Mudd Chats

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Topic Descriptions
January 8 - 16
*****Note: All dates/times are in Pacific Time*****

Note: Each gathering is small, but you will get into your first three choices. This will be on a first-come, first-served basis. If you can no longer make it, please let Vanessa Chiu (vchiu@hmc.edu) know so we can let those on the waitlist know.

A perspective on making sustainability work in industry with Kathy French ’97

Interdisciplinary Career Options after Mudd: A Chemist’s Perspective with Grace Credo ’96

International experiences pre and post Mudd with Dan Borton ’90 and Barry “Bear” Petersen ’90

Adulting in Grad School with Phia Ribeiro ’24 and Luke Stemple ’24

Automotive Electronics and Functional Safety with Zane Bodenbender ’17

Working at Startups - How to find Companies and What to Expect with Joe Sinopoli ’17

Engineering Your Impact with Gabe Phun ’18

Compensation Packages: Negotiating and Evaluation Options with Matthew Dharm ’98 and Jason Fredrickson ’99

Don’t Panic: Perspectives from the other side of the New Hire Interview with Trevin Murakami ’09 and Michael Braly ’09

A Perspective on Making Sustainability Work in Industry with Kathy French ’97

Date: Thursday, Jan. 8
Time: 6-7 p.m. PT

Description:
Industry has the need to show profit either through fiduciary responsibility to shareholders or investors or just to survive commercially. Thus, the topic of sustainability has to be approached through the lens of being a dual win - both good for the environment and good for the bottom line of the company. The talk will give suggestions on how to balance your passion or interest in sustainability with the pragmatic approach needed to get hired and succeed at a company.

Biography:
Kathy French ’97 (engineering) is the Senior Vice President, Environmental, Health and Safety for LS Power, an electric power generating company. She has been with LS Power for 25 years and is part of the team at LS Power that works on sustainability efforts and reporting.

Interdisciplinary Career Options after Mudd: A Chemist’s Perspective with Grace Credo ’96

Date: Friday, Jan. 9
Time: 5-6 p.m. PT

Description:
An open discussion on how to prepare for and navigate a career in-between fields.

Biography:
Grace Credo ’96 (chemistry) is a technical program manager at Intel Foundry in Santa Clara, CA. Starting with a B.S. in chemistry from HMC, progressing to a UCSB Ph.D., NCSU postdoc, and a 25-year career at the interface of chemistry and engineering, her work has been highly interdisciplinary. You can view her LinkedIn profile at linkedin.com/in/gracecredo. Grace is the current President of the HMC Alumni Association Board of Governors (AABOG) and is a long-time supporter of AABOG’s outreach efforts to current HMC students.

International experiences pre and post Mudd with Dan Borton ’90 and Barry “Bear” Petersen ’90

Date: Friday, Jan. 9
Time: 6-7 p.m. PT

Description:

Discuss the experiences/challenges of entering Mudd as an international student, as well as the experience/opportunity to do international work post Mudd.

Biography:
Dan Borton ’90 (engineering) – I was an American ex-pat for my last two years of high school at the American School in London, and my family continued to live there through my freshman year. I was an Engineering major, swam for CMS all four years, and was on ASHMC for two years. I have spent my career in pharmaceuticals/biotech and currently work for Amgen supporting capital construction

Barry (Bear) Petersen ’90 (chemistry) – After Grad school in ‘95 I went to China for a year on an art & travel Durfee Foundation grant. Followed in 97-98 to Berlin with a Humboldt Fellowship. Went from there to the Japanese countryside for 5 years, mostly writing a software studio for green energy projects, followed by building an AI startup in Taiwan in 2002, which was absorbed into Foxconn in 2008. Worked in Taiwan advising the bigger company and doing AI research for 8 years, and then back to the US for kids before and during COVID. Now I split time between the US and Taiwan because the two kids (aged 4 and 7) like Taiwanese school.

Adulting in Grad School with Phia Ribeiro ’24 and Luke Stemple ’24

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 13
Time: 5:30-6:30 p.m. PT

Description:
The dos and don'ts of the first year of grad school. Our advice on finding a good lab, setting expectations with your new mentor, coping with all the new responsibilities of grad school, and being an independent adult at the same time.

Biography:
I am **Phia Ribeiro ’24** (math/computation biology), a second year at Case Western Reserve University's School of Medicine doing a PhD in systems biology and bioinformatics. I study gene regulation in glioblastoma multiforme (a common brain cancer) using machine learning. In my free time I play video games, go to craft fairs, and hang out with my cat and my friends.

I’m **Luke Stemple ’24** (joint chemistry/biology), a 2024 graduate of Harvey Mudd College and a current first-year graduate student in Dr. Cheng’s lab at UCR. Currently I’m working on protein expression, SPR, and credit card applications.”

Automotive Electronics and Functional Safety with Zane Bodenbender ’17

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 13
Time: 6:30-7:30 p.m. PT

Description:
Automotive engineers do their best to design safe vehicles, but when you are making millions of vehicles, something is bound to go wrong. In this talk, we will walk through the process that is used to eliminate unreasonable risk in automotive electrical systems.

Biography:
Zane Bodenbender ’17 (engineering) is a first generation electrical engineer who has spent his entire career in the automotive space. He has worked on high performance dirtbikes, passenger cars, and medium duty delivery vehicles, focusing on high voltage electronics and batteries.

Working at Startups - How to Find Companies and What to Expect with Joe Sinopoli ’17

Date: Wednesday, Jan. 14
Time: 5-6 p.m. PT

Description:
With our broad Core Curriculum and emphasis on clear technical communication, Mudders often excel in startups, where each member of a small team has wide-reaching impact. This MuddChat will go over techniques for finding and networking within startups across any target industry, as well as the aspects of startup work life that are different than larger corporations.

Biography:
Joe Sinopoli '17 (engineering) has worked at 5 different startups, ranging from 3D printing, to medical devices, operations software, and green energy within companies growing from 6 to 600 employees. While his roles have varied across manufacturing optimization, project management, and customer-facing roles, he greatly enjoys the cross-functional and hands-on work associated with small, growing companies!

Engineering Your Impact with Gabe Phun ’18

Date: Wednesday, Jan. 14
Time: 6-7 p.m. PT

Description:

HMC's mission is to educate leaders with 'a clear understanding of the impact of their work on society.' But what does that actually look like in practice? Join me as I continue to grapple with this question and discuss the process of trying to find and build a mission-driven career. I'll share my own ongoing journey—from a PhD in chemistry, to exploring science policy, and now to the challenge of building Qtpi, an HMC mission inspired dating app.

Biographies:
Gabe Phun ’18 (chemistry/physics) has been exploring different paths to social impact. This journey has led him to build Qtpi, a dating app focused on ethical design, while continuing to explore science policy as an avenue to address climate change. He is passionate about applying his skills and knowledge to positively impact society.

Compensation Packages: Negotiating and Evaluation Options with Matthew Dharm ’98 and Jason Fredrickson ’99

Date: Thursday, Jan. 15
Time: 6-7 p.m. PT

Description:
Join us for a discussion about negotiating and evaluating your options during the last stages of your job interview and once you’ve received your offer.

Biography:
Matthew Dharm ’98 (computer science) is currently an Application Engineer at Avnet, but this is simply the latest stop in a career that has taken him through large companies (>10,000 employees) and small (<10 employees), including both well established and startup organizations. Through that journey, not only has he had to interview and negotiate for his own compensation, but he had to evaluate and negotiate corporate agreements and also interview and find agreement with (potential) new hires. Lately, Matthew has been travelling extensively, spending over 100 nights away from home in each of 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Graduating in physics, with a focus on computational simulation, **Jason Fredrickson '99** was so terrified of interviewing his senior year that he joined a few friends to instead start first one, then two, and finally three companies in a row. As a serial failed entrepreneur, he earned his "MBA" at the School of Hard Knocks, eventually making a strong left turn into software management. Now, as a Managing Director at LevelBlue, he rides herd on a motley crew of software developers dedicated to addressing hard problems in digital forensics and cyber incident response. He spends his days making software developers more awesome, making the world a safer place...and, most relevantly, *getting paid for it*.

Don’t Panic: Perspectives from the Other Side of the New Hire Interview with Trevin Murakami ’09 and Michael Braly ’09

Date: Thursday, Jan. 15
Time: 8-9 p.m. PT

Description:
The hiring interview is one of the last hurdles in the job application process. But very often we see otherwise qualified applicants fumble so close to the finish line. Come hear about our experiences trying to hire new graduates and our perspectives on how you can impress the interviewing panel.

Biography:
Michael Braly ’09 (engineering) is an FPGA Software Engineer at Altera working on Quartus. At work, he enjoys mentoring new hires and interesting hardware optimization problems. At home he enjoys playing video and board games, cooking, and hanging out with new and old friends.

Trevin Murakami ’09 (engineering) is a Design Engineer at Micron Technology working on the latest memory technology. He works collaboratively across international teams, mentors new hires, and actively engages in recruiting and hiring events. He enjoys teaching boardgames, cooking, hosting parties, and learning about pretty much anything

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