI, More Than Cosi

Jingzhi An

Join the FEAST at CoSI in Sidney Pacific! Coffee? Sandwich? Soup? Food, yes. Yet the SP CoSI offers you much more, and is an experience guaranteed to be uniquely MIT.

David Rosen, a veteran of CoSI events and past CoSI chair, put it perfectly: “The attraction of coming to a place like MIT versus somewhere else is that MIT is filled with people who are very bright and broadly intellectually curious; not just about the specific things

ly Interactions. CoSI is a long standing tradition at Sidney Pacific and has received many famous guests such as Prof. Eric Lander, Prof. Robert Langer, Prof. Feng Zhang, and very recently, the co-founder and an intellectual leader of the LIGO Project (which made the world’s first observation of gravitational waves!!!), Prof. Rainer Weiss. Its menu consists of public lectures, dinner discussions, outings, and seasonal specials such as the research art night. You can check out

photos of these events on the SP gallery. Spaces are often limited and reservation in advance is highly recommended.

The Chef de Cuisines this year are Aaron Smargon from EECS and Eng Huiling studying system design and management. They are both new to the SP community but have been doing a great job in carrying on the legacy of CoSI. Over the summer, they have organized an outing to



Recent CoSI Lecture by Dr. Rai Weiss

that they work on but a broad spectrum of things besides. I wouldn’t say this is unique but it is really rare. So missing out on the interaction with our colleagues outside of professional contexts is a huge waste of opportunity. CoSI provides such a forum or opportunity for a wide range of discussions beyond what one would usually encounter in his day to day work. Therefore, CoSI is awesome and everyone should do it.”

This Michelin worthy-CoSI serving up delicious feasts of freshly picked ideas from around the world, textured with opinions and spiced up with intellectual exchanges, is our very beloved Committee on Scholar-

ly Interactions, as well as dinner discussions, themed the Game of Thrones and Space Exploration respectively. “This is also our first time living in SP, but we are so excited to be part of the community and meet some fun people,” said Aaron.

Intellect gourmands amongst you can get ready for new sizzling events for the fall semester. “We will have Professor Carlo Ratti, director of the MIT Senseable City Lab, joining us for a lecture and dinner on September 20. He has recently published a book about the senseable cities of tomorrow.” Huiling shared. And to celebrate the rebirth of SP with its new residents and reopening of the full building, Aaron and Huiling will also be bringing back our very first housemasters, Roger and Dorothy Mark, to spend an evening with the residents. (Continued on Page 3)

CoSI (Continued from Page 2)

"One thing in terms of vision is that we really want to challenge people. All the things we have done have some controversial aspects... We are also working hard to ensure that we cover a broad range of topics to appeal to different interests of participants. The dinner discussions are particularly exciting to us. These are good platforms for people who are more informed to share and to seek alternative opinions, and for those who are new to the topics to learn something. We also encourage anyone with ideas or discussion topics to bring them up to us, either by emailing us at sp-cosi-chair@mit.edu or talking to us in person."

Well, sounds like some delicious fare don't you think? As David said, "CoSI events are something I would make a point to not miss". So do join the CoSI discussion interest group through the SP website and look out for upcoming publicity emails. Hope to see you at the feasts. Bon Appetit!



Social Chairs 2016-2017: Daniel Munoz (left), Flora Tan (center), Haozhe Wang (right)

As many of you enter the SidPac community for the first time, or come back to your home on campus after a long summer break, the first few items on your social agenda might be the exciting orientation events that bring us all together. Who are the incredible people behind those events, and why do they do what they do? In this issue, let's get to know a few of our social chairs, Haozhe Wang and Daniel Munoz!

Daniel Munoz, originally from Dallas, TX, has been at MIT and an SP resident for two years. He studies moral philosophy in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy. Something you might not know about Daniel is that he is an incredible musician who plays guitar, drums, sings, and records electronic music in his spare time! In fact, he had once wanted to be a professional musician, but figured that he would opt for a much more financially stable line of work-- philosophy.

So what excites him about being this year's Social Chair? "Meeting people, working with helpers, and

For me, [attending SP events] has been the perfect way to make new friends, discover new ideas, and of course—the summum bonum of grad school life-- eat free food." - Daniel Munoz, Social Chair 2016-2017

Spotlight: The Folks Behind the Fun Editor

watching everything come together after weeks of planning-- those are my favorite things about being social chair," he says. "There's something really satisfying about struggling to put together an event, then finally getting to watch people enjoy themselves, whether that means eating tasty food, mingling with other MIT people, or going wild on the dance floor." (Continued on Page 4.)





As Social Chair, his favorite orientation event is the dance party, and he encourages incoming residents to attend and volunteer at this and other events, such as the BBQ or Sunday brunches, as a way of forging new friendships. Of SidPac as a community, Daniel says, "There's nothing else like it at MIT. For me, [attending SP events] has been the perfect way to make new friends, discover new ideas, and of course—the sum-mum bonum of grad school life-- eat free food."

Haozhe Wang, originally from Shandong province, China, joined MIT as a PhD student in Mechanical Engi-

neering last year. But just like many of you reading this issue, he is also new to SP as a resident! Something you might not know about Haozhe is that he is a bit indecisive-- he was a medical student, changed to be in an Electrical Engineering group, then to a Mechanical Engineering group, but actually currently does research on Materials Engineering!

Haozhe is extremely passionate about his role as Social Chair, and looks forward to offering residents a lot of relaxing and interesting social events. His favorite orientation event (definitely a theme here) is also the dance party, and he encourages everyone to join what he says is the best SP Social event of the year!

Of the SidPac community, Haozhe says "I like the people living here! SP feels like a big family." All of our wonderful Social chairs warmly welcome incoming and returning residents for the school year, and hope to see them at all of the events they have worked so hard to plan.

We thank Haozhe and Daniel for their contribution and for all of their hard work!

Orientation Events at SidPac

- August 22nd** SP Welcome Get Together (6PM)
- August 24th** Photography Class (8PM)
- August 25th** SP Welcome Get Together II (6PM)
- August 27th** SP More Opens
- August 28th** IKEA Trip (10 AM - 3 PM)
- September 2nd** SP Dance Party (9 PM)
- September 3rd** SP Cultural Festival (Noon-3 PM)
- September 4th** SP BBQ (5 PM)
- September 5th** SP Mandatory Meeting + Hall Welcome Dinner (6PM - 9PM)
- September 6th** SP Head of House Dinner (6PM—9PM)
- September 7th** SP Coffee Hour (9PM), Prep at 7PM
- September 8th** SP Games Night (8-11 PM)
- September 10th** Plant Sale (Noon-5 PM)

- September 11th** Costco and Target Trip (11AM - 4 PM)
 - September 11th** SP Brunch (12—2PM), Prep at 8AM
 - September 12th** SP Head of House Welcome Dinner II
 - September 13th** SP Head of House Welcome Dinner III
 - September 15th** Indian Cooking Class (6:30 PM)
 - September 16th** Open Doors Night I (6-9 PM)
 - September 17th** Trip to Wrentham Outlet
 - September 18th** Trader's Joe and Whole Foods Trip (11 AM—4PM)
 - September 23rd** Open Doors Night II (6-9 PM)
 - September 26th** September House Meeting
- See the Welcome Guide for more details!*

Photo Credits: SP Photofile Chairs, Daniel Munoz, Nicholas Triantafillou