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Seniors concerned over post-graduation plans

An in-person commencement celebration for Cal State San Bernardino's 2021-2022 graduates is a month away. While many are hopeful for the future, other graduating seniors are starting to feel the pressure of career planning after college.



A collection of CSUSB regalia for the Spring commencement, including a CSUSB themed sash and tassel. Photo by Ricardo Martinez.

By Ricardo Martinez
Staff Writer

According to the Fall 2020 Facts and Statistics released by CSUSB, 28% of the student body are seniors which makes up a huge portion of the total students attending which is 19,404 students. That leaves many graduates beginning their careers with a degree in their responsive field, but a topic that is talked about lightly is the route these graduates take after the celebration is over.

Some of these future graduates may be hesitant to apply for a job while studying in between semesters, therefore leaving it to the end of their graduation to job search where they have the most time to dedicate.

Jason Barrea, a senior majoring in kinesiology, feels that he has to act quickly with the graduation date in May looming.

"This last semester has been going by very fast, since I know I'm graduating with my degree

soon I have to sit down and find the time to apply to different locations," expressed Barrea.

Barrea's long term career goals is to become a personal trainer for some of the top athletic organizations in the world or becoming a physical therapist. He understands that he may have lost time by gaining experience through various internships offered by programs while in college but was committed to working with his family.

"I have been working with my family through college and I know there were opportunities to learn more about my major in a hands on approach. Looking back, -that is one thing I strongly advise to underclassmen because many of the applications for jobs I want are requiring a certain amount of experience," stated Barrera.

Barrea plans to strive forward and looks at the many positives of his graduation. He is very glad that the university offers much support for graduates who are also unsure about what to do.

"CSUSB hosts a lot of job expos and career fairs that really help out and motivate me to begin looking on where to start my career," Barrea said.

One of the programs offered by the university, Handshake, allows current students and alumni to create a user profile which will connect them with many career opportunities. This can be found after logging into your MyCoyote and clicking on the Employment Opportunities icon.

Similar to other employment websites like Indeed and Portfolium, HandShake, allows students to sign up for on-campus interviews, join career events on campus, and alumni can schedule career advising appointments.

Mike Ruelas, a graduating senior, understands the pressure graduates may feel when it comes to career planning, but for him it's more of not letting his family down.

"Being a first generating graduate student says a lot, what happens from here on after graduation also speaks on what

kind of example I'm setting for everyone in the family," said Ruelas firmly.

Ruelas feels that being the first from his family to graduate from a four year university is such a big moment for him. He wants to show other family members, especially his younger brothers, that pursuing a college degree can be a great way to succeed in life.

"Graduating from college was half the challenge, what you do with the degree is also another barrier to consider. All the years investing into my education are all for my career, I want that to show," said Ruelas.

Completing a degree in college can be hard to achieve, Ruelas is not too worried about his post-graduation plans and is still proud of the moment he will have this coming May.

Another senior, Javier Lopez, has a different take since he took a year off to focus on finding jobs that center around his field.

"It's funny because I went into college trying to find a good job, then in the middle of it I get

a good enough job where I had to take a break," stated Lopez.

Lopez began working as a sales assistant for a business organization where he began as an intern, after a few months he was hired. He admits that the hours were too much to handle while also being a full time student, it was a hard decision, but Lopez took a break to see where this new job would take him.

"It was a lot of work, but I learned so much throughout the way. Now I have a better idea of what a degree does for you and what position I am aiming for," said Lopez.

Lopez has returned for his final year and feels the pressure of post graduation is gone away due to getting experience early on. He also expresses how putting yourself out there by showing your potential to employers is deeply important.

"Don't let the requirements on an application hold you back, yes, employers want that but if you're confident in what you do then you'd be surprised how far you can get".

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Students digging their financial grave

John Malapitan
Staff Writer

As students return to campus nationwide there are still many problems they face. The graduation rate for college students is predicted to drop in 2022 from previous years because returning to campus may not be as easy as it seems with new challenges emerging each day.

It has been shown in the past that during a recession enrollment rates for colleges go up. The number of students increases. These students want more opportunities from job losses and have more time to devote to studies, however the dropout rates have increased as well. More and more students are taking direct loans from the government as stated from the Federal Student Aid Portfolio Graph mentioned above. From PEW it is estimated that "\$91.1 billion in annual federal student lending in 2019-20, up from \$20.7 billion in 1990-91. Over that same period, per-student borrowing rose from \$2,110 to \$6,276, after adjusting for inflation." The cost of loans have increased, but so has the cost of student dropout rates. What this means is that these students who are borrowing and dropping out

are digging themselves into a financial hole; seeing a chance for a better future these students are hurting themselves more and digging their own financial grave.

While the number of students attending both community colleges and Universities has increased, the number of students dropping out has increased as well. The overall graduation percentage is expected to drop. While enrollment has been high within the past few years, COVID-19 has affected the quality of life for many students. Being fully virtual has been off putting to some and has led to their struggles finding success in the classroom; this has led to students failing and questioning if they should even continue to pursue a higher education. It is also shown from PEW that the undergraduate enrollment has fallen by 3.6% from 2019 to 2020. These were due to struggles from the pandemic from personal care to financial needs. The pattern has shown to continue throughout 2021. There have been responses to help the struggles these students have been facing financially. The Pell Grant award has been increased compared to previous years along with the Emergency Cares Act able to help the students in their financial needs. However,

even with these financial funding programs, it does not help offset the struggles some students are facing. While they may help in the short term, the overall debt of the student keeps increasing.

This has even hit close to home with families struggling to be able to support their loved ones to receive a higher education. Some students may lean on their family for financial support, however the challenges left from the pandemic have left an impact. Unemployment has not only affected the students, but their family members as well. Compared to the previous recession of 2007 having a 10.6% unemployment, the current pandemic recession unemployment rate in 2020 was increased to 14.8%. Families continue to struggle supporting their loved ones and themselves.

While students may want to seek a higher education, maybe right now is not the right time to do so. It may seem better to go back to college with more free time because of the pandemic, however before doing so there must be a proper plan and roadmap or else it will end up causing more harm than good. It is not bad to seek a higher education during this recession, however it is important to do proper research and make intelligent decisions rather than impulsive ones.

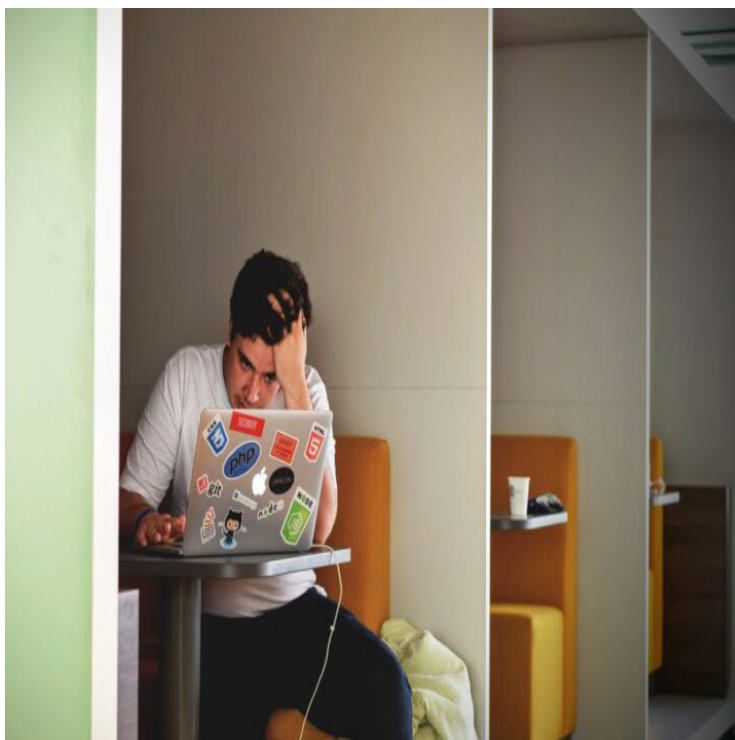


Photo by Tim Graw

The ritual of coming out and why heterosexuals don't have to

By Celeste Santarrosa
Staff Writer



Dani Villegas proudly out as lesbian

Coming out can be found intimidating and scary for a lot of people, but is it worth it in the end? Dani Villegas, a 21-year-old college student, shares her testimony of opening up about her sexuality and the process of coming out.

"The first time I came out was because I had no other choice but to do so," said Villegas.

She had no choice since her mother kicked her out of the house after she read Villegas' private diary, expressing her true sexual identity

To phrase it simply, coming out is the process of acknowledging and sharing with people one's sexual identity. This process allows for the person to develop positive self-esteem and build empowerment by no longer

hiding a part of who they are. But for some like Villegas, this process wasn't made easy.

"The biggest fear I had was how others would view me. I came to terms in high school, which is such a crucial time in any young person's life. At that age, I just wanted to be liked by those around me," said Villegas. "I was also very fearful that my family wouldn't accept me. My family's opinion matters to me deeply, so I was scared that they would no longer love or accept me."

It's important to keep in mind that coming out can be a long process and not just a single event. It could mean coming to terms with recognizing and accepting one's own sexual identity before coming out to others. There is no denying that there are multiple risks and benefits to coming out. And no means these pros and cons are meant to convince anyone to make a decision, but rather think of some of the possibilities to help prepare one for possible reactions.

Before coming out, Villegas did a whole lot of reflection. Everyone's experience is a different situation, but before making a decision it might be beneficial to reflect on certain aspects. Ask yourself the following questions: "Is this my decision?", "Is this a good time?", "Am I comfortable with my sexual identity?", "Do I have

support?"

"Sadly, a lot of families can be unaccepting of one's sexuality, so I believe that individuals should have a safe place to stay in case their family reacts poorly to them coming out," said Villegas. "They should be prepared for both positive and negative reactions. Like my mom was very upset when I came out, but I had expected her to be there for me with open arms."

Once on her own, Villegas was able to rely on her aunt yet she was back to hiding a significant part of herself. Without wanting to lose the opportunity to properly come out to her aunt on her terms, Villegas decided on her own this was where she thinks acceptance and support are found.

"I eventually forced myself to say 'I'm what *cousin's name* is'. I still couldn't find the courage to say the words, and I began to cry," said Villegas. "She began to name off a million things until she reached 'gay?'. I slowly nodded my head and she reached out to hug me."

After building self-esteem by being honest about herself, Villegas was able to be more genuine with her aunt. This took a massive weight off Villegas' shoulders, allowing her to ease her stress and worries of hiding her identity or fears of having to live a double life.

"I think many LGBTQ+ individuals just want to be

accepted. Being gay doesn't change who I am," said Villegas. "I'm still the same person I was before I came out, now people just know that I love differently than they had expected. I'm still the same Dani, regardless of my sexuality."

Being open and overcoming the fears of judgment has given many LGBTQ+ individuals many profound experiences of freedom. Openly loving who you love, connecting with other LGBTQ+ people, empowering those who haven't come out, educating others, being a safe place for someone, expressing how you feel and so much more.

Coming out allows one to see the most honest picture of life to be one's self without having to do it behind closed doors. "Now I live fearlessly and proud of who I am. I don't have to hide myself or anybody I'm dating, I'm free to be the person I am," said Villegas.

Yet why do people still need to come out? Throughout the decades society's attitude towards the acceptance of LGBTQ+ has undoubtedly changed for the better. There is more representation throughout the media expressing gender identity and sexual identity causing a shift in cultural norms giving the future hope. So why is coming out still a part of the process for some individuals? Why is saying a few words found to be so difficult still?

It's because we live in a heterosexual-dominated society. Straight individuals don't think of coming out when they talk about or introduce their partners to others. For some professions, there is still wariness to this welcoming of diversity.

"Being straight is the norm, it's what everyone expects you to be. When you don't follow the norm, people feel entitled to answer as to why you don't because it makes them uncomfortable," said Villegas.

Equally, coming out is a joyous process and action. Everything has gotten better for Villegas because she knew she was being herself, coming out has allowed her to finally be her whole self freely. In hopes for the future, coming out should be less of a big statement or announcement for LGBTQ+ individuals. Instead, they should just simply decide not to self-censor.

Coming out will always be a part of this process, but ideally in the future maybe one day it will be as mundane as saying what your favorite color is.

"For the longest time my mom had trouble accepting that I was lesbian, but our relationship has gotten a lot better," said Villegas. "I would want those who are debating to come out to know that things do get easier over time. The first few times are difficult and scary, but the more you do it, the easier."

The civil rights activist forced into the shadows

By Jason Lucero
Staff Writer

A man by the name of Bayard Rustin was an integral part of the nonviolent civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, directly working with Martin Luther King Jr. to organize nonviolent marches, sit-ins, and boycotts. He should be celebrated by all alongside the names of Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks but was unfairly forced out of our history books simply because of his sexuality.

"Martin Luther King, with whom I worked very closely, became very distressed when a number of ministers working for him wanted him to dismiss me from his staff because of my homosexuality," said Rustin.

Born March 17, 1912, in West Chester, Pennsylvania,

Bayard Rustin grew up in a society full of prejudice towards him, not only for the color of his skin but also for his sexuality. It was this prejudice, as well as the values his family instilled in him that led him onto the path that would one day result in him becoming a key contributor to the civil rights movement.

"My activism did not spring from my being gay, or, for that matter, from being Black," Rustin once said.

"Rather, it is rooted fundamentally in my Quaker upbringing and the values that were instilled in me by my grandparents who reared me."

Above all, it was the Quaker value of nonviolence that influenced him the most. Due to this, he became a conscientious objector to WWII and refused to enlist in the draft, which led

to his arrest in 1944. Rustin recounted his experience, stating

"I am a Quaker, and as everyone knows, Quakers, for 300 years, have, on the conscientious ground, been against participating in war. I was sentenced to three years in federal prison because I could not religiously and conscientiously accept killing my fellow man," said Rustin.

This was one of the many times he would find himself behind bars due to who he was and his beliefs. Another time would be a 60-day sentence in 1953 when he got arrested on a moral charge for engaging in "homosexual activity". This would lead to him losing his job as a secretary for student and general affairs for the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Fortunately, this job had already led him to

one of the most influential people in his life, his mentor A. Philip Randolph.

Randolph and Rustin became close friends and it was Randolph himself who urged Rustin to meet with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who had started gathering a following in his fight for civil rights. In 1955, Rustin became a key organizer and strategist for Dr. King and was hugely influential on him.

Rustin was the man who pushed MLK to fully embrace pacifism and nonviolence in his movement, using the teachings and philosophies of Gandhi as an example. Together, the two formed a nearly unstoppable team. Dr. King's powerful speeches and unrivaled leadership skills kept the movement growing, while Rustin used his strategy and

organization skills to set up their nonviolent marches and protests.

In 1960, Rustin and Dr. King planned a march on the Democratic National Convention to protest the party's lackluster stance on civil rights. Unfortunately, Congressman Clayton Powell was sent by the DNC to stop this protest, and the weapon he used to do so was his knowledge of Rustin's sexuality. Powell told them that if they were to go through with the march, he would falsely accuse Reverend King of having an affair with Rustin.

The face of the civil rights movement having a homosexual affair would not only assassinate King's character to the general public but also most likely...

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Saying no to a quinceanera party to pursue doctorate degree

By **Mayra Mendoza**
Staff Writer

Choosing to study versus partying was a typical decision made by the University of Southern California (USC) graduate, Christina Gonzalez. Gonzalez shares her story of being a first-generation graduate, the challenges she faced, and how she had to overcome cultural and family expectations.

Gonzalez explains her personal experience of how being a first-generation graduate pursuing her Doctor of Education Degree (EdD) made her face cultural challenges and created family turmoil. Gonzalez received her EdD in 2019 despite her perception of family unsupportiveness and shares insight on how to overcome first-generation graduate challenges.

"I come from an enormous family, every month there are about 2-3 birthdays to celebrate. Being born into a Hispanic family that loves to party on the weekends wasn't all that when you're the first person to

choose to pursue an education," Gonzalez commented.

After asking Gonzalez what made her feel that having family parties throughout the month "wasn't all that" she mentioned that her family would criticize her for choosing to study on the weekends and doing her homework.

Gonzalez said, "I recall when one of my brothers had a quinceanera party for one of my nieces, my entire family judged my decision of declining the invite."

Gonzalez was receiving calls after calls from her grandmother, her brothers, to her aunts and uncles, cousins all wondering why she didn't want to go to her niece's quinceanera.

"My family didn't understand the importance of a doctorate degree. They would think that I was upset with them or didn't care to be part of the family. They took my decision personally. They would think that I didn't want to go to the family events and wouldn't comprehend that I just couldn't go," Gonzalez recalls.

Being a first-generation graduate, Gonzalez struggled

with feeling supported by her family and shared that she would do her best to be understanding and compassionate about why her family would behave the way they would with her.

Gonzalez stated, "I was the first generation graduate from my siblings so I did my best to not judge them based on their inability to understand where I was coming from but I always did what was best for me."

One of the insights Gonzalez provided was to ensure consistency and commitment to your education as a college student.

"There are many challenges that first-generation college students face, some are psychological like guilt that you are betraying your culture and your family by pursuing higher education," said Gonzalez. "Others are financial, social, and academic. Since these challenges are more than likely to occur it's crucial that a student stays committed to their overall goal."

Gonzalez also mentioned that she utilized as many resources available to her as possible for her social, financial, academic, and psychological

needs.

"When I was pursuing my bachelor's degree I qualified for FAFSA and also applied for the California Student Aid Commission to assist with my financial aid," said Gonzalez.

Gonzalez continued to express that she also took advantage of other resources available to her at USC.

"I knew my academic strengths and weaknesses. For me, my biggest academic struggle was writing essays, so I would go to the writing center frequently to ensure I was doing what I could to get passing grades," Gonzalez stated.

Being a first-generation college student that didn't feel seen or heard by her family, Gonzalez stated that she had to find other outlets to express herself and feel connected to people and USC resources assisted her in doing just that.

"From there I also made sure to take advantage of any free classes offered by USC that dealt with psychology and mental stability. Lastly, I ensured that I would join USC social gatherings when I had free time or visit family when I could,"

Gonzalez shared.

Gonzalez's Hispanic background culturally emphasizes collectivity, harmony, and cooperation in the family group tends to be emphasized more than individual function and responsibility which made it difficult for her to connect to her family since she felt she has been functioning from an individualist standpoint and hardly shared family responsibilities due to the high demands school had on her.

"I felt as if I was the black sheep of the family. My entire family has a role within the family and at times it felt that I didn't play any role at all but these were most likely feelings based on the experience I had of unsupportiveness and also my demanding school schedule," said Gonzalez.

Gonzalez shared that the best advice she can give to any first-generation college student is to control the controllable.

"You can't control how anyone perceives you, or how demanding school can be, or your cultural background but you can control your choices," said Gonzalez.



Photo by George Milton

Local shop owner inspires community in Apple Valley



Photo by Amaya Baca.

By Andrea Smith
Staff Writer

Located in a small tucked away shopping center in Apple Valley lies the Inspired Gift Shop, which is owned and operated by Amaya Baca, a 20-year-old who has a vision for the High Desert and the surrounding area.

At the age of 17, Amaya was involved in a head-on traffic collision where she suffered many injuries, including a traumatic brain injury. After her accident, she was no longer interested in pursuing sports medicine as a major in college and took a chance on business instead. A decision that would change her life. Majoring in business, Amaya took an interest in entrepreneurship. That interest turned into her starting her own business and selling goods

online and at local farmers markets all while healing and recovering from her injuries. After a few years of hard work and dedication, The Inspired Gift shop evolved from a market stand into a full-blown store. With plenty of encouragement from her family and friends, Amaya now runs the entire store completely by herself. And she already has a sizable clientele.

"It's a little hippie shop, ran by a little hippie" Baca commented.

The Inspired Giftshop sells an array of items, but the main attraction of the store is its spiritual supplies. Everything from Catholic symbols to crystals and sage products are available, as well as clothing, jewelry, and CBD dog treats.

"I like to think no matter what your religion or interests are you will be able to find

something you like in the store," Baca explained.

Some of Amaya's favorite products are her CBD dog treats and, for the humans, Guatemalan Worry Dolls.

"I really like our Guatemalan worry dolls. The legend behind them is, you tell the doll your worries and place them under your pillow while you sleep, and in the morning your worries will be gone," said Baca.

Baca credited her mother for giving her the drive to pursue her passions so successfully.

"When I was a child I watched my mother open up a salon all by herself, and it's still open to this day. She was a big inspiration to me".

The Inspired Gift Shop is completely operated by Baca as the only employee. While this can be a challenge, the store has been successful at staying in business in the High Desert and Inland Empire, as well as night markets in Downtown Los Angeles.

The main goal of the inspired Giftshop is to encourage people to practice self-care and be kind in their everyday lives. Amaya and the community of people interested in spirituality see the use of crystals, herbs, and other tools as a form of self-care. All of these are said to have extremely beneficial effects and

can be used to improve one's health in a multitude of ways.

The store sells a wide variety of crystals, handmade crystal jewelry, sage and other herbs and trinkets. However, there are also clothes, room sprays, mugs, date night ideas and games, and decorations available.

It's not uncommon for people to have a misconception about spirituality. But Baca is determined to show people that

it isn't scary at all, and there is something for everyone.

"Some people might be only into chakras and not other things, or only into crystals- and that's okay! I like to make people feel comfortable here and have something that you are going to like whether it has to do with spirituality or not."

The Inspired Gift Shop is located in The Apple Valley Inn shopping center surrounded by other shops and small businesses.



Photo by Yan Krukov

San Bernardino County embarks on healthy eating through their IE Vegan Sundays event

By Alexis Corine McGowan
Staff Writer

From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., every Sunday in San Bernardino, at 478 N. D St., a weekly vegan event takes place for vegan vendors to come to sell products ranging from food, clothes, and even crystals.

The food options included pizza, Mexican food, dips and spreads to use as a snack, clothes, specialty drinks, and even eyelashes which was a star in its own way. I personally had nachos, a small strawberry lemonade, and tried some tacos. All were delicious of course and it meant a lot when purchasing and the owners come to talk to you or personally thank you for coming whether it's from the staff or the owner it's meaningful and personal. The smells are inviting, the smiles are contagious and the area is nice and full of green from the people to the beautiful landscape the city of San Bernardino has offered.

Names were called out like we were all people moving in a bustle and it was like being in a small yet functioning well-oiled machine. If you are unfamiliar with vegan food in the Inland Empire, you can always check out vegoutmag, which is a magazine that has local information on food, so you kind of get what kind of cuisine you are craving, or you can always try samples at the event.

Some vendors come every week while others rotate. The vendors announce if they're participating in the event every week through their Instagram. The way to find and contact the vendors that are on the roster is through their business Instagram or if you can't find what you are looking for you can always ask the Instagram account for the weekly Sunday event.

While it may seem like this is a small event it is a powerful one as it throws the stigma or stereotype of what vegan food looks or tastes like. It's slowly growing every

With over 1.9k members, it



A mixture of dips and spreads that can be used to snack at IE Vegan Sundays vendors event in San Bernardino. Photo by IE Vegan Sundays

shows that places like the weekly Sunday vegans are greatly needed. It's amazing what the internet can teach and aid you in your discovery of the vegan community.

During the event, the

compound area is packed and the grass area with vibrant green growing grass offers many the opportunity to lay down or eat their food on a blanket or chair.

The vegan community can be easily found through

a community on Instagram, Facebook and the weekly vegan Sunday Inland Empire. The vegan Sunday Inland Empire is an eyeopener and the taste of the food and meeting new people are priceless.

VoxPop: What ma

Taking the time to notice what makes us feel alive and b us understand ourselves, as well as have empathy for others changes.

By Anujin Byambajav
Copy Editor



Ameer Tales, First-year, Biology major

Knowing that other people think about me. They know that I exist. That is like an affirmation that I am alive. What is enjoyable at this moment is spending time with those people.

What makes me feel alive in this moment is not knowing what the future holds. It makes me feel excited about the future. Not being stuck in the same place makes me feel alive and know that I am doing something with my life. The excitement of what the future holds is what keeps me alive.



Daniel Villegas, First-year, Analytics Major

What makes me feel alive is the conversations that I get to have with people. I think that when you get to have a really good conversation with someone, whether it's deep or very lighthearted, it makes you feel very happy to be anywhere and everywhere. I love talking to my friends from Lubos PASO. I love talking with random people and everything in between.



Marrian Angeles, Second-year, Economics Major

What makes me feel alive is interacting with everybody. I like interacting with people. I meet a lot of people through the classes I take. During my first year, I went to the homecoming that was held at the beginning of the semester and I got to learn what kind of school clubs or activities there are. I went to a dance one time at the old Student Union. Even though there were not that many students, I just like participating in things like that.



Darrin Gomez, Second-year, Kinesiology student

What keeps you feeling alive?

Being mindful of our feelings, emotions, and thoughts, can help those who are experiencing difficult situations or negotiating big

I feel like what is alive for me at this moment is how much respect and love I have for my family. It is what keeps me going and it motivates me to do better in school. My parents came from Mexico with medium education and they had a lot of barriers, such as learning English and finding a job to support me and my siblings. I owe my whole life to them and they motivated me to do better in school. I have four older siblings and one younger sibling. My older siblings would help me with the experiences they had in school, so I try to be involved in school as much as possible to meet new people and make new friends.



Daniel Gaeta, Second-year, Computer engineer major



Dominiek Dayrit, Second-year, Biology major

Honestly, what makes me feel alive are my friends at this school, like the fraternity family that I will be joining very soon. Just being able to come to school, hang out with people, learn, and experience new things, in general, is what makes me feel alive.

I would say what makes me feel alive at this very moment is when I go to work out. I feel my heart beating. I feel life within me. That is what keeps me keep on going through all the stress and sadness that builds up. When I am working out, I just feel alive and know that I am doing good.



Viviana Vega, Third-year, Biology major



Dayana Rodriguez, Third-year, Biology major

I would say what makes me feel alive at this very moment is when I go to work out. I feel my heart beating. I feel life within me. That is what keeps me keep on going through all the stress and sadness that builds up. When I am working out, I just feel alive and know that I am doing good.

CSUSB among the 400 schools in attendance of the 70th Model United Nations Conference

From CSUSB, 18 students departed to New York as delegates of The Republic of Cameroon and representatives of their school. Led by Program Assistant Sofia Alvarez and faculty member Professor Sina Bastami, the Delegation of Cameroon won the Outstanding Delegation Award for their preparation and skill demonstrated during the conference.



Students from all over the world come together to collaborate on resolutions that tackle each committee's respective topics. Photo by Yussif Kanbar

By Yussif Kanbar
Staff Writer

The National Model United Nations (NMUN) program is an event where about 400 colleges and universities come together to represent the member states that are part of the United Nations and discuss current world issues with the intent to collaborate and come to a resolution that addresses the topic. This year's event involved 408 schools from around the world with a total of 6353 students, 468 faculty members, and more than 200 volunteers. Led by Secretary-General Natalie Keller, and Deputy Secretary-General Estefani Morales Zanoletti, the event kicked off with a bang as they welcomed students and faculty to adjourn the meeting in

person for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic.

Among the schools present at the NMUN conference were Ukrainian Catholic University and the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, whose students made the trip with faculty adviser Dr. Halyna Protsyk, despite the current situation taking place in Ukraine. Dr. Protsyk held a seminar with faculty from the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre at MacEwan University to raise awareness and share their experiences on the situation of the Russian-Ukrainian war taking place. The harsh situation served as a wake-up call to a brutal reality. Students from schools all over the world were allowed to ask questions about the war and were given a chance

to connect with Ukrainian students.

CSUSB's students spent three months preparing and gathering research on topics ranging from human rights issues, environment, sustainable development, and more. An exceptional amount of effort was made by the students to familiarize themselves with UN policies, and topics that are outside their fields of study since members of the team came from various backgrounds with majors ranging from cybersecurity and IT to psychology and communication studies. In New York, they spent days collaborating with delegates representing different countries, discussing possible solutions for the respective topics of each committee, and trying to come

up with a resolution that all countries can get behind.

Navigating the world of politics is challenging, yet our students were able to experience that challenge and apply skills they've learned from their respective majors. In an interview with Professor Bastami, we discussed how students often think that the MUN program does not relate to their major or field of study in any way. In reality, political topics and world issues are connected with almost every major and require experts in diverse academic fields. Most importantly, students were able to experience a new perspective on how world issues are discussed and addressed, along with making connections with classmates and students from

different parts of the world.

The purpose of the NMUN program is to provide an understanding of the United Nations and to inform students about world issues, working towards peace, and diplomacy. The experience itself is a reminder of how vast the world is and invites anyone who seeks to contribute to making it a better place. The exposure to students and faculty alone allows for international connections between students in various fields. For many students and Faculty NMUN 2022 was their last conference, and for others, it was their first. NMUN veterans have passed the torch to the newcomers who will keep their passion for politics and diplomacy kindled until it is their turn to move on.

From Afghanistan to the United States: The tale of a woman who defied the odds

By Zarin Rahime
Staff Writer

When you meet her for the first time you would think that her life has been milk and honey. Her happy and bubbly disposition might deceive you into thinking that her childhood was that of a Disney princess. But sitting with her and listening to her stories, you will realize that she is nothing but a courageous woman who defied the odds of many immigrant stories.



Photo by Zarin Rahime

And this is Jamila Rahime, a 61-year-old mother of two who fled Afghanistan at the age of 17 to live an American dream. Her unique journey and struggles from Afghanistan to Japan, Germany then finally to the United States could be a story of many other immigrants out there who have left their homes in pursuit of a better life in the United States.

Jamila Rahime, was born and raised in Afghanistan but had to flee with her family when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in the 70s. Her family went straight to Germany but Rahime left and decided to go straight to Japan to live with her older brother. To get to Japan she had to travel through India all on her own as a 17-year-old. One could only imagine what it felt like to be a young girl traveling in a foreign country all on her own without her family. Jamila's driving force was the pursuit of a better life.

She lived in Japan from 1979 to 1983. In the span of living there for almost four years, Jamila was able to learn how to speak Japanese fluently. While she was living there she

continued her education and attended an all-girls university where she accomplished getting a degree in economics. At this same university, she was also working and teaching English to other students.

After spending some time in Japan with her brother and finishing her education, she decided to move to Soltau, Germany and reunite with the rest of her family. There, she continued her education and decided to follow her passion of becoming a nurse. She finished her studies and worked at a hospital in the same town she lived in. It was around this time that she met her husband Mohammed. He had a similar story to hers. Him and his family were also from Afghanistan and they all fled due to the Soviet invasion. Mohammed was his family's sole provider and he helped them make it to Germany, where they too were in pursuit of a better life. They were both from the same cultural background and as soon as they met it didn't take long for wedding bells to ring.

Before their wedding, they

built a house together, which they moved into on their wedding day. Soon after they wed, they decided to sell their newly built house and move to America to live the life they dreamed of. Like many immigrants, they struggled at first and built a foundation from scratch. They first came to California where some of their own family were already living. Soon after, Jamila and Mohammed had their first child together, a daughter. Two years later they decided to move to St. Louis, Missouri to live close to her brother who had encouraged them to move there because life was easier than California. After 6 years of struggling to have another child, in 1998 Jamila gave birth to her second child, a boy. All while doing this she continued her education and became a registered nurse and worked at a nursing home, while Mohammed was working in property management. She did this while raising children and trying to make ends meet with her husband. Eventually, after living in Missouri for 8 years they had enough money saved up to move back to California to



Photo by Zarin Rahime

pursue a better quality of life.

She now lives happily in Southern California with her family, working as a registered nurse in the COVID-19 unit at a hospital.

"My life is very good," said Rahime. "I have a beautiful life, I'm healthy, I live in sunny California, I have two good children that I'm proud of and a daughter who is about to graduate with her bachelor's. I learned in life to take nothing for granted. And to face consequences for my choices. I make my life better by learning from my experiences."

Through the eyes of a native Ukrainian woman: The 2022 Ukraine War

By Catherine Orellana,
Breana Owens
Staff Writers

"Sometimes I just want to check out, but I do not have that luxury," Kristina Korbs said as she endures the hardships of war in Ukraine. The young woman was featured on CNN as she expressed the turmoil her country has faced due to the uncertainty

of its future.

Kristina Korbs is a native Ukrainian woman who documents her day-to-day life on social media such as TikTok as she gives her international viewers a look inside life living through a war. Korbs explains and updates viewers on the challenges she and her loved ones face daily, as well as the hurt her people face every day

as constant attacks and battles continue in Ukraine. Korbs documents her life to give her followers a realistic and factual view of what is happening every day in Ukraine as social media and the news have bombarded the public with so much news that many now don't know what to believe. This woman as well utilizes this social media platform to spread awareness

and try to do her part to aid the people of Ukraine.

Everyday necessities such as food and gas are not easily accessible to those living within the borders of Ukraine. Korbs illustrates through her videos a firsthand experience of long lines that show desperation and scarcity of food. She shows how people line up blocks away from the grocery store and wait long hours just to see if they can get their hands on limited essential supplies. Grains and sugar are limited down to five kilos per customer despite the need and demand being much higher. Grocery store shelves are shown to be barren and clear of many foods like bread, however, there is an abundance of eggs and chicken. The rations do not stop at the grocery store alone. Ukrainian citizens are confined to only 20 liters or five gallons of gas per car. Weekly inventory is taken in her home to see how many available resources are feasible for the family to use. Seeing as multiple people are living in her household, controlled distribution is vital to survival. Power outages are not an uncommon occurrence that Kristina bears witness to. On one occasion when the power was down for a couple of hours, all of their frozen food was defrosted

such as multiple bags of potato dumplings. Due to the situation, they were forced to cook meals that were intended for an emergency. This is something that is not unique to the Korbs family, but to many households in Ukraine.

Leaving the country is basically impossible for most citizens. It is much easier for many to wait in long lines for small portions of food at the grocery store than to exit the country. The roads are blocked, and the dense traffic keeps the road packed for miles. In this instance, the risk is not worth the reward. Kristina believes that staying put is the best option for her and her family because of the many obstacles they would have to face in attempting to flee. Her household consists of children, senior citizens, and animals; 17 people in total. Packing up for days to make a trip to the border would require food that they don't have, and more gas than they are allowed. There is also the issue of safety with road blockades everywhere, and checkpoints. Should Korbs and her family make it out, they would face the ongoing threat of bombings. This is why the best course of action is to stay where they are and work with what they have.



Photo by Mathias P.R. Reding

How social media made a positive impact during the pandemic

Social media is often seen as the villain in today's society, but could it actually be the secret hero of the Pandemic?



Photo by Tracy Le Blanc

By Jason Lucero
Staff Writer

Whether it be posting their thoughts on Twitter, scrolling through memes on Reddit, liking a friend's photos on Instagram, or watching videos on Tiktok, most people consume social media on a regular basis. With so many people using these sites, it is no wonder that the effects of social media have been so thoroughly studied. The results of this research have often not been kind to the prospect of social media being beneficial. Many of these studies have shown how social media can become addictive, how seeing edited and perfected photos can lead to self esteem issues, and how seeing "influencers" living extravagant lifestyles can cause a person to be depressed about their own life. Recently, however, the overwhelming number of negatives social media has might finally be outweighed by the positives it can provide.

For the better part of the last two years, the COVID-19

pandemic has made social lives next to impossible. People have been forced to isolate themselves from their friends, family, and coworkers in order to avoid catching or spreading the virus. This means working remotely, attending their classes over zoom, only leaving their homes to grab groceries and other essentials, and generally only spending time with the people in your own household. All this isolation has taken its toll on everyone's mental health, with feelings of loneliness and depression becoming rampant in people of all age groups. In these dire times people need a saving grace, something that can help boost their mental health by once again making them feel connected to their friends and loved ones. Luckily for them, the very social media sites that many have claimed has been poisoning the minds of teens and young adults might just be the unlikely hero they needed. Yes there are many potential downsides to social media use, but it is called 'social' media for a reason. It is

a tool that allows you to interact with your friends and family without having to occupy the same space as them and therefore can help you digitally keep connected with the world around you without having to leave your home.

Research seems to support social media playing this beneficial role as well. One study published in The Journal of Social and Personal Relationships found that social media use has a negative relationship with both existential isolation and social loneliness, meaning that the more social media a person uses, the less isolated and lonely they feel. Another study from Youth and Society suggests that receiving positive feedback online can aid mental well being and can actually help a person alleviate some of the symptoms of depression they could feel. Although social support over the internet may not be quite as impactful as support given face to face, it is still much better than nothing and helps keep the

a feeling of community alive. Social media has also played an essential role in the mental development of adolescents. During this time in a person's life, social connection and relationships are important. Not having any social interaction during this time can leave an adolescent stunted socially, as they have not had a chance to develop the skills needed for everyday interactions. These adolescents are nearly completely reliant upon social media in order to learn the social skills they need and form relationships with their peers through video chats, calls, or simple text based messaging. All of these benefits listed show how important social media has been in maintaining and developing social interactions during the pandemic, however social media's positive uses doesn't stop there. Social media is also a great place for self expression for people of all ages and has also been one of the main platforms that utilized by the CDC to spread

information about COVID, such as safety guidelines and new developments, because of its ability to spread news throughout the entire country quickly.

Although there are so many positive aspects of social media being highlighted during the pandemic, it is important to remember that the negatives still exist. People can still have their self esteems and mental health damaged by it. They can still become addicted to the social connectedness and feel anxiety when offline. Social media is still a place where misinformation is being spread. Therefore, even though using social media may be beneficial, people still need to be wary and mindful of the downsides when they use it. Like most things in this world, there is a limit for when too much of a good thing becomes a bad thing. It is important for us as individuals to decide for ourselves where the cutoff needs to be in order to maximize the good we can get from social media and minimize the adverse effects.

Mobile phone syndrome, if you can't avoid it, prevent it

By Dahyun Lee
Contributing Writer

Suppose you have a day without a smartphone. From checking the class schedule to finding out the arrival time of the bus, all the information that could be found with just a few touches every day is alienated. In this case, most people will feel uncomfortable or anxious about not being able to use their cell phones all day.

As such, we rely more on smartphones than we think, from trivial to big. According to a study by the ICT Statistics and Information Research Office of the Information and Communication Policy Institute, the smartphone ownership rate in their 20s is 99.8%. For college students, smartphones are a necessity that has melted deep into their lives.

The spread of mobile devices has given us a convenient life. In addition to phone calls and text messages,

leisure and work such as surfing the web, watching games, watching videos, reading and writing documents can be solved with one device. However, the infinite comfort provided by mobile has made people 'phono sapiens,' which is described as a generation that has difficulty living without smartphones, or humans who use smartphones as part of their bodies. Accordingly, we looked into the psychological and physical problems we face in the social change caused by the universalization of mobile phones and their risks and solutions.

Recently, people who hang their heads down while using smartphones while walking have frequent accidents. The problems caused by the increased penetration rate and frequency of use of smartphones are collectively called "mobile syndrome."

Since it is a safety problem related to our lives, the problem caused by the spread of mobile devices is by no means light. However, now that it is almost

impossible to live without using a smartphone, it is not easy to blindly stay away from mobile devices, which are considered the cause of the problem.

Professor Seo, a Korean psychologist, urged people to use smartphones in the right posture.

"It is very difficult to treat any disease after the pain occurs, so efforts to prevent it in advance are the most important," said Professor Seo.

Smartphone users who use smartphones for a long time are used to writing letters with

their thumbs. At this time, have you ever felt the pain in your finger muscles holding your cell phone with your hand and touching the screen with your...

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Mobile phones have become a part of our body such that losing it would feel like one has lost a part of their body. In the image above, a student reluctantly offers his mobile phone to the teacher for experimental purposes. Photo Credit: Dahyun Lee

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A true leader of the Inland Empire

By Kenya Johnson
Staff Writer

Dr. Ayanna Balogun is a CSUSB alumnus who has made a huge impact on the Inland Empire and has risen over and beyond for the community. She has persevered through hardships and adversity and has managed to become a success. Starting at Chaffey community college she then transferred to CSUSB receiving her Bachelor of liberal arts, to eventually getting her Ph.D. from the Harvard University Extension School.

Today she is the principal of Warner Elementary. I first met her as my first-grade teacher at Curtis Elementary in Rialto, Ca. As a little Black girl, she always instilled in me to get educated and stay determined no matter what life throws at you. She made sure to always let me know that my black is beautiful, to be empowered and to give back to the community. Putting students first has always been her main priority. Throughout any endeavor with school, she has always made sure to be there for me.

Giving back to the

community is one of the many characteristics that makes her a great person. She has a nonprofit organization Emerging Beauty Inc which focuses on empowering black women in the community. A Queens meeting was an event held March 12, 2022. The event was held not only to honor queens of the community who have given back but to also bring black women of all ages in the Inland Empire to celebrate one another.

Dr. Balogun said, "The goal of A Queens meeting was to celebrate women, create a united base, help women empower themselves from within and motivate them to utilize their talents, use their power to impact and empower others in the community and broader society. In total, 180 women came to the event and celebrated with one another. Everyone wore purple, black, and gold. This event brought Black women from all different backgrounds together for a great cause."

The goal is to expand Emerging Beauty Inc and to go even further with helping the community. She plans on having an Inland Empire black women's collective. The

women of the collective will help to push Black women who are campaigning politically in the community. Putting on workshops to help black women of the community build their credit and become successful entrepreneurs. Balogun is also the director of the Bany program which is geared toward Black middle school girls of the Fontana school district. The Bany program helps to build confidence for young black girls in the community. The program teaches young black girls self-love and how to create certain cool experiments at home, such as lips gloss and lotions. She makes learning science cool and appealing to young Black girls with an urban twist.

She helped write *Who We Are and How We Learn*. The book's focus is Educational Engagement and Justice for Diverse Learners serves as an educational program handbook for understanding the complexities of student engagement and providing access and justice for learners, with an emphasis on students with diverse backgrounds. Points from the book include helping to frame students' educational

justice through social as well as cultural views, the role of cultural capital from home and school settings, and the influence of the funds of knowledge.

The material addresses race and culture as they pertain to curriculum, instruction, and performance of all students, with a focus on African American and Latinx students. It examines social class and identity, social and cultural dimensions of family involvement as a predictor of student engagement, adaptations for English learners, and writing as a way to capture student voices. This book you can purchase on Amazon is great for students of all ages and backgrounds.

Dr. Ayanna wears many different hats, she is also a great mother to her two children. Her son graduated from Brigham Young University of Utah with his masters and her daughter is a Senior this year at Summit high school in Fontana and is excited to attend a Historically Black college in the fall. Her efforts and achievements have not gone unnoticed. She is a staple in the community. She has had success in a lot of her students' past and present. As a black

woman of the community, she is such an inspiration to all. Her life journey has not been easy. Coming from humble beginnings she has persevered through it all and came out on top. Her mother recently passed away and she has continued to walk in her legacy and in her purpose. She is the epitome of a strong Black woman and an outstanding leader of our community.



Photo by Ayanna Balogun

From a grim and bleak childhood to motivational speaker and author

By Anthony Teig
Staff Writer

Kevon Lee did not let his childhood and adolescent years define who he wanted to become. At the young age of five years old, Lee was placed in the foster care system due to being shot during a drug-related incident that involved his parents. After graduating high school, Lee flipped his lifestyle upside down. He became a fitness advocate, a motivational speaker for the youth, author, and activist for anti-bullying. Lee graduated from CSUSB with his Bachelors degree.

As a young child, the environment Lee grew up in was pretty devastating. At a young age, the community around us shapes our mindset and the way we view life. Lee's community consisted of drugs and prison time. It was implanted in his head that everyone goes to prison, so at the age of 13 he asked his grandmother when was his turn to go to prison. Everyone in Lee's family had gone to prison, with his biological

parents alone, the two of them combined had gone to prison over 50 times. Upon hearing this from his grandmother, Lee realized that he can create his own future despite his childhood. In high school, Lee had suffered from an eating disorder which led him to gain a lot of weight. He weighed around 260 pounds while playing football for his high school. From the outside, Lee was a very happy, funny, and kind person to be around. On the inside, he was suffering from depression as a result of being bullied about his weight. Some of the bullying came from his closest friends or teammates, but he would hide his pain by cracking jokes. He would cry in silence so nobody could see him, because high school can be a ruthless environment and other kids might use that to bully him even further.

Lee wasn't really set on attending college, but the idea sounded nice even though his grades would remain barely above the minimum GPA to play sports. It wasn't until his sophomore year of high school that he started to change his mindset, and he owes it all to one

of his teachers. His teacher asked the class to raise their hands if they wanted to go to college, and upon raising his hand, the teacher made a very unnecessary remark. She said, "You? College? Please." in an attempt to diminish his spirit insinuating that he had no shot. Lee took this as a challenge, hearing this from a youth educator who is supposed to be supportive of her students, Lee wanted to prove her completely wrong. He started to dedicate much more time and effort into his studies, which



Author Kevon Lee presents his children's book to Almeria Middle School. Photo credit: Kevon Lee

led him to graduating with a 4.0 GPA and he began attending CSUSB the following year. He was the first in his family to graduate from high school and attend college, thus breaking the generational cycle.

After graduating high school, Lee began to develop this "innate beast" inside of him which led him to continue on this journey of self betterment. He remembered a quote someone told him a while ago, and has carried it with him ever since. It reads, "It's better to be consistently good rather than occasionally great" which helped Lee's mindset focus on his everyday habits and creating day to day goals to accomplish. He ended up losing a lot of his weight and became an active influencer for exercising and eating healthy. He has competed in triathlons, ran multiple marathons, and even cycling up to 100 miles in a single ride. When asked about this, Lee simply replied with, "If you don't quit at something, sooner or later it's bound to happen, and I applied that mindset to losing weight and becoming a speaker." The year 2019 was when

Lee realized his calling to become a motivational speaker. He had already been volunteering and working with the foster and homelessness community, but he wasn't completely invested in it. He began to share his story in a speaking setting, and once he realized how his story would touch peoples' lives, he began to really enjoy speaking. Since then, he has become a national activist for anti-bullying, education, and at-risk youth. Lee lectures across the nation to inspire and empower others to not give up, understand the power of their voice, and leaves them with his motto "Go Make a Difference" (#GoMAD). He is the author of "Kevon's Big Field Day, We Should All Have A Chance" and regularly reads his book to young children. He is working towards graduating from California Baptist University with a masters degree in Higher Education Leadership and Student Development.

Most of all, Lee wants to leave a legacy to others about never giving up and equipping young adults with the proper tools and mindset to achieve their goals and dreams.