Dear Incoming Freshman,

We are confident that every admitted student is capable of succeeding at Caltech. At the same time, many students have encountered particular challenges in the first term with Ma 1a, in part because their high school mathematics coursework have not prepared them for the type of mathematics done in this class. Though computationally skilled, many students lack exposure to formal reasoning, writing proofs, and common proof techniques.

To assist you in preparing for Caltech mathematics, Professor Roberto Pelayo (University of Hawaii at Hilo, Caltech PhD, 2007) has designed an online course, Math 0 - Transition to Mathematical Proofs (TMP). This is a course you can take at home over the summer before you arrive at Caltech.

TMP is designed to allow you to gain experience in mathematical writing and in constructing proofs. TMP involves seven modules, each consisting of a set of video lectures, exercises, and a mechanism for submitting work. Your TMP course work will be assessed by Caltech teaching assistants (TAs), who will provide both quantitative and qualitative feedback. Assessed work will be returned to you electronically and your course progress will be tracked by the TAs.

The course site will go live on Sunday, July 7. Participation is voluntary. This is a non-credit course and it will not appear on your transcript. However, we believe that you will find it worthwhile to complete the TMP class. Students who took the course last summer performed significantly better in Ma 1a than those who did not. Students who have been placed in Ma 1a, Section 1 and/or Ma 8 should find TMP particularly beneficial. I strongly urge you to take the course.

You will receive an email in the next few days with details about how to enroll in the course.

Sincerely,

Kevin Gilmartin
Dean of Undergraduate Students
William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of English