

Future of humanity club (FHC)

This living document exists to provide a general outline of the FHC. The ideas expressed hereafter are for guidance only and should not be interpreted as inflexible rules.

Tl;dr: We are a group of individuals interested in ensuring a better future for humanity (and perhaps mitigating catastrophic and existential risks) by working on important problems. Join us for camaraderie, scholarship, fun, and a chance to make a difference.

Fundamental purpose

As the name implies, the fundamental goal of the FHC is to collect a group of students that are concerned about the future of humanity. This group has three primary objectives: gather a group of individuals that are interested in or working on important problems, build interdisciplinary friendships and collaborations¹, and influence others² to consider the impact of their work on the future of humanity. We define important problems to be problems that are relevant to the future well-being and existence of humanity.

We believe that it is important for our society, collectively, to think on longer timescales. For many individuals, we are largely concerned about what happens in the next few weeks to, at most, a few years. Most people³ tend to stumble into working on certain problems through chance and do not give much thought into the long-term impact their work, which we hope to change.

Potential activities

- Social events are necessary to make new friendships and enjoy old ones, and are a mechanism to bring people together who would otherwise never meet. I'd recommend that these events happen on a frequency of at least once a quarter.
- Book or journal clubs would be nice because it would provide a venue to discuss interesting thoughts or technologies and broaden our collective horizons.
- Many individuals in the UCLA and surrounding communities are working on important problems and also have considerable expertise in issues relating to catastrophic and existential risks. Talks, panels, and meetings with these individuals could prove to be very valuable and inspiring and should form a large fraction of the meetings.
- As a form of broader outreach, writing op-eds may be influential. This task is difficult but should be attempted.
- It may be useful to create a catalog of important problems or technologies for those that need inspiration.

¹ Most things are done best within the context of friendship. What matters most in the lives of most humans seems to be the relationships they create. In addition, an interdisciplinary group maximizes idea diversity, the benefits of which I believe are dramatically underrated.

² We are currently focused on students at UCLA, but it may be wise to reach out to those Los Angeles, and perhaps the nation, in the future.

³ We would like to point out that few people in the world (such as graduate students) actually have the opportunity and privilege to choose what problems to work on. We hope to influence those people.

Potential pitfalls

The worship of technology and its potential benefits needs to be avoided. The future can be awesome, but the goal of this organization is to work towards good future, not to fantasize about one. Too much fantasy can lead to wishful thinking and complacency. Discussing physics-breaking or fantastical solutions (e.g., the EM drive, cold fusion, teleportation) is largely a waste of time.

It may also be prudent to avoid significant political involvement. More often than not, politically motivated discussions are divisive. An explicit political orientation of the group would likely prevent roughly half the population from paying any attention.

Of particular importance is avoid groupthink and holier-than-thou attitudes. It can be tempting to think that working on future-facing problems is the most important or best use of ones time but there is absolutely nothing wrong with being useful to society in other ways.