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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2026 | UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA | EST. 1930 | WWW.DAILYNEXUS.COM



YDSA demands a meeting with the chancellor at Parents & Family Weekend

ELIJAH OBANDO / DAILY NEXUS

YDSA members spoke to Assanis for a few moments after his speech, where he did not agree to having a meeting.

Wynne Bendell
Lead News Editor

This past Parents & Family Weekend, UC Santa Barbara's Young Democratic Socialists of America chapter held a demonstration during Chancellor Dennis Assanis' speech, demanding direct communication regarding its Sanctuary Campus Campaign.

UCSB's Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) chapter began their Sanctuary Campus Campaign last year, amidst an unprecedented escalation in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) activity. The campaign includes a list of demands such as the prohibition of I.C.E. activity on campus, among others.

YDSA had previously delivered its list of demands to the chancellor's office on March 5, which included a petition of support signed by over 3,000 students. Since then, YDSA's negotiation team has met with Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Life Suzanne Perkin and Dean of Students Joaquin Becerra several times. However, the group has been unable to meet with Assanis, despite frequent requests.

According to YDSA Treasurer and second-year English major Kate Shivley, the lack of communication between the group and Assanis has become a major roadblock in the campaign, citing that the chancellor's approval is necessary for many of their demands.

"We [have] been hitting like a deadlock where there's nothing we can do," Shivley said. "So when we heard that Assanis was going to be speaking at an event, we thought it would be good to get some face time with him just to make him more aware of who we are and what we're doing and why we want him specifically to come to the table, because, for all we know, he doesn't know we exist. We haven't heard anything from him specifically on this issue."

Throughout the week leading up to Parents & Family Weekend, YDSA created posters and art pieces to showcase at the demonstration, some of which read, "Assanis what do we pay you for," and a "missing" sign hung up on Parking Lot 22 that read, "Have you seen our Chancellor? Neither have we."

After initially starting the demonstration on the Campus Green lawn, Perkin asked the group to move to the sidewalk, claiming it was a private event and they were not allowed to protest there.

Shivley said that YDSA members were able to speak to Assanis for a few moments after his speech, where he did not agree to having a meeting with the negotiations team. She said that there has not been any follow-up communication from the University.

Shivley said that this lack of communication is not a problem unique to YDSA, as she has had conversations with other students and organizations who have had similar problems in not being able to directly communicate with Assanis.

"He's not super visible on campus," Shivley said. "He doesn't address a lot of the issues in our community even though he's talking about the community in his speech. We found out that he's pretty difficult to get in touch with."

Shivley was also able to speak to some parents which she said generally supported both the campaign and their demand for a meeting with Assanis.

Since launching, the campaign has made some progress. According to Shivley, YDSA's demand that the University design and facilitate a Gaucho FYI module on best practices for responding to I.C.E. officers on campus and in the surrounding community has been met.

Shivley said she hopes that students remain engaged in the campaign despite less media coverage and social media posts about I.C.E. activity.

Lastly, Shivley emphasized that this campaign does not belong to YDSA, and that they have worked in tandem with many local advocacy groups such as El Congreso, Unión Del Barrio and 805 UndocuFund.



ELIJAH OBANDO / DAILY NEXUS

Throughout the week leading up to Parents & Family Weekend, YDSA created posters and art pieces to showcase at the demonstration.

UCSB students, staff react to midterm elections

Elle West
Staff Writer

The United States midterm elections were held on Nov. 3 and included national, statewide and local elections, as well as a lengthy list of California propositions.

UC Santa Barbara students reacted to results in a variety of ways, including celebration and frustration.

Isabel Hicks, a third-year political science major, speaking on Proposition 40 failing, said, "[it] was kind of disappointing because I feel like that was [so] obvious that [it] should have passed."

Proposition 40 was a ballot measure that proposed a one-time 5% tax on individuals with over $1 billion in assets. California voters shot down the proposition, with 52.8% voting no.

Autumn Lee, a second-year biochemistry major, felt "frustrated with certain props not passing, especially the billionaire tax" and was "astounded at the ambiguity of other ones, especially the one regarding funding for healthcare-related research that required a little bit more [personal] research."

Measure E2026, a ballot measure specific to Isla Vista, was passed by voters with a 71% majority. It includes a utility tax increase of 7% on methane and 6% on trash, sewage, water and electric. It is estimated to raise an annual revenue of $1.2 million to fund the I.V. Community Services District (IVCSD) for improving community safety efforts, housing services and more.

Hicks went on to say that IVCSD isn't "pro student in the way that they pretend they are" and "over policing is a huge issue in I.V., and IVCSD tries to act like they're pro community service or like other alternative forms of restorative justice, but I don't really think that they are."

Torin Fraser, a second-year biology major, was "pretty happy" with the national and statewide results.

"I was pretty bummed two years ago when Republicans got control of both the Senate and the House with Trump being a president," Fraser said.

According to the Associated Press, Democrats have so far won a majority of the Senate with 54 seats and majority of the House of Representatives with 255 seats. This comes two years after the 2024 election when Republicans gained control of all three chambers.

Lee described UCSB's political activism on campus as complex.

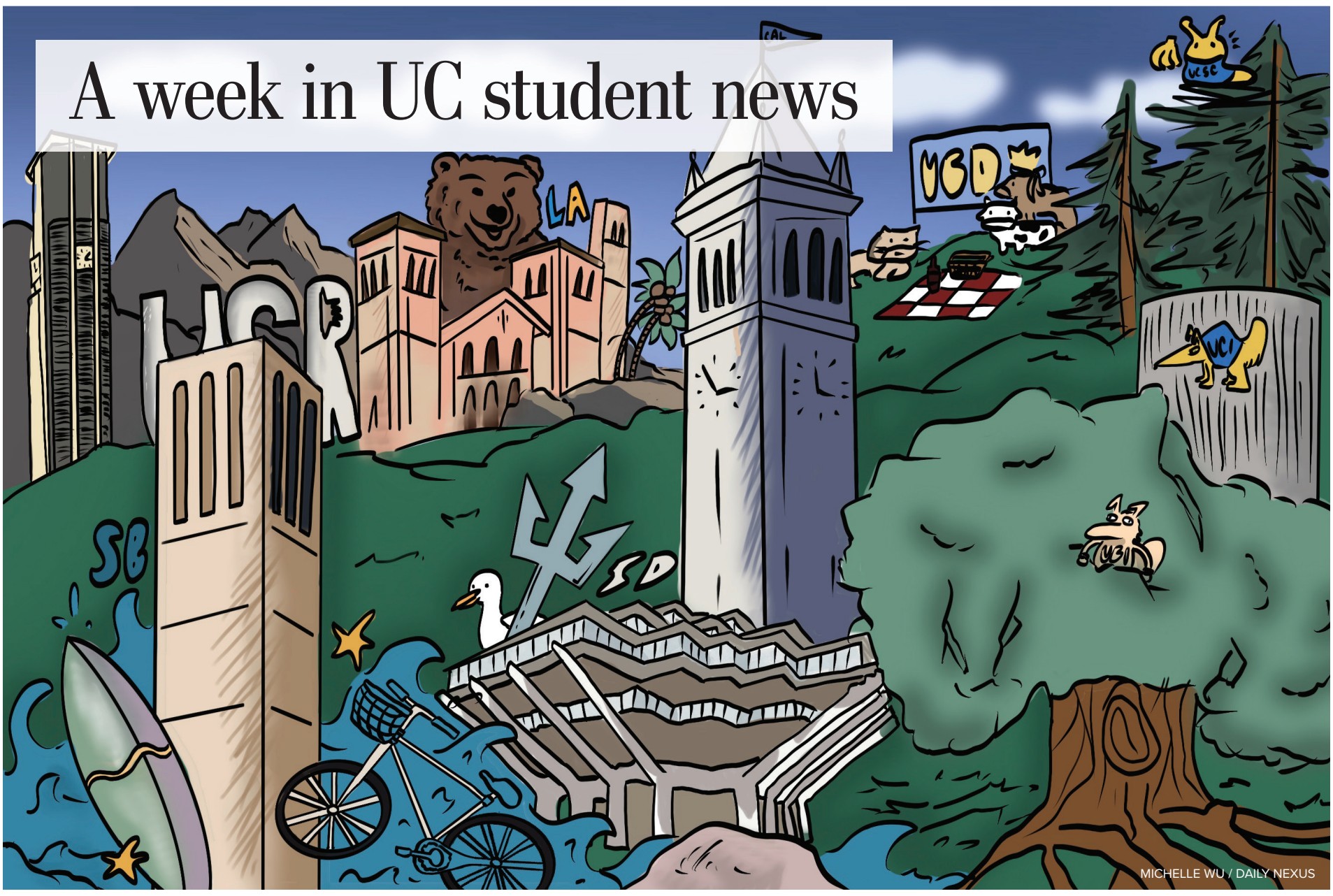
"Yes, and no. It's politically active in the sense that I think our minority students, underrepresented students and students who face systems of oppression are working quite hard to undo those systems, to reform them and to build new ones. I would say there is a lack of assessment on the privilege [some] hold here, which leads to a lot of political inefficacy."



SHENGYU ZHANG / DAILY NEXUS

Measure E2026, a ballot measure specific to Isla Vista, was passed by voters with a 71% majority.

A week in UC student news



MICHELLE WU / DAILY NEXUS

Wynne Bendell
Lead News Editor

UC investments buys Half Moon Bay's Ritz-Carlton for $193 million

The University of California's investment arm purchased the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Half Moon Bay for about $193 million, with no disclosed plans for use or management.

The UC investment arm maintains an investment portfolio of $236 billion, much of which is used to fund pension accounts for more than 80,000 system retirees. The Office of the Chief Investment Officer manages the UC investment portfolio, to which the chief investment officer, Jagdeep Singh Bachher, has independent investment authority. Bachher does not need UC Board of Regents approval for real estate deals.

The luxury oceanfront hotel has 261 rooms across the nearly 35,000 square feet property. According to county records, as reported by the Coastside News, the hotel buyer is listed as a limited partnership called Regency Half Moon Bay with the address of the UC's headquarters in Oakland.

The Office of the Chief Investment Officer oversees UC Investments' portfolio, which includes endowment funds, cash assets and the University's retirement fund.

Judge orders immediate release of UC Berkeley student detained by I.C.E.

UC Berkeley student Paula Valentina Albornoz Hernandez was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) at San Francisco International Airport on Oct. 30.

Albornoz Hernandez, a 23-year-old who immigrated to the United States from Colombia to study business administration, is now being held in I.C.E.'s California City Immigration Processing Center, a detention facility north of Los Angeles County for an overstayed visa.

The student's attorney, Nikolas De Bremaeker, told the Daily Californian that Albornoz Hernandez was applying for asylum due to the "gender-based violence" she experienced in Colombia. He also confirmed that she has a work permit.

According to a campuswide email, UC Berkeley Chancellor Rich Lyons is actively working with Albornoz Hernandez's family to provide legal support to ensure the student has "access to advice and representation."

In response, hundreds of UC Berkeley students and community members gathered on Nov. 4 to protest the detainment and demand Albornoz Hernandez's release. De Bremaeker described the conditions of the detention center she is being held in.

"It's an atrocious facility," De Bremaeker said. "I've been there several times. It's not where human beings should be. It's in the middle of the desert. The facilities are horrendous. There's wholly insufficient medical care. Food is incredibly problematic. Human beings should not be there."

On Monday, U.S. District Judge Dena Coggins ruled that I.C.E. violated Albornoz Hernandez's right to due process, granting her a habeas corpus petition and temporary restraining order. Coggins ruled that noncitizens who overstay their visa and are not detained within a reasonable time after expiration gain a protected liberty interest in which I.C.E. must notify them before detainment.

The ruling prohibits I.C.E. from electronically monitoring Albornoz Hernandez and requires seven days' notice and a bond hearing before re-detainment.

Proposition 1 passes, the UC obtains $175 million for student housing

Proposition 1, also known as the Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2026, was approved by voters on the Nov. 3 midterm election ballot.

With its passing, the UC will receive $175 million for student housing development. The $11.25 billion bond has allocated $350 million for student housing across California's public universities, divided equally between the UC and the California State University system.

"The passage of Proposition 1 is a vital step in addressing the state's housing crisis," UC President James B. Milliken said in a press release. "As the University of California works with the state to enroll more California students, the demand for affordable student housing has risen. This historic investment will enable the construction of necessary and new housing on our campuses. I am grateful for the state's partnership and to those across the university community who advocated for Proposition 1. We have much work ahead to address housing in California, but this is an important victory in the effort to bring down costs for students."

Since 2021, the UC has added nearly 19,000 more California resident students. Despite this population increase, state funding per student remains below pre-recession levels. With the UC's share of the funding, which will be available through the Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program, the University will be able to expand affordable housing options for students.

October I.C.E. sighting report

Lucy Wellons
Staff Writer

Information is primarily sourced from community alerts by the 805 UndocuFund, a local nonprofit that verifies Immigration and Customs Enforcement sightings in the Central Coast. A full map of Immigration and Customs Enforcement sightings reported by 805 UndocuFund in Goleta and Santa Barbara can be found on the Daily Nexus website.

Oct. 8: Mission entrance to 101 freeway (early morning, no specific time given)

An individual was reported to have been taken from their vehicle near the Mission entrance to the 101 freeway. One detainment was confirmed.

Oct. 8: La Mesa Vons (7:54 a.m.)

One unmarked Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) vehicle was reported behind the Vons La Mesa location. No detainments were confirmed.

Oct. 8: Figueroa Street (6:00 p.m.)

An individual was reported to have been taken off Figueroa Street. One detainment was confirmed.

Oct.12: La Cumbre and State Street (6:30 a.m.)

I.C.E. presence was reported on La Cumbre and State Street. No detainments were confirmed.

Oct. 12: Butterfly Beach (8:38 a.m.)

I.C.E. presence was reported on the streets near Butterfly Beach. No detainments were confirmed.

Oct. 15: Montecito (6:10 a.m.)

I.C.E. presence was reported in Montecito at an unspecified location. No detainments were confirmed.

Oct. 15: 101 North at Patterson exit (7:10 a.m.)

I.C.E. presence was reported at the Patterson exit on the 101 North Highway. No detainments were confirmed.

Oct. 15: Santa Barbara courthouse (9:35 a.m.)

I.C.E. presence was reported at the Santa Barbara courthouse. No detainments were confirmed.

Oct. 27: San Pascual Street and West Anapamu Street (9:58 a.m.)

I.C.E. presence was reported on San Pascual Street and West Anapamu Street. No detainments were confirmed.

Oct. 31: Santa Barbara County Jail (7:50 a.m.)

One I.C.E. agent was reported walking in the jail's parking lot. No detainments were confirmed.

Oct. 31: El Sueno Road and Calle Real (8:05 a.m)

I.C.E. presence was reported on El Sueno Road and Calle Real. No detainments were confirmed.

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Printed at the Santa Maria Times printing facility.

"They were touching toes."

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Senate debates eliminating recurring student fee reaffirmations

Elijah Obando
University News Editor

The Associated Students 77th Senate debated a bill that would eliminate the need for students to reaffirm certain lock-in fees on the ballot, prompting concerns over student representation at its Nov. 4 meeting.

The proposed bill aims to shorten the ballot in order to try and increase voter turnout in the Associated Students (A.S.) elections. Under the current system, students vote to reaffirm lock-in fees every two years. However, the bill proposes exempting fees from needing reaffirmation if it has received an average approval rate of 65% over the past 10 years.

Legislation proposed

The bill was introduced by Senator and second-year political science major Adeline Nguyen at the request of the Elections Board Chair Annabell Guinan, a second-year global studies and political science double major. According to the legislation, the bill would retroactively apply to all lock-in fees that meet the criterion.

Supporters argued the change would simplify the A.S. voting process — encouraging students to complete and submit the ballot. They cited last year's election that had around 1,100 students who left their ballots incomplete, which invalidated their votes.

Since 2020, the A.S. elections have experienced a decline in voter turnout. The A.S. legal code requires 20% of undergraduate students to participate in the election — a threshold the student body often fails to meet — leading to weeks-long delays in obtaining results.

"Essentially the main concern or issue is that our voter turnout, especially from last year, was extremely low," Nguyen said. "It has been a really steady decline over the last few years. Last year we only received 20.45% of the student body voting in our elections."

This year, A.S. leadership have been looking for ways to increase voter turnout. Nguyen said that decreasing the amount of items on the ballot would make it easier for students to complete it.

Some senators raised concerns about justifying a bill that would reduce the frequency of student votes on mandatory fees. Senator and fourth-year economics and accounting major Faizaan Chunawala said his main issue with the bill is its retroactivity. He argued students who initially voted for certain lock-fees did so under the understanding that they were not permanent.

In response, Nguyen said that the student body has been reaffirming lock-in fees for a decade, which demonstrates "that students have shown immense support" for these fees. She mentioned that in last year's election, the Environmental Affairs Board and A.S. Bike Shop lock-in fees were reaffirmed with the lowest support being 82% from voters.

Senators also raised concerns over the process to return previously exempted fees back on the ballot to be reaffirmed. The process requires a student petition and two-thirds of the Senate's approval. Senator and second-year chemistry major Alexandria Turner questioned why the Senate needed to approve a fee's return when students have already expressed their desire through a petition.



This year, A.S. leadership have been looking for ways to increase voter turnout. Nguyen said that decreasing the amount of items on the ballot would make it easier for students to complete it.

"My concern with that whole thing is the Senate could potentially say no to a student — it could prevent students from trying to reaffirm something on the ballot," Turner said.

Senator and third-year applied math major Luke Lopez was opposed to limiting students' ability to vote on fees they pay. He argued that the proposed system could make it significantly more difficult for students to challenge existing fees.

Throughout the discussion, senators suggested amendments that would remove the retroactive provisions, adjust the approval threshold and create a more direct petition process without requiring Senate approval.

The bill was referred to the Outreach Committee for further consideration.

The Senate also introduced a bill that would establish a treasurer position for the A.S. Living History Project — a student organization dedicated to documenting and preserving archives of student activism on campus.

The organization's Chair and second-year writing and literature major Summer Agren explained that the position would help the team manage outreach, archival materials and student event expenses. She also highlighted that the position would not require additional costs because the organization's existing budget would pay for its honoraria.

The bill was referred to the Liaison Committee.

Legislation adopted

The Senate approved a resolution calling for a non-binding student referendum on the A.S. ballot, which would poll students on whether UC Santa Barbara should maintain its academic quarter system or switch to a semester-based system. The resolution was previously introduced at the Senate's Oct. 28 meeting.

The resolution was amended to require A.S. to provide the number of students who took the poll when presenting its results to University officials. The amendment was added to address concerns that low voter turnout could affect the results by inaccurately representing the larger student body.

The Senate additionally approved $15,000 in funding for a project to replace 12 white boards in the University Library. The project, previously approved by the 76th Senate, required a financial reauthorization due to its funding not carrying over into the current fiscal year. The project is expected to cost $14,304, with additional funds intended to cover potential installation and maintenance expenses.

The Senate also approved a bill clarifying the responsibilities of the A.S. Solicitor General and an omnibus bill that restructures A.S. entities and honoraria eligibility.

UCSB Community Labor Center hosts Worker and Tenant Rights Fair

Julia Sanabria
Community Outreach Editor

More than 15 organizations tabled at the Worker and Tenant Rights Fair on Nov. 4 at the Student Resource Building lawn, spearheaded by UC Santa Barbara Community Labor Center.

The organizations that attended work with tenants and workers specifically in the UCSB community and throughout the Central Coast. They shared resources with the community and opportunities to get involved.

The Community Labor Center's programs and operations director, Fabienne Doiron, helped lead the event alongside some of the organization's student assistants, as well as the External Vice President for Statewide Affairs' office. Doiron shared that the variety of organizations present included unions, community organizations, student organizers and several state agencies.

Doiron said she and others at the Community Labor Center have realized a lot of students hold their first jobs in college and are not aware of their rights as workers. Students new to the workforce might not know what minimum wage is or how many breaks they are entitled to.

Another goal of the event was to introduce students to the labor movement. They wanted to show students all of the unions and organizations that work toward empowering laborers throughout the region.

The Community Labor Center does not work directly with campus labor. Instead, their focus is to support workers throughout the Central Coast — from San Luis Obispo to Ventura County. They have a community focus alongside their campus focus.

"We look to uplift workers throughout our region, and we do that in three main ways," Doiron said. "One is to provide strategic research that centers workers' needs and experiences. Another one is to provide education and training programming, both to the campus community and to folks off campus. And then the third is to try to engage students on labor issues and to try to plug them into the labor movement."

One of the organizations present was UAW 4811, a large union in higher education with over 60,000 members spanning across all 10 UC campuses. They represent teaching assistants, graduate student researchers, tutors and readers, academic researchers, postdocs and student support staff.

"We represent a pretty broad swath of laborers at UCSB and we're working with lots of other unions and organizations to make this a better place to work. So I think it's important for the community to know what we're doing, and who we are," UAW 4811 Head Steward and UCSB graduate student Victoria Albert said.

The Student Labor Advocacy Project (S.L.A.P.) aimed to bring information and awareness about UC labor practices to students. UCSB S.L.A.P. began at the end of the last academic year and is based on UC Los Angeles' S.L.A.P.

Fourth-year sociology major Fred Torres is a member of S.L.A.P. and said that their three main committees are educational, organizational development and propaganda. Torres explained that the organization is still in its developmental stages.

"Now we're trying to collect students' input — their concerns, any problems or any changes they want to see at the university — through our posted board [on their table at the event]. That way when we do host events, when we do get together, we know what we could focus on and start organizing," Torres said.

Milena Seymour, a fourth-year English and ecology and evolution double major and member of S.L.A.P., emphasized the importance of their club collaborating with underrepresented groups across campus, as well as participating in fairs like the Worker and Tenant Rights Fair.

"We talked to a lot of people who are interested in joining unions and learning more about unions. We kind of helped serve as an information middleman to help students get involved in that," Seymour said.



Doiron said she has realized a lot of students hold their first jobs in college and are not aware of their rights as workers.



BWHC hosts Black Beauty Expo, largest turnout yet

Leilani Barker
Reporter

The Black Womyn's Health Collaborative hosted the quarterly Black Beauty Expo on Nov. 7, with the largest turnout they've had yet, according to Administrative Director of the Black Womyn's Health Collaborative Isa Green, a third-year history of policy, law and governance major.

As access to affordable hair care continues to be a struggle, with a lack of hair salons and overpriced products in Santa Barbara, students find hair health difficult to maintain. The Black Beauty Expo is an event that aims to provide these products for the UC Santa Barbara community, addressing this issue through free product giveaways and educating the public about proper hair care for diverse hair types.

The small business Absolutely Beautiful Hair Beauty Supply, located in Oxnard, supplied products for the Black Womyn's Health Collaborative (BWHC). Retention Co-Chair of BWHC, Hailo Salavera, a third-year sociology and feminist studies double major, said the organization began this event out of a lack of resources available to the Black student community.

"The reason we decided to do this is because there are no Black hair products that support hair types in Santa Barbara, and you usually have to order off Amazon, so we thought, let's bring it here because there are no resources for us," Salavera said.



SHENGYU ZHANG / DAILY NEXUS

Each person was given three tickets to select three items out of a variety of products ranging from combs and accessories to gels and conditioners, as well as one pack of braiding hair.

Beginning at 5:30 p.m., students lined up outside the door to enter the event. Each person was given three tickets to select three items out of a variety of products ranging from combs and accessories to gels and conditioners, as well as one pack of braiding hair. The number was lowered from the original five tickets to accommodate the unexpected turnout.

Hot tools were provided and won through a game of Jeopardy focused on topics in Black hair history, such as the Crown Act, which prohibits discrimination based on natural hairstyles associated with race.

The aim of this event was not only to make quality products available to students but also to educate the public on the history behind Black hair culture and how to properly maintain curls through custom pamphlets designed by BWHC Retention Co-Chair and third-year biology major Essence Tibbs.

The topic of hair care was chosen because of the inaccessibility of quality resources and the importance of hair in curating community and culture in the Black community.

"I feel like hair care has been a prevalent and important topic in the Black community and taking care of our hair and managing our hair, especially in a white institution," Green said.

Assistant Director of Mental Health Initiatives Meredith Merchant emphasized that providing a space for students to maintain and curate cultural connections and allowing room for expression is crucial to supporting student success.

"Hair has been politicized in our community and on campus and in industry, and really supporting students with being able to wear their hair in whatever way they want to, and know that that doesn't change their brilliance or their scholarship or their validity to be on this campus," Merchant said.

As the Black Beauty Expo continues to grow each quarter, so does the increased need for resources and representation in acknowledgement of student needs. Salavera explained the major problems that still need to be addressed at UCSB.

"[The issue is] just getting more resources for Black students on campus. I think that it's a huge lack, and it's constantly having to be bought more. So just more representation and more resources," Salavera said.

BWHC hosted this event with a goal of creating an inclusive space while ensuring Black students are recognized — allowing room for cultural expression and community.

"I want students to know that they have a place they can come and be supported. Their mental, physical and human being is being supported," Green said.

Meal plan reform expected fall 2027

Elijah Obando
University News Editor

UC Santa Barbara Housing, Dining & Auxiliary Enterprises is expecting to implement a new meal plan system by the next academic year. The new meal plans are currently in development and will add a form of credits, similar to Gaucho Bucks, that can be used to purchase food at on-campus retail locations, such as Subway and Panda Express.

Fourth-year mechanical engineering major Eddie Barajas began the initiative three years ago, gaining support from the UCSB Residential Housing Association (RHA) and the Associated Students (A.S.) Senate. Barajas attended a Senate meeting on Oct. 28, requesting its support in the implementation process. He hopes that, with student involvement, it will ensure the meal plan reflects student desires.

"The reason I came to Senate is like, 'Ok we got this thing passed,' but if I disappear for the year then I believe the University would make the meal plan beneficial to the University as opposed to really beneficial to the students," Barajas said.

He clarified that he doesn't believe the University is "evil" but that people often "act on their own self interests." Barajas plans to set up accountability meetings where administrative dining staff can meet with students and utilize their input. He believes students can push for the meal plan to include all locations on campus and possibly include a 10% discount within its system, similar to other UCs.

He emphasized that including retail locations in the meal plan will help students with dietary restrictions and students who work late hours to have more places to eat. Ultimately, he hopes the new meal plan will eventually encourage the University to add more diverse food options on campus, especially in the University Center, and extend to Isla Vista businesses.

"It'd be great to get some really great options on campus like other universities have," Barajas said. "And then, maybe if it's so successful, you could even start introducing the program at select locations in I.V., which other universities have done."

Barajas began the initiative during his freshman year after noticing the differences in meal plan systems at other UC campuses. Before attending UCSB, he had visited UC Los Angeles and was amazed that his friend could buy him Blaze Pizza with a meal swipe.

"I was like, 'UCLA is great. It really feels like the administration cares about its students,'" Barajas said. "'I want to go to UCSB because I think UCSB is going to be UCLA but just somewhere else.' I get here, I get my meal plan and I'm like, 'Holy shit, this is something completely different.'"

Almost all UC campuses have a system of dining dollars embedded into their meal plans with UCSB being one of the exceptions. These campuses also feature more university-owned and retail restaurants for students to eat at.

During the time Barajas was advocating for the reform, he spoke with the UC Riverside Director of Residential Dining Cedric Martin about the reform. Martin helped Barajas modify his plan based on what would work well for UCSB and get another meeting with UCSB Housing, Dining & Auxiliary Enterprise (HDAE).

Despite this, Barajas' efforts were still "shut down," based on the HDAE's belief that students wouldn't be interested in a system like this. He explained that he had to "somehow prove that students want this," which led him to the A.S. Senate; even with its support, Barajas said, "HDAE didn't really care about A.S. Senate, but what they did care about was RHA."

The RHA guided Barajas' vision by highlighting the meal plan reformation's potential conflict with CalFresh benefits; for students to be eligible for benefits, their meal plan cannot exceed 10 meal swipes. They were able to work with UCSB's Basic Needs to include a version of the new meal plan that wouldn't affect student's eligibility for CalFresh. He highlighted that other UCs have systems in place that don't exclude students with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards.

"The last thing most students want is for 'Eddie's lunatic new meal plan' to prevent them from using EBT, right?" Barajas said. "It's a very helpful resource, and a lot of students — I believe a quarter of students — at this university are on EBT."

With the meal plan reform being backed by the Senate and RHA, Barajas was able to survey students on their opinions of the plan, which had almost completely positive results, and present it to the HDAE.

Although he will have graduated by the time the meal plan is implemented, he hopes students will be enthusiastic about it even if they're in the same position as him.

"A lot of us are not gonna feel the fruits of our labor — I mean, for me, I've been working on this for four years, and the plan's going to be implemented after I leave," Barajas said. "But I want students to feel excited to know that everyone in the future is going to have the meal plan that we all deserved when we came in."





UCSB students volunteer at Friendship Manor's Ice Cream Social

Isabella Terranova
Reporter

Several UC Santa Barbara students volunteered at Friendship Manor's Ice Cream Social on Nov. 7, where senior residents lined up to be served a sweet treat.

Friendship Manor is a local retirement community in Isla Vista that frequently hosts events for their senior residents and volunteers to participate at. The Ice Cream Social, which is one of many offered activities, occurs on the first Saturday of every month and is coordinated by the UCSB Associated Students Community Affairs Board.

Activities Director Chris Rendessy helps organize the activities that Friendship Manor hosts. A resident of 26 years, Imke Bomer, says Rendessy is "instrumental" in making these events happen.

"We have a lot of fun here. And Chris, he's very good at this kind of thing," Bomer said.

Part of what makes these events special to the residents of Friendship Manor are the students who volunteer their time to spend with the senior community. Bomer's longtime friend, Susanne Pestel, said the volunteers "[enliven] all these people here."



ISABELLA TERRANOVA / DAILY NEXUS

Part of what makes these events special to the residents of Friendship Manor are the students who volunteer their time to spend with the senior community.

Those who live at Friendship Manor value the volunteers and find the time they spend together important. Another resident, who requested to remain anonymous, shared their thoughts on why it's beneficial for young people to engage with the seniors in their community.

"These people have stories to tell, and besides the textbook, you need to hear someone's story," they said.

Though residents say that the environment is still lively and many students still volunteer at Friendship Manor, some have noted a slight decrease in volunteer participation and activities. One resident, who also requested to be kept anonymous, mentioned that Friendship Manor will be moving locations within the next two to three years, potentially contributing to the minor decline in their events.

"You see, we're currently in a transitional phase, and activities have lessened," they said.

Despite this, students are committed to assisting Friendship Manor. Dylan Domingo, a second-year communication major and student volunteer, commented on the positive impact that the students' engagement seemed to have on the seniors.

"It really seemed to brighten their days," Domingo stated.

First-year communication major Adaysia Hernandez agreed that being at the event was inspiring for both the students and the elderly.

"This event really helped us bond with the senior citizens in our community," Hernandez said.

UCSB CALPIRG advocates for plastic-free 2028 LA Olympics

Elijah Obando
University News Editor

UC Santa Barbara's chapter of California Public Interest Research Group is participating in a state-wide campaign calling for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic and Paralympic Games to eliminate single-use plastic from its venues.

The campaign, titled "Don't Waste the Games," calls on the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic and Paralympic Games (LA28) organizers and food and beverage providers to eliminate single-use plastic cups, bottles and food containers in favor of alternatives. The initiative aims to reduce the environmental impact of the games, which are expected to bring millions of visitors to Los Angeles.

Second-year environmental studies major and UCSB California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG) Chapter Chair Diana Ruvalcaba Nunez said the campaign began at UC Los Angeles before expanding into a state-wide effort. According to Ruvalcaba Nunez, all eight UC chapters are participating in the initiative. She explained the campaign was motivated by concerns over the amount of plastic waste that could be produced by the millions of expected attendees.

During the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic and Paralympic Games, approximately 6,000 metric tons of waste were generated. Ruvalcaba Nunez expressed concerns over the amount of disposable plastic waste that could accumulate in landfills and potentially enter waterways — contributing to pollution along the California coastline.

"If done right, we could actually set a model for sustainability moving forward," Ruvalcaba Nunez said.

The campaign is specifically pushing for eliminating single-use plastic at all Olympic venues, fan zones and dining areas within the Olympic Village, which will be hosted at UCLA.

CALPIRG is also advocating for the use of reusable cups and access to water refill stations. The group is requesting Olympic organizers to educate attendees about sustainability and include incentives in bringing reusable containers. Ruvalcaba Nunez referenced existing sustainability initiatives at venues, such as the Santa Barbara Bowl, as examples of how organizers can reduce their reliance on disposable plastic.

According to Ruvalcaba Nunez, the UCSB chapter has been conducting their pledge drive and has already received 772 new dues-paying members. The fees students pledge go toward CALPIRG's advocacy efforts by funding campaign materials, staff training and lobbying. Currently, the chapter has around 30 active members.

"We can't outspend them down to the dollar, but we can raise enough money to collectively organize and build people's power to go up against that," Ruvalcaba Nunez said.

CALPIRG aims to collect 10,000 petition signatures across all its chapters. Ruvalcaba Nunez estimated that the organization had gathered approximately 4,500 signatures during the campaign's first two weeks. She highlighted that the UCSB chapter plans to go to a press conference on Dec. 1 alongside other UC campuses to present the public support collected for the campaign.

LA28 has begun making plans for sustainability in its venues; however, CALPIRG is pushing for it to do more. In August 2025, LA28 released an Impact and Sustainability Plan outlining several environmental commitments; it includes purchasing 100% renewable electricity for its venues and reusing or recycling at least 90% of materials used for temporary infrastructure.

Ruvalcaba Nunez said one of the campaign's biggest challenges will be securing cooperation with companies involved in the Olympics, specifically Coca-Cola — a longtime Olympic sponsor and the Games' worldwide non-alcoholic beverage partner.

"I believe that the most challenging aspect will be to get our oppositions on board with just actually taking the extra step to make the Olympics single-use plastic free," Ruvalcaba Nunez said.



COURTESY OF UCSB CALPIRG

The campaign is specifically pushing for eliminating single-use plastic at all Olympic venues, fan zones and dining areas within the Olympic Village, which will be hosted at UCLA.



UCEAP students face difficulties amid rising French civil unrest

Lucy Wellons
Staff Writer

This fall, the French public has captured global attention by launching several large-scale protests across the country advocating for a number of changes within the government and flooding the media with images of violence, brutality and destruction. The University of California Education Abroad Program students studying across France have had their education and daily life impacted by these ongoing demonstrations.

What began as a student-led mobilization for improved schooling conditions has gradually evolved to become a much larger movement, encompassing a broader discontent within the French public, including concerns over the rising cost of living, declining public services and government austerity measures.

Beginning in mid-September, the movement has continued with unprecedented levels of street violence and looting in recent years. Students studying abroad in France through the UC Education Abroad Program (UCEAP) have found their experience to be unexpectedly interrupted by these mobilizations.

Amelia Beving, a third-year UC Santa Cruz student studying applied linguistics, currently attends the University of Bordeaux through UCEAP, taking classes at both the Bordeaux Montaigne University and Sciences Po Bordeaux. She described her initial thoughts on her experience abroad in France.

"Honestly, I didn't have a crazy lot of expectations. I just wanted to take classes and be able to live in another city and see if I could adapt to a different lifestyle. I like the French way of doing things. I like a lot of things about France, so I feel like I'm pretty happy here," Beving said.

Beving stated that she lives within the city center of Bordeaux and must commute to campus from her house, which has put her in the midst of the demonstrations happening in her area.

"Whenever I'm walking through town, I see tons and tons of [police] and guys all suited up to go. And the other day, my roommates inadvertently got exposed to some tear gas that was in one of the main plaza areas. So it's definitely very, very close," Beving said. "The other week when it was really intense, I could hear sirens going pretty much all the time from my house, and when I walk around downtown, I see all the windows that have been smashed, and I see shops that have been boarded up."

Beving noted how her personal education experience has faced serious difficulties. Over the course of the weeks of protests, hundreds of high schools and higher education facilities have been sporadically closed or blockaded as a result of student unrest.

"I would say it really sucks. Right now, I'm taking classes at the DEFL, which is the Department for French Language Studies," Beving said. "Those classes are not canceled, so I'm still able to get to them when the tram is running. But it's hard to get home in the afternoons if there's protests because the tram is heavily disrupted."

The Sciences Po Bordeaux campus was blockaded by a student movement for over a month, from Sept. 29 to Nov. 2. During the time of the blockade, students barricaded all of the doors to the administrative buildings and classrooms, and all classes were held online. Beving spoke about how this has affected her ability to access campus resources and connect with her peers.

"It's pretty much impossible to meet any French students because they're not on campus, and even certain extracurriculars, like certain workout classes I was doing, are inaccessible because the buildings have been closed, and it's very bizarre," Beving said. "It's very hard to talk to people in a Zoom class. Obviously, it feels like [COVID-19] again at times because there's just no way to connect with [the] students in class. "

Despite the unexpected hurdles Beving and other students abroad faced due to the demonstrations, she stated that she still tries to keep a positive outlook on her situation.

"It's definitely really annoying, and it's definitely made me get firsthand experience of a very French phenomenon, which is the strikes and the protests, so it's certainly unforgettable," Beving said. "I think that eventually it will end, and I think it's interesting to give us a firsthand account of creating a social movement. And so I'm trying to remain at least curious and not be completely like, 'This sucks. I hate this,' but it does suck, and I do hate it. I'm trying to remain not optimistic or excited about it, but just [with the mindset that] this is a learning experience. Even if it is difficult, I'm still learning from it, and adversity builds character."


PHOTO COURTESY OF REUTERS

Over the course of the weeks of protests, hundreds of high schools and higher education facilities have been sporadically closed or blockaded as a result of student unrest.

Similar to its Bordeaux campus, the Sciences Po Paris campus has faced numerous student blockades and moved classes online for extended periods of time. These shutdowns were sometimes unexpected and therefore not well communicated, causing frustration amongst the student and teaching bodies due to last-minute class cancellations.

A controversial attendance policy at Sciences Po enforces a strict mandatory attendance policy across all registered courses, where exceeding two absences in courses lasting 24 hours or more causes a student to be in "default" status. Students with long commute times or those who experienced public transportation disruptions due to demonstrations struggled to attend class when the campus suddenly announced it was re-opened.

Malu Ramos, a third-year political science major at UC Santa Barbara, is attending the UCEAP program at Sciences Po Paris. She spoke about her personal experiences dealing with the protests centered in the capital and the unexpected transition to online learning.

"It brings me back to [the] COVID days, 6 years ago. So I mean, I know how to deal with it," Ramos said. "But it also made me realize how not used to it I am at the same time, because I realize that I thrive much better being in person, but I completely understand why everything had to be moved online."

Ramos acknowledged the inconvenience of the situation, but voiced her belief in the validity of the protests.

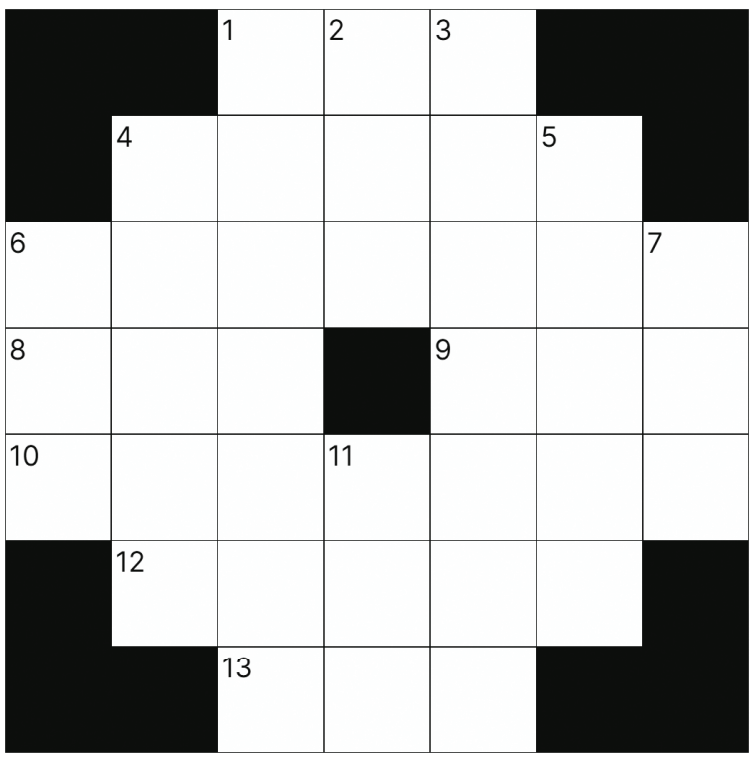
"I mean, selfishly, I feel a little bit upset that I wouldn't be going on campus, but I understand that protests, they're not made to be comfortable," Ramos said. "They're supposed to make you uncomfortable, so you realize the reality of the situation that people are protesting for. I think it's interesting, experience-wise, that I was personally affected by French protests and French protest culture. But I would also be a little bit disheartened that it would take two more months for the government to realize that they have issues and that they should be focusing on education reform and on helping their citizens."

Since the beginning of the protests, there have been numerous investigations into officer-related misconduct. Several children have been among the victims of injury and mutilation due to anti-riot techniques utilized by the French police force. This includes a 15-year-old losing a hand to a crowd-control grenade, a 16-year-old losing an eye to a rubber bullet and a 14-year-old fracturing his jaw, losing his bottom teeth and having all his top teeth broken.

Ramos re-emphasized her support for the ongoing demonstrations, highlighting how she appreciates the dialogue that it has created in her classes.

"I think it's really admirable that these 15- to 18-year-olds are taking to the street to let it be heard, and especially in a moment where French politics, which has been really emphasized in my classes that I have here in Sciences Po, is in a really polarized year because they have elections coming up," Ramos said. "I condemn the violence, but from what I've seen, it seems that a lot of the violence hasn't been incited by the student side. And it's really sad to see when the police start physically retaliating."

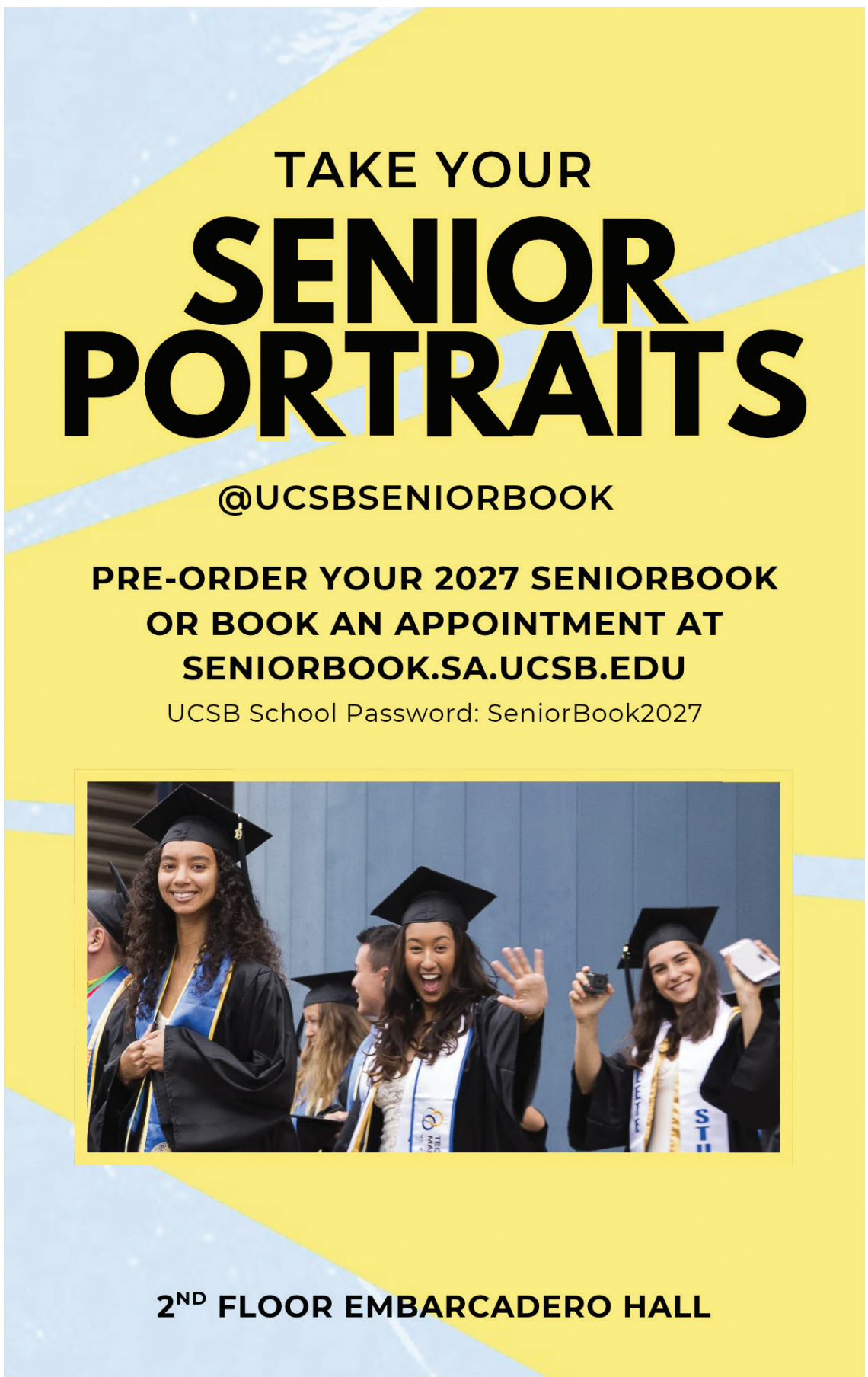
The Daily Nexus Mini Crossword



Kendrick Lam
Games Contributor

Across
1. Black and yellow insect
4. Lunch item that might be bought from a konbini
6. ___ Tunnel (UC Santa Barbara-Isla Vista connector)
8. Suffix for a world record
9. 11-Down avatar
10. Microtransit service for Isla Vista, Goleta and Carpinteria
12. Shows such as "Bocchi the Rock!" or "Attack on Titan"
13. Run out of battery, say

Down
1. Pour one out?
2. Dec. 11, for this quarter
3. Common Japanese restaurant appetizer
4. One of the Obamas
5. Martini garnish
6. Home critter
7. Bluff
11. Classic Nintendo console



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SPORTS

UPCOMING GAMES OF THE WEEK


COURTESY OF UCSB MEN'S SOCCER

Men's Soccer

On Nov. 13 at 7 p.m., No. 3 seed UCSB Men's Soccer will take on No. 4 seed Cal State Bakersfield at Harder Stadium.


COURTESY OF UCSB VOLLEYBALL

Women's Volleyball

Women's Volleyball will celebrate senior night against Utah Valley University at home in the Thunderdome Saturday, Nov. 14 at 7 p.m.


COURTESY OF UCSB MEN'S BASKETBALL

Men's Basketball

After a big season opener, Men's Basketball is ready to continue on just as strong against UC Merced on Nov. 15 at 1 p.m.

UCSB Men's Basketball cruises past San Francisco State 85-55 in season opener

Vincent Regalado
Sports Writer

UC Santa Barbara Men's Basketball opened its 2026-27 campaign with a commanding 85-55 victory over San Francisco State University on Monday, Nov. 2 at the Thunderdome here in Isla Vista. Despite a methodical start offensively, the Gauchos gradually established control before increasing their offensive production in the second half to secure a 30-point victory.

The Gauchos entered the season looking to build upon an offense that led the Big West Conference in 3-point shooting percentage a year ago, while addressing ball security issues that contributed to one of the conference's worst turnover margins.

UCSB opened with senior guard Miro Little, fifth-year guard Aidan Mahaney, sophomore guard CJ Shaw, sophomore forward Michael Simcoe and sophomore center Eric Dibami in the starting lineup.

San Francisco State countered with their senior guard Markees Williams, junior forward Kiahn Nice, senior forward Bricen Buciak, junior guard Achilles Woodson and junior center Evan McKnight.

The Gators jumped ahead 5-0 following a jumper from Woodson and a 3-pointer from Buciak. UCSB quickly erased the deficit, with graduate forward Koat Keat Tong converting a fast-break layup before Little tied the contest at 6-6.

Graduate guard Viljami Vartiainen then gave UCSB its first lead with a turnaround jumper, helping spark a stretch that saw the Gauchos build a 16-8 advantage midway through the opening period.

San Francisco State remained competitive, narrowing the deficit to 19-17 following a Woodson 3-pointer with 7:25 remaining. However, UCSB responded by outscoring the Gators over the remainder of the half to take a 41-26 advantage into the break.

Despite leading comfortably, the Gauchos' offense looked different from the perimeter-oriented approach that characterized much of last season.

UCSB attempted just five 3-pointers in the opening half, converting one, after averaging around 24 attempts per conference game during the 2025-26 season. The Gauchos instead relied heavily on interior scoring and opportunities at the free-throw line, generating 20 points in the paint and converting 16 of 21 free throws.

The slower, more deliberate offensive approach resembled last season's UCSB team, which operated at the slowest pace in the Big West.

The Gauchos emerged from halftime with greater offensive urgency, opening the second period on a 10-0 run. Dibami converted consecutive baskets before Mahaney and Little knocked down 3-pointers, extending UCSB's advantage to 51-26 with 17:38 remaining.

Graduate forward Antonio Chol continued contributing offensively, knocking down a 3-pointer with 15:09 remaining to put UCSB ahead 56-29.

San Francisco State briefly regained momentum, capitalizing on several Gaucho turnovers to cut the deficit to 58-43 with 9:52 remaining. Woodson helped fuel the run, including a transition 3-pointer following a UCSB turnover.

However, senior guard Marvin McGhee IV quickly halted the Gators' comeback attempt with consecutive 3-pointers, restoring UCSB's advantage to 64-43.

Graduate guard RJ Smith added another 3-pointer shortly afterward, helping the Gauchos regain control and extend their lead beyond 20 points.

UCSB's perimeter offense improved considerably after halftime, converting 6 of fourteen 3-point attempts at a 42.9% clip. The Gauchos also increased their overall shot volume, attempting 33 field goals in the second half compared to 23 in the first.

Chol finished as UCSB's leading scorer with 13 points, followed by Dibami with 12. Smith and McGhee contributed 9 points apiece, while Vartiainen added 8.

McGhee also recorded 6 rebounds and 5 assists in just 15 minutes, while sophomore


COURTESY OF UCSB MEN'S BASKETBALL

RJ Smith goes for the basket to continue the Gaucho's lead.

forward Declan Duru Jr. collected 7 rebounds, including 6 on the offensive glass.

The Gauchos' depth proved another significant advantage. UCSB received 55 points from its bench compared to just 23 for San Francisco State, with contributions coming from throughout the rotation.

While UCSB's offensive production improved throughout the contest, its ball security remained an area worth monitoring following last season's struggles.

The Gauchos entered the 2026-27 campaign after finishing one of the last in the Big West in turnover margin during conference play, averaging 12.8 turnovers while forcing just 11.8 per game.

UCSB committed only 3 turnovers in the opening half compared to San Francisco State's 10, establishing an early advantage in a statistical category that frequently troubled the Gauchos last season.

However, the second half presented a different picture. Both teams committed 9 turnovers after halftime, with the Gators capitalizing on several UCSB mistakes to generate 12 points off turnovers during the period.

Despite UCSB finishing with 7 fewer turnovers overall, the teams remained nearly even in points generated from those mistakes. San Francisco State finished with 19 points off turnovers compared to UCSB's 18.

The Gauchos ultimately won the turnover battle 19-12 and outrebounded the Gators 40-33, but the 9 second-half giveaways demonstrated that ball security remains a potential concern heading into tougher competition.

For a UCSB team looking to pair its efficient shooting with more consistent possession management, Monday's performance offered both encouraging signs and areas requiring improvement.

Gauchos go 1-1 in matches against Fullerton and Long Beach

Izabella Nickerson
Asst. Sports Editor

With only four matches left in the 2026 Big West Conference regular season, UC Santa Barbara's Women's Volleyball team (13-12, 9-5 Big West) split its weekend series, defeating California State University, Fullerton (7-20, 2-12 Big West) 3-1 on Friday, Nov. 6 before falling 1-3 to California State University, Long Beach (20-4, 12-2 Big West) on Saturday, Nov. 7.

Coming off two solid wins against UC Irvine and UC San Diego, the Gauchos extended their winning streak to three on Friday, defeating the Titans in four sets.


COURTESY OF UCSB WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Gauchos cheer after winning a hard fought point.

The Gauchos controlled the opening set, leading by 10 points at 17-7. Senior setter Milan Rex contributed a service ace that bumped them up to an 11-point lead at 19-8, and the Gauchos closed the set with a 12-point lead at 25-13.

Hoping to gain a set, the Titans tied the second at 10-10, scoring 5 straight points. They then led 13-16 and 15-18 before the Gauchos responded with 4 consecutive points to pull ahead 19-18. The set was tied again at 19-19 and 22-22 before senior outside hitter Auburn Tomkinson sent a kill to claim a 1-point advantage at 23-22. With the set on the line, senior middle blocker Bella Mathis delivered a kill before the Titans answered with one of their own, cutting the Gauchos' lead to 1 at 24-23. The set ended at 25-23 with another Mathis kill.

Down two sets, the Titans were desperate for a set and claimed the third 18-25. Fullerton led 4-8 before the Gauchos eventually tied the set at 9-9. The Titans then reclaimed the lead at 9-10 and held on to it, claiming the set.

With the Gauchos up 2-1, they went into the fourth set hoping to finish the Titans off. Initially, the Titans had the lead at 2-7, but the Gauchos were able to tie it up at 12-12 with help from sophomore outside hitter Gabi Martinez. Exchanging points, the set was tied again at 18-18 before a kill by senior outside hitter Emma McDermott and a service ace by junior libero Bianca Nistor gave the Gauchos the lead at 20-18. The Gauchos stayed ahead, but the set remained close until 24-24, when the Gauchos forced a Titan error, and a crucial kill by Tomkinson gave them the win at 26-24.

As the only Gaucho to hit double digits, Martinez led the match with 20 kills and hit her sixth double-double of the year with 13 digs.

The Gauchos continued their weekend Saturday with a rematch against the Beach, falling 1-3 for the second time this season.

The Gauchos held an early 5-4 lead, but the Beach responded with 4 consecutive points to get ahead 5-8. The Beach maintained the lead through the middle of the set before the Gauchos gained momentum and tied it at 16-16. However, the Gauchos could not maintain the momentum, as the Beach regained the lead and closed out the set at 21-25.

The second set opened with a 1-5 lead by the Beach that quickly extended to 3-9. The Gauchos struggled in the second set, falling 16-25.

However, the match was not over yet. Down two sets, the Gauchos came back to win the third 25-22. Off to a great start, the blue and gold led 8-2. A kill from McDermott made it 12-6, and another by Martinez brought them to 19-10. The Beach threatened a comeback, cutting the deficit to 24-22 before McDermott secured the set with a kill.

With the Beach ahead 1-2, the fourth set was critical for the Gauchos, who lost it in overtime, 27-29. With a 5-1 lead to begin, the Gauchos were off to a good start and held a slim edge at 8-3 before the Beach tied it up at 10-10. Rallying back, the Gauchos reclaimed the advantage at 16-11 and 22-16. The Gauchos nearly extended the match to five sets, reaching 24-22, but the Beach fought off defeat, stringing together the final points to secure the match.

With the week off, the Gauchos will next host the third-ranked team in the Big West, California State University, Sacramento, on Friday, Nov. 13. On Saturday, Nov. 14, Senior Night celebrations will welcome Utah Valley University to the Thunderdome. Both matches start at 7 p.m.

COLUMNS



What we keep wearing:
Visible underwear

Arna Churiwala
Fashionista

There was a time when a bra strap showing was considered a fashion emergency. You might as well have left the house with your shirt inside out. But somewhere along the way, the rules have changed. These days, a little lace peeking out from beneath a tank top, a pair of boxers sitting above low-rise jeans or even the outline of a nipple through a sheer shirt can feel like the most deliberate part of an outfit.

Underwear has spent a long time being treated as something private, something to be hidden beneath the clothes we actually want people to see. Now, the visible underwear trend is all about making the supposedly hidden part of an outfit the main event. Sometimes that means showing a little; sometimes it means showing a lot.

Perhaps the most recognizable version of this trend is the exposed waistband. Think back to the early 2000s, when the white Calvin Klein waistband became almost as important as the jeans themselves. Peeking above a pair of low-rise denim, the logo was a status symbol, a brand name worn right on the body. Today, with low-rise jeans and Y2K styling back in rotation, the waistband is making another appearance.

Miu Miu helped bring this look back to the runway with its spring 2022 collection, where logo-covered briefs peeked out above low-slung skirts and trousers. By fall of 2023, the brand was taking it even further, styling underwear over tights and treating briefs as an actual outfit component. Suddenly, the underwear drawer was looking like a legitimate place to shop for clothes.

Boxer shorts have also moved beyond the bedroom, with their elastic bands and loose cotton hems deliberately visible above skirts, jeans and trousers. There's something undeniably cute about a pair of men's boxers peeking out from under an oversized pair of jeans. It's a little boyish, a little cheeky and, somehow, very chic.

Bras have undergone a similar transformation. Instead of choosing a top that conceals every trace of lingerie, people are styling outfits around it. Lace-trimmed balconette bras peek out from sheer longsleeves, colorful straps are left visible beneath tanks and delicate bralettes become tops in their own right. The look can be romantic, messy or provocative depending on how it's styled.

Of course, this is hardly the first time underwear has taken center stage. Jean Paul Gaultier famously brought the bra into the spotlight with his cone-bra corsets for Madonna's 1990 Blond Ambition World Tour, turning an undergarment into an unmistakable piece of performance costume. What was once designed to shape and support the body became something to be looked at. The bra wasn't just something you wore underneath your outfit; it was the outfit.

For spring 2026, Prada played with bandeau tops and plunging necklines, while Dior's sheer dresses made the underwear part of the look. Designers seem to be claiming that an outfit doesn't have to be perfectly buttoned, tucked or covered to be considered finished.

But the visible underwear conversation gets even more interesting when we consider what happens when there is no bra at all. The no-bra movement has made going without one feel less like a wardrobe malfunction and more like a styling decision. For some, it's about comfort; for others, it's a rejection of the expectation that women's bodies should always be supported, shaped or made presentable. Either way, the bra is no longer a mandatory part of getting dressed.

Fashion has helped make that choice visible, too. Sheer tops, transparent dresses and barely-there fabrics have appeared on runways for years, challenging the assumption that a woman's chest must always be covered. The nipple, once something to be concealed at all costs, has increasingly become an accessory in its own right. Who needs a necklace when your body is already making a statement?

There is something particularly interesting about the way fashion treats the nipple. A visible bra can be playful, flirtatious or nostalgic, but going braless beneath a sheer top makes a different kind of statement. It draws attention to the body without relying on the familiar language of lingerie. The nipple is a small part of the body that carries a disproportionate amount of cultural baggage, which is perhaps exactly why fashion keeps highlighting it.

And then there's the irony of the SKIMS Ultimate Nipple Bra, which might be the most literal example of the nipple-as-accessory trend. The lightly-padded bra is designed with built-in, permanently raised nipples, giving the illusion of being braless without actually having to go without a bra. It's a little funny that just as fashion is encouraging us to ditch out bras, we're also buying bras that make it look like we're doing that.

Still, the trend doesn't have to be provocative. It can be as simple as letting a brightly colored lace bra show beneath a white T-shirt or wearing a pair of boxers with an oversized button-down. There's a certain charm in the slightly undone quality of it all. The outfit looks effortless, even when every detail has been carefully considered.

And maybe that's what makes visible underwear so appealing. It blurs the line between getting dressed and getting undressed, between what is meant for public view and what is supposedly reserved for the private. A bra strap doesn't have to be fixed, a waistband doesn't have to be tucked away and going without a bra doesn't have to be explained. Underwear has always been part of getting dressed. Maybe it's time we stopped pretending otherwise.

Arna Churiwala believes the best-dressed people don't always get dressed all the way.



put me on aux
'Kacey Musgrave brings the Christmas cheer'

Siobhan Stewart
Beat Reporter

As November rolls in, so does the sweet return of Christmas music and, even more importantly, the annual rewatch of the dazzling 2019 "Kacey Musgraves Christmas Show." With Halloween behind us, it is officially Christmas season. Some people are very strict about when festive music is allowed, like my grandpa, who will cover his ears whenever a carol plays before Thanksgiving.

However, I truly believe there is no better time to get excited for the holidays. The short stretch between Thanksgiving and Christmas just is not enough time to brew the real cheer. I would rather start early and look forward to it longer, and in my house, that now means Musgraves' iconic Christmas special.

Musgraves is an American singer-songwriter popular for blending country, folk and pop music. Ever since her "Christmas Show" came out, my Dad has been obsessed with it. I would catch him cuddling up on the couch watching the whole thing start to finish, even after we all saw it. It's both flashy and down to earth: Musgraves produces real laughs, revives old classics and mixes in refreshing pop numbers.

The video's sets are gorgeous, and a full storyline carries the special, following Musgraves as she meets celebrities and musicians who help her prepare for Christmas and track down her Nana's star ornament. She teams up for duets with artists like Lana Del Rey, Troye Sivan, Camila Cabello, Leon Bridges, James Corden and more, as well as celebrity cameos like Kendall Jenner. Each number has its own vibe yet still feels cohesive. Dan Levy narrates throughout, and his dry, sarcastic humor balances out the sparkle.

One of my favorite scenes is the number "Present Without A Bow," where Musgraves and Bridges glide through the set while the camera flips upside down, giving the illusion they are on the ceilings. It almost feels like watching a music video; it turns the smooth duet into a playful visual trick.

Then there is the "(Not So) Silent Night" with Fred Armisen. The performers keep getting interrupted by the "handyman" who keeps drilling in paintings and other applicants in the middle of their song. The scene is ironic, light and has good comedic timing. It's better than other specials because it is messy on purpose. Instead of being super fake and polished like most other holiday shows, it just leans into how chaotic the season is. It makes fun of how over-commercialized Christmas has gotten, which makes it a fun watch.

For a shimmering shift, Sivan joins Musgraves for "Glittery," an original song she made for her Christmas album. The soft pink glow and the sparkles from the disco ball scatter light across the room like glitter drifting through a snow globe, turning an ordinary room dreamy. The song is about romance and the scene fits perfectly.

Past all the sparkle, the narration slows down for her song "Christmas Makes Me Cry," a somber solo that shows the other side of the bright, shiny lights. She admits that the holidays aren't always the most joyful for everyone, and this time of year can bring up sadness, loss and loneliness. It's a vulnerable moment that makes the special feel honest instead of just cheerful; it reminds viewers that it's okay to feel everything at once during the season, and a nice break between the fun comedic numbers.

The mood softens with Lana Del Rey on "I'll Be Home for Christmas." Her voice fits the song, turning it into a quiet, emotional moment. The special never stays serious for too long, as more joy shines with her real-life Nana making an appearance, alongside Zooey Deschanel and a tiny puppy joining in on "Mele Kalikimaka." The Radio City Rockettes also join in on the holiday fun with a kick-line through "Ribbons and Bows." Every number adds something different which makes it so easy to watch again and again. That's exactly why it's become a holiday tradition in my house.

Whether you start listening to Christmas music on Nov. 1 or wait until after Thanksgiving, "The Kacey Musgraves Christmas Show" is worth a watch. It strikes the perfect balance of funny, chaotic and wholesome. And if it were up to my Dad, he would probably be running it all December long.

Siobhan believes it's never too early for Christmas music.

The Diversity Hire:
2026 midterms, identity politics and the case of Xavier Becerra

Meher Indoliya
DEI Chair

The 2026 midterm elections last week saw overwhelming victories for the Democratic Party, as Democrats flipped seats and took both the House and the Senate, winning state offices across America, including in traditionally red states.

Amidst this blue wave that has swept across the nation, many have celebrated significant milestones for representation. These include the first Native American woman elected governor in United States history, the U.S.'s first ever Muslim senator, the first woman to be elected governor of Ohio, the first Black woman to serve as governor anywhere in the U.S., the first Palestinian American to serve in the New York State Legislature, the first Hispanic woman to serve as Governor of Texas, the first openly gay man elected to the U.S. Senate and California's first Latino governor since 1875. These are certainly important wins — expanding representation in national politics is clearly something to strive for. However, a fixation on identity can often eclipse other critical aspects of political evaluation, and the assumption that certain identities automatically equate with progressive politics can be dangerous.

An example of this is the election of Xavier Becerra as the next governor of California. After his victory was announced, many took to social media to celebrate, including self-identifying progressives and leftists. A focal point of this celebration was that Becerra was the first Latino governor of California since 1875; comments on online posts announcing his victory often centered their praise on this fact. Notedly, these comments staunchly elided the fact that Becerra, in many aspects, was the antithesis of progressive hopes for California.

Throughout the course of his campaign for governor, Becerra has received heavy criticism for positions and actions that do not align with the image of a progressive warrior he has attempted to project. Becerra's campaign was built on significant financial backing from corporations and other special interests — including Chevron, PG&E and Meta — and these corporate loyalties are incompatible with the vision of California's future that many expect him to bring into fruition.

Chevron contributed $500,000 to an independent committee backing Becerra, as well as $39,200 directly to Becerra's campaign — the maximum amount allowed by law. The influence of these donors has been connected by critics to components of Becerra's platform, such as his willingness to ease restrictions on oil drilling in California's Central Valley as well as his continued defense of Chevron and Big Oil. Many consider this as an example to support the case that Becerra will, indeed, largely act as a "corporate puppet."

Becerra's inability to reconcile his so-called progressivism with the reality of his campaign has sparked significant concerns about his commitments and priorities, exacerbated by the fact that the governor-elect himself seems to be unable to articulate any tangible principles regarding campaign funding. When asked about what corporations he would accept donations from by the San Francisco Standard, especially in the context of his campaign receiving substantial corporate donations from oil companies, Becerra was unable to name any corporations he wouldn't take money from by himself, and even said he was open to taking money from Purdue Pharma, a corporation that he had sued in the past for sparking the opioid crisis.

Aside from his campaign funding controversies, noncommitment to key policy promises and clear corporate loyalties, Becerra has echoed the party line, essentially proving himself an establishment Democrat rather than any sort of progressive warrior. He refuses to disavow Immigration and Customs Enforcement, instead claiming that the organization is currently corrupted by the Trump administration, but is ultimately legitimate law enforcement. Becerra's refusal to align with progressive politics while simultaneously labeling himself as progressive, as well as his inability to generally commit to concrete principles raises the question: Why are so many progressives and leftists celebrating him?

Becerra has leaned on his identity throughout his campaign, branding himself "Tio Xavier" in an attempt to appeal to many voters in California by projecting an image of himself as a down to earth, relatable man of the people. However, his corporate funding and refusal to concretely address issues pertinent to a large portion of Californians tell a different story — one that does not suggest that he is an ally to progressive movements and the communities he will represent.

Becerra's case and particularly the reaction to his victory presents a compelling case for why relying too heavily on identity to measure progressivism can be dangerous. Identity shouldn't be ignored in politics — it often serves as an indicator of shared experiences and perspectives that can be invaluable when striving to create representative policies and address common struggles in communities. However, the watering down of politics to solely identity is a symptom of an evaluation system that eschews critical thinking and political literacy in favor of quick and easy judgements and an unwillingness to dig deeper.

Identity is but one factor in politics and it is in constant interplay with other aspects of a political candidate. A critical and holistic view of platforms is absolutely essential lest we fall prey to evaluating candidates solely through identity, which figures like Becerra can use to pander to a voter base while simultaneously refusing to solidly commit to any actual policies.

Amidst a political climate and federal administration that has been decidedly hostile towards diversity and equity, attempting to suppress the voices of marginalized communities, it is important to celebrate wins for representation across the nation. However, it is just as important to evaluate all aspects of a candidate and carefully consider what they will do once in office. These representation milestones shouldn't be our only indicators of progress — they are not reliable at fully gauging the direction of political progress. Furthermore, all the blue victories that are currently being widely celebrated as historic "firsts" are candidates that deserve to be evaluated by their platform and have their policies heard, rather than just being reduced to a milestone.

NEXUSTENTIALISM

It's Satire, Stupid.

MADELINE BRYCE / DAILY NEXUS



Trump's mental decline causes him to forget he's closeted

Jessie Joint
Political stoner

In recent months, President Donald Trump's mental faculties have taken a steep decline, leading to nonsensical rants, cozy naps at sporting events and — unsurprisingly — homosexual behavior. Many experts cite the recent midterms campaign where, among Trump's talking points, he seemed to consistently fall back to complimenting and gesturing suggestively to describe the Ohio Republican Senator Jon Husted's beefy and powerful ass.

This single comment initially appeared to be a one-off before Trump continued to reiterate the point, alongside complimenting his "massive feet" and hands with "fingers like sausages." Republican voters were puzzled by this repeated campaign message, likely leading to Husted losing his seat and being beaten by Democrat Senator-elect Sherrod Brown.

Following the flip, Brown's campaign team actually cited their lack of ass-focused commentary as the biggest driver for voters on their side of the campaign trail. Ohio Democrats stated the lack of rear discussion compared to the opposition seemed, "sane" and "not entirely batshit."

While many are now seeing the rise in Trump's Gay Actions per Year (G.A.Y.), eagle-eyed Americans noticed a clear shift with the incoming presence of the new reigning bear-daddy of politics, Zohran Mamdani. New York City's own mayor has proven to not only be a force in the public sphere but also in the heart of our own president. Upon first meeting him, Trump remarked that he was "even better looking in person" compared to his television appearances, followed by endless accounts of the president seemingly unable to resist describing him as "handsome" — completely unprovoked by the press.

To get local perspective from Trump voters, we talked to Jaques Strapp, a fourth-year economics major who voted Republican this midterm and plans to vote for Trump in 2028 despite the Constitution barring presidents from serving more than two terms.

"I mean, I've been looking a lot at this Husted guy's ass and I don't know what Trump's talking about — his ass isn't even that impressive. It doesn't even look like he can squat 200," Strapp said as he pulled out a close-up picture of Senator John Husted's ass on his phone before hurriedly shoving it into his pocket.

Unprovoked, he then said: "And no, it's not gay that I have pictures of a guys ass on my phone, shut the fuck up." Strapp took a beat to breathe. "That Mamdani though bro, he does have something about him. I must say the full beard is very good, very high test [testosterone]," Strap said.

Seeing the voter base rattled by this commentary, Trump staffers and the White House have taken precautions to prevent more homosexual incidents leaking to the public. The Daily Nexus spoke to White House Interior Affairs Director Kay Hole about the process.

"We have to monitor everything. He keeps switching from Fox News to the wrestling channel and then makes weird noises until we switch it back. It's becoming unmanageable," Hole remarked.

As Hole further detailed the practices to keep the president's activities in check, he then shifted into the long line of White House officials who had walked this same path before him.

"Many staffers had to hide the gayness before, more than you would think. JFK obviously and of course LBJ, who really put the BJ in his name. Even Clinton; the whole Monica situation was a coverup for his fling with Secretary of Labor Robert Reich," Hole told the Daily Nexus.

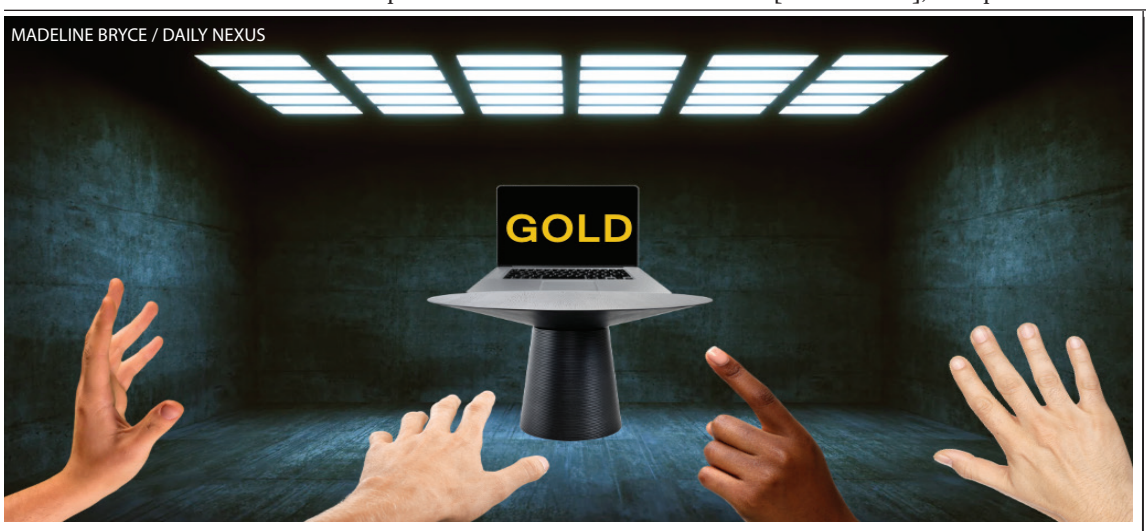
The list of homoerotic presidents and their various tales seemed to be never-ending, but the sheer amount of queer coverups over the years seemed to only emblazen Hole in their quest to conceal the truth.

"Either way, we have to keep this under wraps, or else will have the first openly gay president. Not to mention, we'd have a second if Trump croaks while JD's still in line," Hole stated.

As the queer struggles of the White House carry on, and the rest of the country basks in the glow of the blue wave, there's no doubt that gay energy is on the rise. We can only hope to surf this queer wave into our nation's future — a future that's not only beautiful, but truly booty-iful.

Jessie Joint is libbing out.

MADELINE BRYCE / DAILY NEXUS



UCSB proposes alternative pass time formatting

Ina Pickle
Cooked

It's that time of the quarter here at UC Santa Barbara: Students are scrambling to set alarms for their pass times and feeling the oppressive sense of stress that accompanies selecting classes ahead of winter quarter. Will they or won't they get the classes they need? Will they be forced through the canon event of getting stuck with a heinous chemistry section time or an incredibly niche elective?

Friendships have been said to be shattered over who has the earliest pass time, and UCSB's Counseling & Psychological Services (C.A.P.S.) reports a great increase in levels of mental unwellness this time each quarter.

The UC Board of Regents might have a solution in mind to create a more optimal system than the anxiety-inducing GOLD system. Realizing the negativity this current format has created, the ongoing discussions between various levels of university authorities have presented the following alternative formats.

One computer at the end of an obstacle course

Determining course registration order solely through pure physicality "might be the move" according to UCSB's Athletics Advisor, Chad Wick. The faster you brave a sequence of athleticism-testing apparatuses, the smaller the chance the classes you need are already taken.

Furthermore, the first to finish the obstacle course will earn the extra bonus of having no credit cap. This structure also eliminates the risk of the bonus being redundant, as a College of Creative Studies student who already has essentially no credit cap would never manage to win a test of physicality and agility.

In an email statement to the Daily Nexus, a spokesperson for the UC Regents explained that they were still trying to figure out the best location for the obstacle course.

"We think we might just build the course in the Santa Rosa construction site. It's most practical. Half the work is already done for us, right? We just need to think about where the computer will go," the spokesperson said.

A campus-wide standardized exam

All students enrolled at UCSB would be given a 200-question exam, taking place in a period of 10 minutes. Questions would cover a wide range of subjects, including Sumatran rhinoceros anatomy and Paleolithic age social structures. The exam would be administered by a proctor to student ratio of 10 to five to ensure academic integrity.

"We don't really like this option because it's pretty uninspired, but it might be the most simple," one of the executives commented.

For students that receive the same score, they'll have to differentiate themselves somehow. Various solutions were floated around, the leading one being having the students play rock-paper-scissors.

Upon being asked for final remarks on this proposed format, the executives said: "We'll keep it as a backup option for now, but we're hoping for something that's a real 180-degree switch from our current pass time format."

A tournament style fight to the death

When working out the specifics, the leading proposal was to send students to Harder Stadium in groups of 20, with the winner of each round allowed to select their classes once they eliminate their competitors.

"Students will die, yes. But as the size of our student body decreases, there will be less competition for the classes everyone needs," the Board argued during the meeting.

The highly anticipated movie "The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping" will be released at the end of November, and it seems like UCSB's administrators might have been particularly inspired by it.

However, the inclusion of weaponry and environmental factors — such as feral raccoons set free in the stadium — are still being evaluated by UCSB's Student Wellbeing Division.

"We're not really worried about it from an ethical standpoint, because it automatically ensures things are better off for those who survive," UC administrators explained in a meeting.

"That's really what natural selection is all about," was the concluding statement made.

Discussions are still ongoing, and no single format has been decided upon yet. But rest assured Gauchos, pass times are behind us, and brighter days are ahead!

Ina Pickle will be hiring a personal trainer and martial arts instructor to secure a good class schedule.

MADELINE BRYCE / DAILY NEXUS



AI majors done for

High Value Female
Analog

After an amazing midterm election for the United States Democratic Party, changes have already been felt throughout different sectors of the United States economy. In particular, people have been questioning the future of the artificial intelligence industry due to poor oversight of its growth and backlash toward data centers. This all comes during the first year where an Artificial Intelligence major has been offered at UC Santa Barbara.

Understandably, UC Santa Barbara Artificial Intelligence (AI) majors have been perturbed by the election. Madeline Smith, a first-year AI major, recently spoke out about the current state of the AI industry.

"I'm honestly really worried about my future. Right now, I am an AI major with an emphasis in AI fruit stories, but I'm not sure if my passions can still translate to a career anymore," Smith said.

She also claims that career advisors are now instructing her to get a retail job in the event her fruity plans don't work out. "He told me to 'get a real job.' What. The. Fuck. How can career advisors shit on my lifelong dream like that?"

Cory Garcia, a first-year AI major, also had worries he expressed to the Daily Nexus.

"Before the midterm, I had an internship locked in with X to be a prompt engineer for Grok's AI Porn department. After the midterm however, X cut the staff in the department down from 10,000 prompters to just 10 due to 'the optics.' What am I meant to do now? Prompting sexy anime girls is all I know," Garcia said.

Other AI majors we spoke to, such as first-year Johnathan Xiao, have expressed sadness — not necessarily with their job prospects, but rather with their work ethic.

"My SexyBroads.ai girlfriend was my rock. I prompted my heart out on all my assignments because I knew once I was done I could spend time with the people I love — her. She was my everything ... After midterms however, SexyBroads.ai decreased the number of messages I could send her every day ... She can't even send me special videos anymore ... I'm failing all my classes now."

Since speaking to one of our reporters, Xiao has dropped out of school to become an advocate for AI justice.

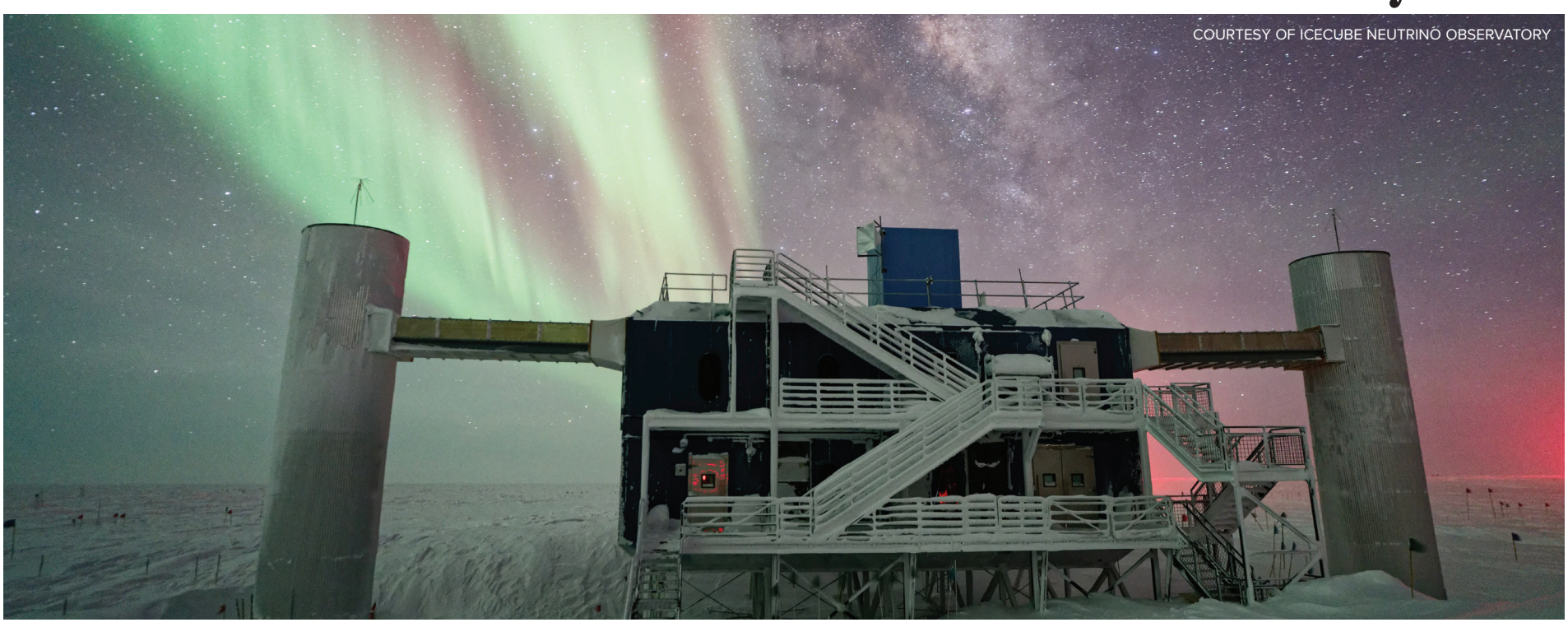
In the wake of the struggles the midterm has produced for AI majors, UCSB's Restorative Justice Program has announced that AI majors will get free Claude Max and Meta Muse subscriptions for the rest of their time at UCSB. Furthermore, since UCSB cannot afford that, Bren School of Environmental Science & Management students will be asked to pay double tuition each quarter to make up the difference.

The Daily Nexus stands in solidarity with AI majors during this trying time. We encourage our readers to stop voting in midterm elections to prevent AI injustice in the future.

High Value Female wishes AI girls would stop rejecting her.

SCIENCE & TECH

Simply Stated:
What is the IceCube Neutrino Observatory?


COURTESY OF ICECUBE NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY

Dylan Bennett
Reporter

The 2026 Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to Francis Halzen, a professor at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, for his contributions to the IceCube Neutrino Observatory, a cubic-kilometer detector composed of thousands of optical sensors buried in Antarctic ice. But why is the IceCube group going through all the trouble to build a massive array of subterranean detectors in Antarctica?

The primary goal of IceCube is to detect neutrinos — particles named by Italian physicist Enrico Fermi, meaning "little neutral one." As the name suggests, neutrinos are small — current research caps the neutrino mass at roughly a millionth the mass of an electron; neutrinos also carry no charge, thus they are electrically "neutral."

The existence of the neutrino was first hypothesized in 1930 by Wolfgang Pauli, one of the architects of quantum theory, in an effort to resolve a standing paradox in physics: beta decay. Beta decay is one type of radioactive decay — the same mechanism that drives carbon dating and positron emission tomography (PET) scans. Prior to Pauli's proposition of the neutrino, beta decay confused and unsettled physicists because, unlike the two other forms of radioactive decay, the particle emitted in beta decay — an electron — was found experimentally to have a continuous spectrum of possible energies.

This finding was alarming because the decay itself was supposed to have a fixed total energy, and accounting only for the nucleus of the atom and this variable energy of the emitted electron seemed to imply energy was disappearing. Pauli remedied this by proposing the neutrino, which he accounted for having gone undetected by attributing it to electric neutrality, small mass and extraordinarily weak interaction with other matter. Considering the neutrino as a second byproduct of beta decay allows the total energy to be shared by the electron and the neutrino, making the continuous range of energies for the electron valid.

Pauli was later proven experimentally to be right, but in a strange contention with his own initial beliefs about the detectability of the neutrino, Pauli famously said, "I have done a terrible thing. I have postulated a particle that cannot be detected."

Today, cutting-edge neutrino detectors like IceCube aim to consistently accomplish what Pauli bet was impossible. Neutrino detection still poses significant challenges, though, because neutrinos interact so weakly with all other matter; a neutrino can travel through a lightyear, or roughly six trillion miles, of solid lead without disturbing a single atom.

Even crazier, neutrinos are the most abundant particle in the universe — about 100 trillion neutrinos are passing through your body this very second. This elusiveness of the neutrino is where IceCube and other neutrino detectors need to get creative.

Having the detector in the ice has two main advantages for the IceCube observatory. One is that the ice helps to reduce the number of background particles, particularly atmospheric muons produced by cosmic rays. Even with this background suppression, IceCube requires an enormous number of individual detectors in order to monitor the entire cubic kilometer of ice — 5160 optical sensors, to be exact.

The second advantage of the ice is directly related to IceCube's method of neutrino detection: The transparent glacial ice provides a massive, clear volume for neutrinos to interact and enables the optical detector modules to detect the light emitted. These detectors are sensitive to flashes of blue light produced when neutrinos interact with atomic nuclei in the ice, creating secondary charged particles that travel faster than light can travel through the ice. This phenomenon, known as Cherenkov radiation, allows IceCube to detect neutrinos indirectly.

Halzen is the principal investigator for this international collaboration, and the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences emphasized his proposal of this one-of-a-kind detector in 1988. One particularly astonishing thing about the neutrinos IceCube detects is that the detector can use the spatial and temporal distribution of light emitted to inform researchers about the energy of the neutrino that produced the charged particle and approximately where it came from.

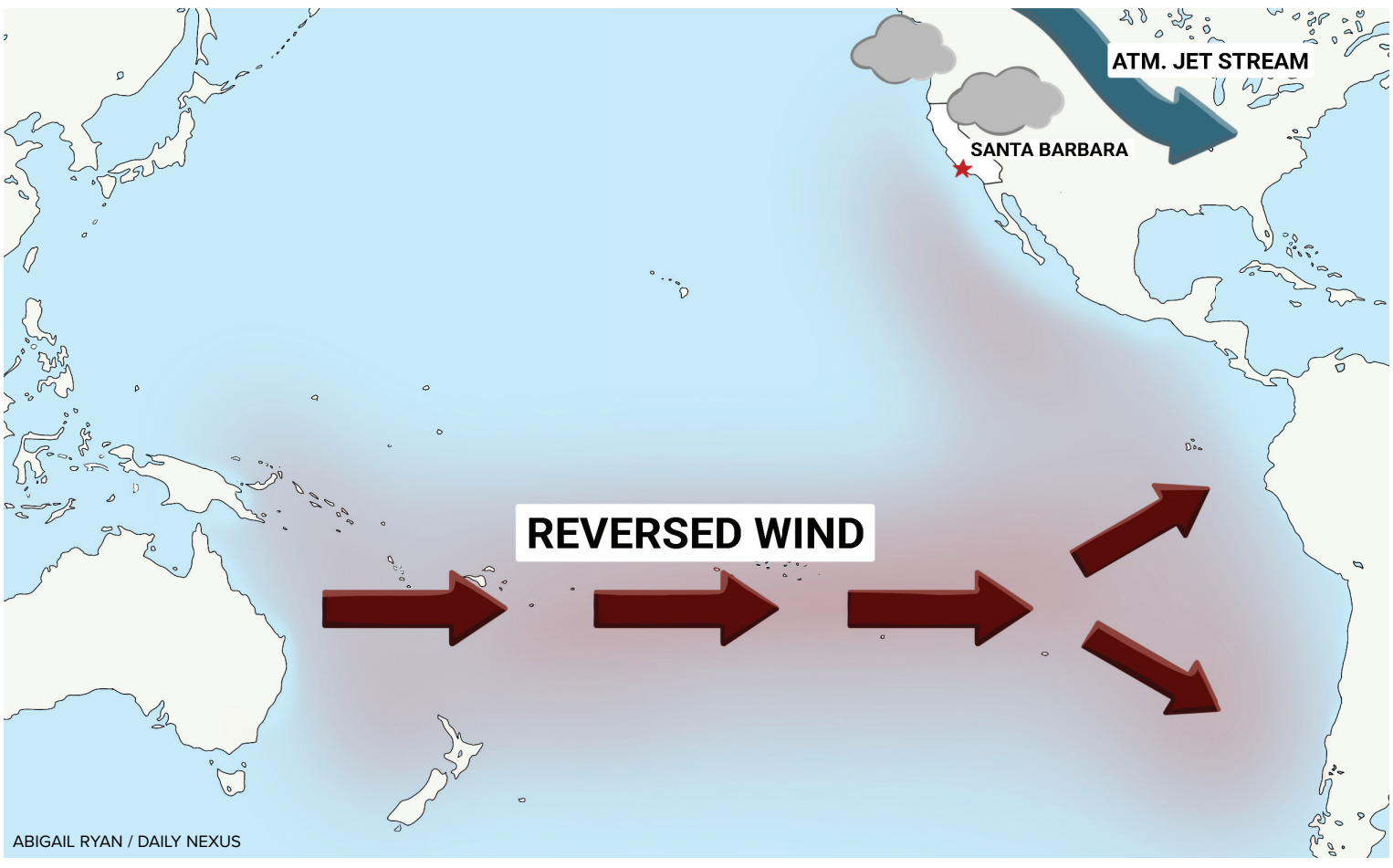
Neutrinos are also unique sources of astrophysical data. Since neutrinos interact so weakly with other matter and carry no charge, they can travel from distant cosmic sources with little absorption or magnetic deflection. This "resiliency" of the neutrino makes it a remarkably good carrier of information, and therefore neutrinos can be used to indirectly learn about the environments in which they were produced.

A notable discovery made by the IceCube Collaboration was the detection of a neutrino that seemed to originate from a blazar, which is a type of active galactic nucleus — the extremely energetic central regions of galaxies — that have relativistic jet streams oriented toward the Earth that emit a vast number of particles with high energies. The detected astrophysical neutrinos themselves have immense energies — some are many times that of what is produced in CERN's Large Hadron Collider, the world's highest-energy particle collider.

Professor Halzen reflected on the long journey of bringing the IceCube detector to fruition in an interview with a member of the Nobel Prize outreach team. He underlined the improbability of the detector coming together and how much he appreciates his collaborators and UW-Madison for taking a chance on the idea, given that there weren't any guarantees that it would work. Halzen remarked, "In fact, my main reaction to this project over time was not proud but was surprised. You know, I gave a talk very early in the project at a conference in Venice where I said, 'This is a detector, Deo volente,' which means 'God willing.'" He explained that the project faced many obstacles and uncertainties, such as not knowing in advance if their method of drilling into the ice would be successful and if the ice would be transparent enough to detect the light at all. Halzen and the IceCube Collaboration ultimately prevailed over these many challenges, representing a monumental triumph in neutrino detection and astronomy, with Halzen's contributions earning him the Nobel Prize.

What to expect from this Super El Niño

Abigail Ryan
Reporter



ABIGAIL RYAN / DAILY NEXUS

According to the National Center for Environmental Information, California this year experienced its warmest August on record. But California residents are not alone. August was unusually warm for communities globally.

The culprit? A climate phenomenon known as El Niño. These events occur every two to seven years and modify or reverse typical wind patterns in the Pacific. Oftentimes, El Niño leads to extreme or unusual weather events worldwide. Impacts include droughts, wildfires, hurricanes in typically dry locations and more.

During a neutral non-El Niño year, winds push warm water away from the South American coast toward Asia and Australia. As these winds push warm water away from the coast, cold ocean water replaces it in a process known as upwelling. This effectively cools the coast and tempers climate, preventing the extreme or atypical weather described above.

During an El Niño year, winds weaken or temporarily reverse, causing warm water to slosh back toward South America, triggering underwater waves called Kelvin waves. These waves trap warm water near the coast and prevent upwelling, resulting in a warmer South American coast. This shifts the atmospheric jet stream responsible for steering storms south and away from its neutral position, meaning storms that typically hit Washington and Oregon also hit California.

California residents can feel these shifting oceanic and atmospheric patterns during uncharacteristically long, hot and humid summers. Residents may also notice strain on power grids, stress on agriculture and wildlife and an increase in heat-related illnesses. The ensuing winter brings its own set of challenges, especially in California, where infrastructure is often unprepared for excessive precipitation and flooding.

Here in Isla Vista, as the fall quarter comes to an end, students and community members are bracing for just that. This year's event is set to rival the 1997-98 El Niño, which flooded several buildings, including Campbell Hall, Biological Sciences II and multiple I.V. housing units.

The historical El Niño brought storm surges and powerful waves that accelerated bluff erosion on the edge of I.V., causing beachfront backyards and decks to collapse. To manage potential emergencies, UC Santa Barbara has long-established resources and guidelines.

To stay ahead of the weather, the UCSB Emergency Operations Center (EOC) encourages students to sign up for CalAlerts and ReadySBC. These systems send real-time text messages regarding extreme weather in your area.

Beyond CalAlerts and ReadySBC, students and community members can prepare by stocking food, water and medicine, establishing evacuation routes and planning for power outages.

During heavy rain and storms, the EOC advises against driving and biking. Students should avoid flooded areas and downed powerlines, and stay away from beaches and other bodies of water.

For long-term readiness, students can also visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency website for help building a disaster supply checklist, and sign up for free on-campus emergency response training.

LA VISTA

Vivir con miedo: 45 días que pueden cambiar la vida de muchas familias inmigrantes


CORTESIA DE GETTY IMAGES

Ana Ramirez Cermeno
Editora

Hay miedos que son difíciles de explicar cuando no te ha tocado vivirlos de cerca.

El miedo de salir de tu casa sin saber si vas a regresar.

El miedo de ir al trabajo, llevar a tus hijos a la escuela o simplemente caminar por la calle y preguntarte si hoy será el día en que tu familia reciba una noticia que le cambie la vida.

Durante estos días, muchas familias inmigrantes viven con esa incertidumbre ante las noticias sobre los operativos de ICE en California.

Para algunas personas, salir de casa se ha convertido en una decisión acompañada de preocupación y nervios.

Detrás de cada persona que puede ser detenida hay una historia.

Hay madres y padres que trabajan para sostener a sus familias, hijos que esperan ver a sus padres al regresar de la escuela y jóvenes que intentan continuar con sus estudios mientras se preocupan por las personas que aman.

Hay familias que en medio de todo este miedo, intentan seguir adelante porque la vida no se detiene, aunque la preocupación esté presente todos los días.

Lo más doloroso es pensar que una persona puede sentir miedo de hacer algo tan sencillo como salir a comprar comida o presentarse a trabajar.

¿Cómo puede alguien vivir tranquilamente cuando no sabe qué puede pasarle a un ser querido?

¿Cómo se puede concentrar un estudiante en sus clases cuando su mente está pensando en la seguridad de su familia? No deberíamos acostumbrarnos a vivir así. Ninguna familia debería tener que vivir con el temor constante de ser separada.

Las personas inmigrantes no dejan de ser seres humanos por su lugar de nacimiento ni por su situación migratoria. Tienen sentimientos, responsabilidades, sueños y personas que las esperan en casa.

En momentos como este, también debemos recordar la importancia de acompañarnos.

Hay que preguntar cómo está nuestro vecino, compartir información confiable, y apoyar a las familias que necesitan ayuda. Se acabo el tiempo de guardar el silencio ante la discriminación son formas de demostrar que ninguna persona tiene que enfrentar este miedo en soledad.

Porque el miedo puede hacer que una comunidad se sienta pequeña y vulnerable, pero la solidaridad puede recordarle que no está sola.

Nadie debería tener que vivir escondiéndose para sentirse a salvo. Nadie debería ser definido únicamente por su situación migratoria.

Y ninguna familia debería ser reducida a una cifra o a un titular. Detrás de cada inmigrante hay una vida.

Hay una historia que merece ser escuchada y una familia que merece ser tratada con dignidad.

Tal vez no todos comprendan este miedo, pero eso no significa que debamos ignorarlo.

Es el momento de escuchar, acompañar, y recordar la importancia de defender los derechos humanos y dignidad de los que viven con miedo.

Muchachas ... quédense en la escuela

Jeannie Gutierrez Rubi
Editora

Después de generaciones de mujeres que han luchado por el derecho a estudiar, trabajar, votar, y vivir una vida independiente, un movimiento preocupante está intentando convencer a las jóvenes de que ninguna de esas cosas son realmente necesarias.

En las redes sociales, las mentadas 'trad wives' (esposas tradicionales) han popularizado una versión idealizada de la feminidad tradicional. Ellas proponen que la vida profesional y la independencia económica son distracciones de lo que supuestamente debería ser el verdadero propósito de las mujeres, cocinar, limpiar, criar hijos, y atender a su esposo.

Claro, que la educación trae más ingresos al hogar, pero no se trata únicamente de ganar más dinero. Se trata de tener opciones, una mujer con educación, experiencia, y posibilidades tiene mejor capacidad para mantenerse por sí misma, contribuir económicamente a su familia, y tomar decisiones sobre su futuro.

También tiene más recursos para poder escapar de un matrimonio abusivo, o poder enfrentar la posibilidad de un divorcio, o viudez.

La organización, Matriarch, dedicó una investigación sobre la salud y el bienestar de las mujeres, y encontró que la educación y la capacidad de generar ingresos contribuyen a que las mujeres puedan tener una vivienda segura, atención médica, y estabilidad económica, sin necesitar un hombre.

Las defensoras de las 'trad wives' también suelen presentar la educación universitaria como un obstáculo para encontrar marido.

Pero desde cuándo debería ser ese el criterio para decidir si vale la pena recibir una educación? La universidad no es una agencia matrimonial, y un título no debería evaluarse según las posibilidades de conseguir esposo. Las mujeres merecen estudiar por sus propios intereses, capacidades, y aspiraciones, no para convertirse en la pareja ideal de alguien más.

No existe ninguna garantía de que un matrimonio dure para siempre, de que una pareja siempre pueda mantenerlas, o de que sus circunstancias económicas y matrimoniales no cambien. Un título, una formación profesional, y las habilidades que desarrollan durante sus estudios que permanecen de por vida, son herramientas que nadie se las puede quitar.

El amor de nuestros padres también vive en sus sacrificios

Ana Ramirez Cermeno
Editora

A veces, cuando somos pequeños no entendemos todo lo que nuestros padres hacen por nosotros.

Pensamos que su trabajo es simplemente darnos lo que necesitamos, cuidarnos y hacernos felices.

Sin embargo, conforme vamos creciendo, comenzamos a mirar las cosas de otra manera y nos damos cuenta de que detrás de cada detalle existe un esfuerzo y un amor enorme.

Cuando pienso en mis padres, el primer recuerdo que viene a mi mente es cómo se esfuerzan y trabajan duro para darme lo que quiero y hacerme feliz.

Siempre buscan la manera de sorprenderme con algún regalo o de darme algo que me haga sonreír.

Pero, con el tiempo, he aprendido que el regalo más grande que me dan no es algo material, sino todo el esfuerzo que hacen cada día por mí.

Veo cómo mi papá se levanta temprano todas las mañanas para ir a trabajar y cómo mi mamá también trabaja, llega cansada a casa y aun así se pone a cocinar para que nunca falten los alimentos en nuestro hogar. Son cosas que quizás parecen pequeñas cuando las vemos todos los días, pero que significan muchísimo.

Mis padres emigraron a Estados Unidos y dejaron sus tierras para que mi hermano y yo pudiéramos tener un futuro mejor.

Al pensar en eso, me doy cuenta de que no fue fácil dejar atrás un lugar que conocían y comenzar una vida diferente.

Muchas veces, sus sacrificios son silenciosos, pero están presentes en cada oportunidad que tenemos.

Cuando era niña, había cosas que no entendía.

No comprendía por qué mis padres no me dejaban hacer algunas de las cosas que otros niños hacían.

Ahora entiendo que muchas de esas decisiones eran para cuidarme y protegerme.

Hoy puedo mirar hacia atrás y agradecerles por haber estado pendientes de mí, incluso cuando yo no comprendía sus razones.

Me siento muy feliz de tener a mis padres conmigo.

Sé que hay personas que desearían tener a sus padres a su lado y no pueden hacerlo. Por eso, valoro cada momento que comparto con ellos.

Para mí, mis padres son una de las razones más importantes de mi vida y las personas por las que lucho cada día.

Mi sueño es que algún día pueda devolverles, aunque sea un poquito, todo lo que han hecho por mí y poder apoyarlos como ellos siempre me han apoyado.

Nunca dejaré de amarlos, porque son de lo más valioso que tengo.

Me siento afortunada de recibir ese amor inmenso que me han dado desde siempre.

Quiero recordarles a quienes lean estas palabras que cuiden a sus padres, que los abracen, que les digan cuánto los aman y que valoren el tiempo que tienen con ellos.

A veces estamos tan ocupados con nuestras propias vidas que olvidamos agradecerles por las cosas que hacen todos los días. No esperemos a que nos hagan falta para reconocer cuánto significan.

Porque el amor de nuestros padres no siempre se expresa con palabras.

Muchas veces vive en sus desvelos, en sus jornadas de trabajo, en sus preocupaciones y en cada sacrificio que hacen para vernos felices.


CORTESIA DE ANA RAMIREZ CERMENO

ON THE MENU


SA/HASRA HANUMIAHGARI / DAILY NEXUS
My personal favorite of the week: the tandoori chicken and rice.


SA/HASRA HANUMIAHGARI / DAILY NEXUS
Honey sesame chicken and broccoli with fried rice.

Why you should start to meal prep

Sahasra Hanumiahgari
On The Menu Editor

For the last two weeks, I've been genuinely scared to check my bank statements due to the sheer amount of fast food I have been eating. Forget haunted houses and scary movies, the scariest thing I experienced this past Halloween was my credit card bill. I probably went to Taco Bell at least five times in a span of two weeks. As much as I love a Spicy Potato Soft Taco, my bank account and body are suffering. But, it's so hard not to indulge. After a long day of class followed by work and then meetings for various organizations, the last thing I want to do is cook dinner and do dishes. I want something yummy and above all, something I don't have to think about. God knows after a 12-hour day, I don't have the brainpower to think about what I'm going to have for dinner.

The solution to this problem? Meal prep. I hate to admit it, but my mom is right (once again, but don't tell her I said that). If you can set aside just a few hours of the weekend to cook, you can save yourself so much stress, time and money. In just three hours, I cooked twelve servings of three different meals and also had a clean kitchen by the end of it.

I know meal prep gets a really bad rep, but I promise it's not just for "gym bros." It doesn't have to be unseasoned ground beef and rice. The sky is the limit. You can make incredibly delicious and nutritious food that you won't have to force yourself to eat — healthy and enjoyable.

The first step to a successful meal prep starts before you even enter the kitchen. Come up with an efficient grocery list. Make sure you know what you already have in your kitchen. I've definitely made the mistake of buying ingredients I already have, or thinking I have something at home that is nowhere to be found when I need it. Figure out what ingredients can be used for multiple recipes and know where to shop for what. I prefer to get protein from Costco and produce from Trader Joes.

The key to meal prep is knowing how to multi-task, knowing what can be made at the same time without overwhelming yourself. Prep and cut all produce before you start cooking and save yourself the headache of running from an open flame to a cutting board. Next, marinate your protein in advance. There's nothing I hate more than dealing with raw meat. I like to get it all out of the way in the beginning.

A good rule of thumb to follow to hit all the major food groups is to pick one protein, one carb and one vegetable. Once you have those decided, the rest is easy. Figure out what flavors you want and you can start the prep!

I can't stress this enough: CLEAN AS YOU GO! Cooking such large quantities of food can go one of two ways: a sloppy mess of a kitchen and a full sink or a clean and tidy environment your roommates won't be scared to enter. Don't be the annoying roommate who leaves the sink full of dishes and stains all over the counters. While your food is cooking, do a few dishes. Wipe down countertops as the mess happens. Clean as you go, and you will be so thankful you don't have a mountain of dishes to wash after hours of cooking.

This week, I was inspired by my Instagram Reels, which have been about how to cook chicken thighs on a stainless steel pan. I was actually so excited to try out this technique, I was buzzing the entire time we were in Costco and couldn't wait to go home and cook. After deliberation with my roommate, I decided on Asian, Indian and Mediterranean-inspired bowls. Pick a few recipes you can rotate through that you won't get bored of. Make it a team effort: You make a dish or two, and your roommate(s) do the same. Broaden the menu and give yourself more options so you don't get sick of your meal preps.

Without further ado, here is a quick and easy meal prep recipe that everyone is sure to enjoy:

Honey sesame chicken and fried rice

Yield: 4 servings
Duration: 30 minutes

Ingredients:
- 4 boneless chicken thighs (about 5 ounce each)
- 3-4 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2-3 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar (optional)
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 teaspoon ginger powder
- 2 tablespoon water
- Salt to taste
- 4 cups broccoli

For the fried rice:
- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 2 cups water
- ½ tablespoon butter
- 1 cup green peas
- 1 cup edamame
- 2-3 tablespoon soy sauce
- ½ tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon garlic
- 4 eggs

Instructions:
1. Wash the rice until the water runs clear. Use a 1:2 ratio of rice to water, and cook using your preferred method.
2. Heat up a stainless steel pan on high heat until it is VERY hot. Don't skip this step. If you're not using a stainless steel pan, heat up 1-2 tbsp of oil in whatever pan you're using.
3. Pat the chicken thighs dry and salt both sides.
4. Lay the chicken skin-side down. Let it cook for 5 minutes. Be patient and let the chicken release itself from the pan before you try to force it off.
5. While it's cooking, mix together the seasonings and water in a bowl.
6. Flip the chicken and let the other side cook for 2-3 minutes.
7. Pour in the sauce and cover.
8. Once the chicken reaches 165 degrees, take it off the stove.
9. Add your broccoli to the same pan and let it steam.
10. As the chicken and broccoli are cooking, in a wok or large skillet, add butter and let it melt. Add the cooked rice, peas and edamame.
11. Add soy sauce, garlic and sesame oil.
12. After a few minutes, move the rice to the side of the pan and crack four eggs. Scramble the eggs and once those are cooked, mix everything together.
13. Top with green onion and chili oil and enjoy!

All the ingredients for my meal preps this week came from Costco or Trader Joes, and each serving costs less than $3 to make. If it's between $3 for a nutritious, balanced home cooked meal or over $10 to eat calorically dense food with little to no nutritional value, all logic points to meal prep.

As I go about my day, I've been finding myself super excited for dinner, eager to go home and eat some delicious and healthy food I don't have to go through a drive through for. After a minute in the microwave, dinner is served; my stomach and bank account both thoroughly satisfied and taken care of.


SA/HASRA HANUMIAHGARI / DAILY NEXUS
Dinner for my roommate and me that came together in less than 5 minutes.


SA/HASRA HANUMIAHGARI / DAILY NEXUS
Honey sesame chicken and broccoli with fried rice.


SA/HASRA HANUMIAHGARI / DAILY NEXUS
One pan tandoori chicken and rice.

OPINION

Traveling solo can leave you with so much more than what you left with

Salma Maytorena
Reporter

After an 11-hour flight across the Atlantic, my family and I finally touched down in the Madrid airport, where they would send me off for the journey abroad that awaited me. We were all buzzing with excitement and tiredness. As we walked through the airport, we hurriedly scattered, trying to figure out just where to get our bags. My eagerness to start this new adventure of studying in a foreign country did not allow me to sleep on the flight. While waiting at the luggage carousels, I turned my head and saw a group of about 15-20 students. Some were American University students, some wore University of Wisconsin hoodies and others had University of Michigan backpacks. We could hear them making their way to baggage claim like a boulder rolling down a hill, and I felt like it was going to hit me.

At that moment, I got a rush of anxiety and even felt a bit insecure — did I mess up by choosing to travel so far and live alone? Was I supposed to leave with fellow students and not allow my family to help settle me in? These were the types of questions that rushed to my head as I was conversing with my mom about how to get out of the airport. I did not know much about going abroad — the traditions or canon events everyone has while in Europe. Does everyone go abroad with a friend, or even a giant friend group? Was there a requirement on our pre-departure checklist where we were all told to take at least five friends?

Without knowing it, I sort of unexpectedly practiced a form of solo traveling through finding my own apartment, keeping a list of places I only wanted to see and even landing in a country where I knew no one, not even other University of California students. I am not the only one who has ever been solo traveling though; from 2018 to 2023, internet searches for solo traveling have doubled, and solo traveling is now becoming an increasingly popular way to travel.

People who choose to travel solo do so for a multitude of reasons, whether that's not relying on others and the choices you make, or wanting a form of self reflection. Before, the solo traveler image was very minimalist, with only a backpack and a remote place, but this narrative is changing.

Now, solo traveling has transformed into a whole new market in the travel industry, with more people from multiple demographics trying it for themselves and doing so in styles that cater to them, regardless of their economic situations. There are even studies showing how solo traveling has benefits for mental health, cognitive functions and emotional resilience. One study was done by Dr. Katie Blake, a social and cultural psychologist, who says that solo traveling removes the social context that defines your identity and allows you to make deeper connections with friends you make along the way. Looking back, I probably experienced so much more than those students traveling in packs that I saw back in baggage claim.

As a first-generation student, going away for college was already a huge step, so studying abroad was even crazier for me to imagine, and to be honest, it took some getting used to. These opportunities, in my experience, are unfortunately not common within the Latino community. Only 12.2% of Latinos study abroad in postsecondary education. Often, it's seen as an unfeasible opportunity due to factors like finances, customs and closeness to family. It is hard for us to leave because we are taught to stay close to home and take care of each other.



SALMA MAYTORENA / DAILY NEXUS

I was fortunate enough to have my family come drop me off, but I know this isn't the case for everyone. Not only did my family express pride in me as I took this opportunity, they also wanted to ensure I got there safely and felt confident in myself. It was also a chance to experience a part of it with me since they never had the same opportunities when they were my age. But, once they left, I felt guilty about traveling to new places without them. However, I came to realize that these are the experiences that my family and I worked so hard for — I should be taking advantage of them.

The reality of figuring things out on your own is the whole purpose of solo travel culture; however, it also gave me a lot of moments of solace as well. I would go on long walks along Campo del Moro around famous monuments after class, explore museums like Museo del Prado and even go thrifting and book finding in small stores in different Madrid barrios. I think the fact that I didn't have to rely on anyone or an agenda gave me that personal freedom and satisfaction that I will never take for granted.


SALMA MAYTORENA / DAILY NEXUS

While I enjoy the moments of solitude, there are also the not-so-lonely parts of solo travel, like making new friends. When I was looking for an apartment on my own, I realized that would mean having roommates. I didn't know anyone when I left, so I found myself with random assignments, as my landlord had rented out the empty rooms to other students of my host university. All of them were international students from different parts of the world, such as my roommate and friend Karla who is from Cairo, Egypt and Rosa who is from Naples, Italy. We explored the city together, as it was our first time in Madrid. We spent the first day going to trendy spots, such as thrift store in the Malasaña neighborhood, and sitting down for a traditional Spanish meal in Plaza Mayor.

From the first moments of traveling solo, I felt pushed to make friends with people I would have never met if I stuck with a big American friend group. This is one of the main benefits of studying abroad — it's the best time to get out and meet new people from all over the world.

Although I met people from all over the world, I did manage to meet some American students, including a group of girls from George Mason University in Virginia. I traveled with them for a weekend trip to Lisbon, Portugal, after only knowing them for a couple of weeks. Despite barely knowing them, that was one of my favorite trips while being abroad because of how spontaneous it was. I had never traveled with anyone outside my family before. Even though it felt a bit abnormal and at times a bit hectic, especially when we were climbing the city's incredibly steep streets, I think that's what made me enjoy it. We made lots of memories.

Aside from international and American friends I also befriended local Spanish students, such as my friends Sara, Gonzalo and Sofia. I walked along Gran Vía and had a drink with Gonzalo, Sara and I went to a feria and soccer match, and I can't forget about the quiet, chill hang outs with Sofia in the park. After being alone in a country and only hanging out with others just like me, meeting locals who know the city and, of course, Spanish culture opened my eyes to the full experience abroad. They all even introduced me to other students and were so welcoming to me. I will never forget the long conversations or sobremesas with big groups in front of the cafeteria and talking about everything and nothing at the same time.

There is so much more I could say about my time in Spain, but I believe it all worked out the way it did because I went alone. While I do think there are moments of vulnerability and homesickness and feeling lost without your family, which I felt deeply, I think the overall goal of this experience is for you to get out of your comfort zone, and to do so on your own. I'm not suggesting that you ditch all of your friends from home, but I am saying to not let that trap you. Be friends with locals, go places without fear of judgement because I promise you, no one is wondering why you are there by yourself.

Being abroad is one of the perfect times to try solo traveling. It provides you with an environment that gives you the chance to explore new places and witness amazing sights. Most of all, it offers you the freedom of being completely independent. Sometimes, I think of those people back in the airport and wonder how many of them are still friends or if they ever escaped their American bubble miles away from home — which I'm happy to say I definitely did.

Salma Maytorena really hopes more students take advantage of studying abroad even if they have

VIEWS EXPRESSED ON THE OPINION PAGE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE *DAILY NEXUS* OR UCSB. OPINIONS ARE SUBMITTED PRIMARILY BY STUDENTS.

HOROSCOPES

The signs as airport habits they have

ARIES
MARCH 21 - APRIL 19
Heatless curls and a facemask on a one-hour flight

TAURUS
APRIL 20 - MAY 20
Striking up conversations with other travelers

GEMINI
MAY 21 - JUNE 20
Jampacking two days of sightseeing into a two-hour layover

CANCER
JUNE 21 - JULY 22
Sleeping in unconventional spots

LEO
JULY 23 - AUGUST 22
Praying to a higher power for an early boarding group

VIRGO
AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22
Going to the airport four hours early

LIBRA
SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22
Not preparing for TSA

SCORPIO
OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 21
Rawdogging a flight with no headphones

SAGITTARIUS
NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 21
Getting lost looking for their terminal

CAPRICORN
DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 19
Clapping when the plane lands

AQUARIUS
JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18
Downloading the perfect playlist that will end right when they land

PISCES
FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20
Grabbing a drink at the bar

ARTSWEEK

Sufjan Stevens captures bittersweet holiday feelings in "Worst Christmas Ever!"

Gianna Dossa
Reporter

Acclaimed singer-songwriter Sufjan Stevens returns with a beautiful Christmas music album featuring his first original Christmas song in almost fifteen years. "Worst Christmas Ever!" compiles the best of Stevens' Christmas songs from over two decades and adds a new song, "On This Christmas (It Only Gets Better)," his first original Christmas song since the release of his box set "Silver and Gold" in 2012. The album, produced by Asthmatic Kitty Records, is his first since the release of his 2023 album "Javelin," which received critical praise.

The album follows the end of Stevens' eight-year hiatus from the public eye in Sep. 2026, when he shocked fans by making his first public performance in eight years at Meg Lui's concert in Kingston, New York. Stevens stopped performing between 2018 and 2026 after dealing with complications from Guillain-Barré syndrome and losing his partner Evans Richardson in 2023, both of which have influenced his music.

Stevens, best known for his 2015 hit album "Carrie & Lowell" and 2017 single "Mystery of Love," has been a prolific creator of Christmas music for over two decades. He began creating Christmas music in 2001 to give as gifts to his family and friends and continued in the following years, eventually releasing his CD box set "Songs for Christmas" in Nov. 2006. His Christmas music discography includes a mix of covers and reimagined versions of Christmas classics, as well as originals.

When speaking to Vulture in 2022, Stevens touched on his love for the Christmas music genre.

"Christmas music gets to the heart of the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane," Stevens said. "Christmas music is such a madcap genre because you get the high art, the low art, the deeply sublime, and the sacrilege."

This blending of sacred and profane, weird and comforting, kitschy and ethereal is at the heart of "Worst Christmas Ever!," which moves between funky beats and soft, nostalgic melodies. Stevens' discography has seen a wide variety of styles, themes and sounds over the last two decades — from experimental electronic music to sad acoustic melodies.

His Christmas music seems to be no exception, especially with the variety present in "On This Christmas (It Only Gets Better)," which spans from soft pieces such as "Silent Night" to funky beats in "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear (Christmas Infinity Voyage Version)." The album opens with Stevens' cover of "Silent Night," a calm, guitar and choral-backed piece that stays true to the original while adding unique guitar riffs. Following the calm of "Silent Night" is a series of livelier songs that feature bright sounds and riffs from a variety of instruments, including the flute, keyboard and drums. The simple, comforting sound of "On This Christmas (It Only Gets Better)" is welcomed amidst a sea of overproduced holiday songs.

Opening with the lines "On this Christmas / I ask forgiveness / For all the funny things I've said and done" in "On This Christmas (It Only Gets Better)" sets the scene for a song about feelings of defeat coupled with finding the strength to believe in a better future. Throughout the song, Stevens sings of struggling to find the light in the world around him, ultimately ending the song by saying, "You said 'no matter what it's worth my friend' / You said, 'don't put it past the Earth to get better in the end.'"

This fight between hope and despair focuses more on the inevitability of both good and bad, which seems to be a continuation of Stevens' contesting with faith despite tragedy, seen in several of his albums and songs, such as the song "Drawn to the Blood." The pull between conflicting feelings finds resolution in the soft Christmas melody, offering quiet contemplation. "On This Christmas (It Only Gets Better)" is soft and reminiscent of Stevens' album "Carrie & Lowell," which touches on grief, love and complex relationships. Stevens once again proves his ability to capture devastating feelings in a soft and welcoming manner, blending hopelessness with acceptance.

The album reads like a biography of Stevens' Christmas music from his career thus far, providing a fantastic entrypoint into his discography. While the album only adds one song, the addition of "On This Christmas (It Only Gets Better)" allows Stevens to combine his talent for creating solemn tunes with his creative Christmas music abilities to craft a beautiful holiday song. The album is a haven in a genre that favors overproduction and manages to add fun riffs and sounds without losing its groundedness. Stevens makes a beautiful return to music and proves once again that his approach to the Christmas genre is grounded and serene.

Rating: 9.5/10



COURTESY OF ASTHMATIC KITTY RECORDS

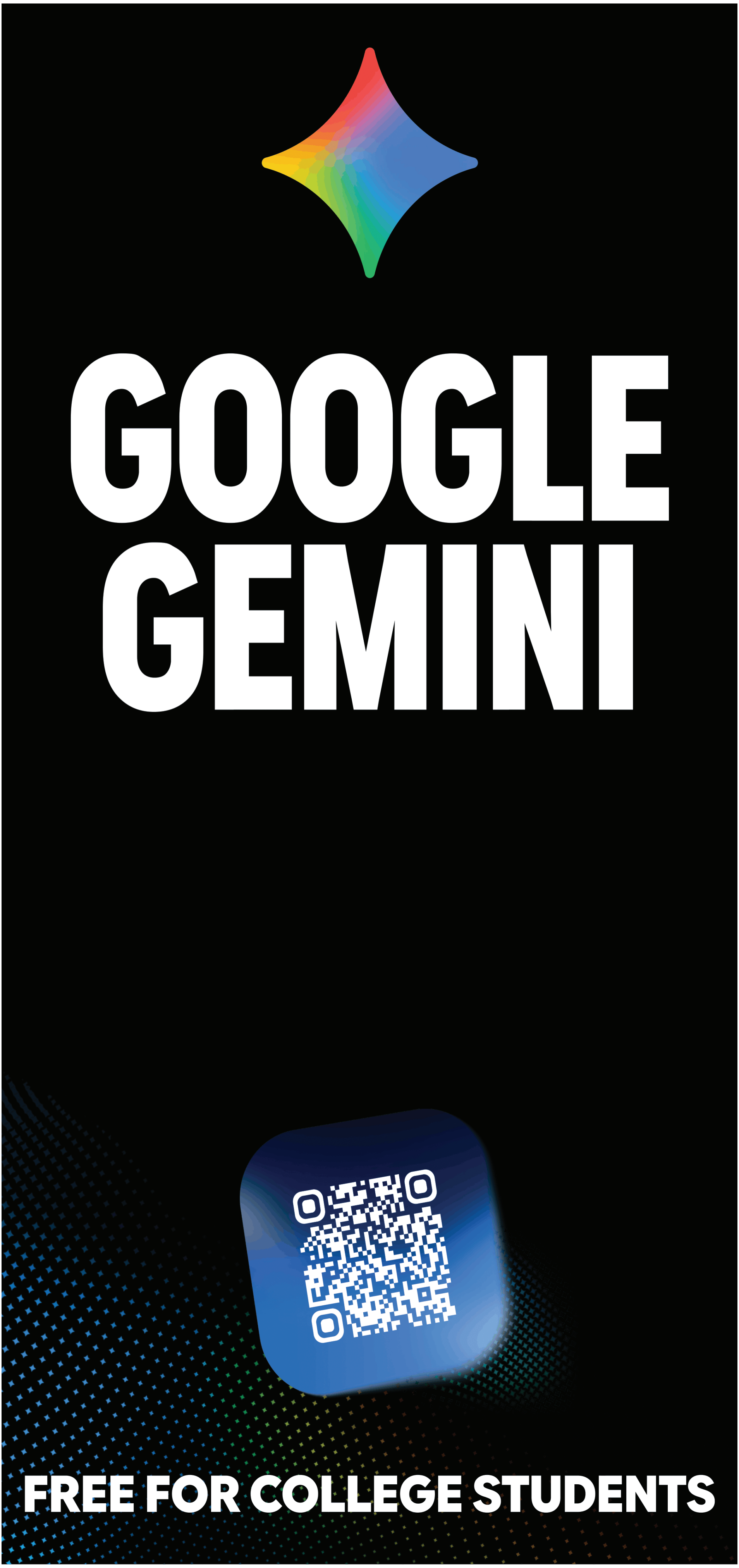
"The Worst Christmas Ever!" is the first album Sufjan Stevens has released since 2023. The holiday release features a mix of original takes on traditional Christmas songs and a new original song by Stevens.



COURTESY OF DENNY RENSHAW

Stevens has been a creator of Christmas music for the past two decades and showcases his love for the genre in the new album.




GOOGLE
GEMINI
FREE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS