

BSEC president Sarah Sam resigning from renaming committee

gradstudents-bounces@caltech.edu <gradstudents-bounces@caltech.edu>
on behalf of
Caltech for Black Lives <caltech4blacklives@gmail.com>

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To: gradstudents@caltech.edu <gradstudents@caltech.edu>

 2 attachments (117 KB)

SarahSam_NTF_resignation.pdf; ATT00001.txt;

Dear Graduate Students,

In June, the Black Scientists and Engineers at Caltech (BSEC) released a petition entitled "Anti-Racism: What Can Caltech Do?," that called on Caltech to (1) publish transparent, public-facing demographic data, (2) increase the yield of racially minoritized students, (3) vitalize diversity recruitment efforts, and (4) improve the diversity climate on campus. Over 1000 community members signed this petition, and we'd like to update you on the ongoing effort related to a part of demand (4): renaming campus buildings named for racists and eugenicists.

In response to the BSEC petition, President Rosenbaum has convened a Committee on Naming and Recognition to study the issue of building renaming and make recommendations to the Institute. This task force consists of four trustees, four faculty members, two Caltech Alumni Association affiliates, one administrator, one postdoctoral scholar, and two students. Sarah Sam, graduate student and president of the Black Scientists and Engineers at Caltech, was appointed to serve on this committee. As of today, Sarah has chosen to resign from the committee, and we feel that it is vital for the community to understand why.

You can read Sarah's resignation letter in the attachment, which explains in more detail the events that led to her decision. We feel that this committee should be held accountable to the entire community, and especially to the over 1000 signatories of both BSEC's and Prof Michael Chwe's petition to rename the buildings. We hope that you will stand with us in holding the Institute to account and demanding that it do better. If you stand with Sarah and with Caltech for Black Lives, please join us in refusing to recognize the validity and authority of a committee whose proceedings to date have been baldly racist.

In solidarity and hope for a better future,
Caltech for Black Lives