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Letters to the Editor

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THE EXPRESS

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LPC ranks as 14th best community college in the nation via Wallethub

By Ana Delgadillo

@AAANAKD

Being at the top of a list for an achievement is always a wonderful feeling. Whether it be for a project you've been working on, something you created or something you are just a part of. There always is a certain thrill of being at the top.

Adam McCann, the financial writer for personal finance website The WallerHub, released the "2020's Best & Worst Community Colleges" on Aug. 17. This list ranked Las Positas Community College as 14th in the nation.

In McCann's report, WalletHub selected a sample of 698 schools from the list of member institutions in the American Association of Community Colleges and evaluated them using three key factors: cost and financing, education outcomes and career outcomes.

Many believe ending in the

top 20 is a huge accomplishment for Las Positas and all the faculty and students involved.

Ecstatic upon receiving the news, Foster said, "I was thrilled! Completely excited and proud of our college, of our district, of our students and of our community. This recognition is validating and a result of a collective effort and hard work of everyone at LPC long before I arrived, so I was particularly happy for our faculty, classified professionals and administrators because they deserve the recognition and the honor of this impressive ranking."

Foster emphasized that the ranking was a huge accomplishment and part of all the hard work that has been put in by not just current faculty and staff but previous as well.

"LPC is a great educational value in the Tri-Valley. We have high transfer rates to UCs, CSUs and other four-year colleges, and our students, upon completion, are finding livable wage jobs in

their fields of study. Las Positas College is successful because we have amazing students and because of our commitment to academic excellence and to providing an inclusive, student-centered, equity-focused campus environment. We provide excellent academic support, student services and outstanding educational programs and opportunities to support students in achieving their educational goals. Most importantly, we have the most dedicated, committed, passionate and professional faculty, classified professionals and administrators who care about our students and their success," said Foster.

He emphasized that the key to a successful school is making sure both the professors and students care about student outcomes. The professors ensure that the students receive and are aware of the help that can be provided to them and know the resources that are available. The students there care to give

their time at LPC the best and leave on the strongest level they can and take what they learned here and apply it to their future.

Foster said, "We don't have plans to get a higher rank next year. However, we do have significant plans to enhance the college experience for our students and to continue to strive to meet their educational and career needs by providing excellent instruction and support services, particularly in this COVID environment. We are constantly seeking ways to improve and to be a better college for our students, and by focusing on meeting the needs of our students, if our ranking happens to improve next year, I'll be fine with that."

As classes and the semester roll on in the midst of a pandemic, accommodating to online learning is a task for everyone, but LPC takes it upon themselves to provide the best quality education, according to Foster.

LPC institutes hiring freeze due to pandemic

By Han Nelson

@SCP_TLDR

It is no secret that this school year has been met with two major issues. These issues include a pandemic, and both students and staff having to transition into remote learning. An issue that coincides with the pandemic is the lack of state budget available to the school. This means that Las Positas College and Chabot College are left with no other choice than to freeze the permanent hiring of staff.

This may sound to some as if the students of LPC are getting short changed, in regards

to there being a lack of staff members able to accommodate the student body of LPC.

Although the hiring freeze was announced, this doesn't mean there won't be new faces when it comes to staff of LPC. Hiring will be continued as "based on the critical needs of the college, and as identified by the college presidents," stated Guiselle Nunez, the district director of public relations.

Nunez said, "Filling of permanent positions are on a hiring pause as an outcome of the state budget — with some exceptions, meaning some hires are continued as planned, based on the critical

needs of the college, and as identified by the college presidents."

Nunez said that the needs of the students will be taken care of regardless of the decision to freeze hirings at this time.

Nunez has only encouraging words to say about the overall impact this decision will have on LPC.

"There has been no interruption to academic or support services to students," stated Nunez, "Student Services operations continue as configured, though online, during the extended shelter-in-place, with various teams supporting the various services available to students."

This should be reassuring to students who could've been fearing a possible lack of resources in terms of staff.

Nunez was also positive about the impact of the hiring freeze. The district is strategically addressing both reduced state funding and creative solutions to best serve students as possible," she said.

Many believe that regardless of the current hardships LPC and the district are facing, the staff is working hard to find the best way to serve the students and their future academic goals.

New student government officers sworn in

By Kiano Deperalta

@KKDEPERALTA

On Thursday, Oct. 1. Lara Wiedemeier, Yanran ("Ruby") Yan and Lord Ferrer were sworn in as Director of Communication, Director of Events and ICC Chair respectively. Until the appointments, the student government offices had been vacant, leaving a void in student leadership.

The newly elected members thanked the board and stated hopes to use their positions to create a more interconnected and supportive environment for

student interaction and clubs.

Elected officials showed support for rebuilding clubs, student life and campus resources that have been affected by the pandemic.

Lara Wiedemeier, LPCSG Director of Communication, said, "During these difficult times of social distancing, I hope to reunite the campus through online outreach. Through LPCSG communication outlets, I would provide clear and concise information to the student body, allowing the student body to reconnect with student life here at Las Positas College."

Ruby Yan, LPCSG Director of

Events, focused on opportunities to help. She said, "I think there are a lot more ways to provide our students with the help they need. I believe that as long as we keep up the hard work and forge ahead, we can provide more resources with higher quality to the student body."

Lord Ferrer, the New ICC Chair, has plans to help students. Ferrer said, "The thing that immediately pops into mind when I think about student life is connection. What I mean by that is, being able to connect with students, faculty, and community members. Perhaps setting up a virtual

meet-and-greet/Q&A section as a way for us to introduce ourselves to the community, answer any questions they may have."

Ferrer would also like to see improvements to the LPC Student Government pages on the college website. He recommends including an "All-About-Me page for all members of the Senate (include a picture of yourself), as a way for people to know who we are."

Members of the student government congratulated the new members and expressed enthusiasm for working with them in the future.

Mental Health is shattering behind the screen

By Michelle Pacheco

@MISEON7MICHELLE

When it comes to school, normally you have to get ready and make your way to class, leaving your house, your family and pets behind.

That is not normal for classes these days as we are learning online through Zoom and wearing masks and social distancing for some in-person classes. This adds anxiety for students about the future and possibly catching COVID-19 even with safety precautions in place.

"Mental health has definitely changed since COVID and lack of physical connection," said Rose Park, a psychologist based in general psychology. Through this pandemic with social distancing, it is recommended that everyone stay at home.

Park said that the changes have been different for everyone. More panic, more anxiety, more depression are just some of the factors that lead to declining mental health. She explains people don't have the access to usual coping strategies like seeing friends or leaving home.

Through this pandemic, people are exercising more, but they are also using unhealthy coping strategies like isolating, drinking, or using substances, spending more money and emotional eating. She said that some people feel that virtual aspects like Zoom are better than not having anything at all.

Park said, "Some students have found online learning difficult and challenging because it is hard to focus on. Some people

have teachers/professors who are not well equipped to teach online, so things can become quite chaotic."

Students are also having a hard time focusing and concentrating, especially since their motivation may have decreased. According to Park, some mental health issues have been steady since using online learning and technology.

Park said, "On the other hand, some students like online learning because it is at their fingertips, and being at home helps them feel less anxious. Some students are feeling more panicked and worried about the future."

Jane Oliver, a counselor at Valley High School, had a different take. She believes distance learning that began in the spring has definitely had a negative impact on mental health.

Oliver said, "I think that this was a combination of distance learning itself, but also the fact that there was so much fear and uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and the shelter in place." Many at her school felt that it was difficult because everyone thought it would be only for a few weeks, but the time away from school kept being extended.

For students, there was no consistent schedule for classes during the spring, and they felt disconnected from school and from others. Oliver hopes that the changes that were put into place for distance learning this fall will help improve the situation.

She noticed that students



seem to feel more isolated now and miss seeing their classmates in person. Students prefer and miss in-person learning, Olver said.

Many students came to her and told her that they do not like online learning and really want to go back to the old times. Students miss seeing their friends and the community that is built within her school, she said.

Learning was especially difficult during the spring when distance learning was not consistent, and students were unsure of how to proceed. Meeting in a normal class schedule will help a little bit, according to Oliver. There is no replacement for face-

to-face learning.

Students tell her that they have a rougher time doing all their work online. Not only that, but there are more financial and personal burdens on families that impact students' mental health.

Oliver personally sees no improvement with mental health due to online learning in the fall. She only saw a negative impact.

DVC student Nancy Kim said that she misses going to class. She misses the social interaction with her classmates.

She also says she misses time to herself away from her husband and kids who are now at home working and learning. She longs for the way it was before in per-

son because now there is more work to do.

Since the beginning of 2020, things have changed so much. In the future, those who weren't alive during the pandemic will read in their textbooks about it or have assignments to interview an adult who was around during COVID-19.

With the rising levels of anxiety and depression affecting the mental health of students, Las Positas offers many resources to help. Students who need support can learn more about support services through the Student Health Center page on the Las Positas website.

WIFI OFFERED FOR FREE IN PARKING LOTS

NEWS BRIEF

The LPC Technology Department has announced that there is WIFI in parking lots C and D. Students can sit in their car and access the WIFI network to complete work for their classes.. This is in addition to the campus wide WIFI.

WHEELS BUS FREE FOR STUDENTS

NEWS BRIEF

The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), which operates the Wheels buses, has announced that it will begin collecting ridership fares beginning on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. Las Positas College employees and students may ride the Wheels bus without paying the ridership fare if they obtain a free LPC identification card from the Admissions & Records Office.

FREE FLU SHOTS

NEWS BRIEF

The LPC Health and Wellness Center is currently offering flu shots, free of charge, to LPC students. Call (925)424-1830 to make an appointment to get a flu shot. There is a \$30 fee for faculty and staff

Talk Hawks win big on national stage, continue success from last year

By Alan Lewis

@ALOLEWIS1

Five of the eight Talk Hawk members were participating in their first ever Forensics Tournament. No they are not Crime Scene Investigators but LPC students participating in a public speaking contest.

The Las Positas College Forensics team, Talk Hawks, is doing well in tournaments. This year most, if not all, of the Talk Hawks are new to the team but continuing the great track record the Talk Hawks have.

During the Pandemic all individual and team practice sessions, instruction and coaching have been solely online. Since March 2020 the Forensics tournaments are being conducted virtually online.

The first tournament of the semester was held the weekend of Sep 19/20. The Talk Hawks placed ninth overalls of the 19 schools in the tournament, seven of the schools participating are 4 year colleges.

Talk Hawks won first place in the Team Sweepstakes. Alejandra Quezada-Sermeno in her first tournament ever, received second place in Novice Impromptu and third place in Prose Interpretation. In impromptu speaking the competitor is given a quotation to use as the topic of their speech. Impromptu speaking is known for its uniquely short preparation time, competitors are given 7 minutes to both prepare and give their speech.

Ashley Eastman also in her first tournament, placed second in the Communication Analysis division. Communication analysis is an original speech centered on the evaluation of a communication event.

Danny Georgiev placed second in Prose Interpretation. Prose interpretation features the performance of a prose piece of significant literary merit.

Nez Hasanly, also his first tournament placed second in after dinner speaking. after dinner speaking is an original, humorous speech centered on a single theme or subject.

This fall 2020 semester team is following in the footsteps of the outstanding performance of last years team. A Synchronous National Championship and an Asynchronous Championship were held in the spring semester, Las Positas College won both events. Brannan Mock, a past member of the Talk hawks and now a volunteer coach was named the top Limited Preparation

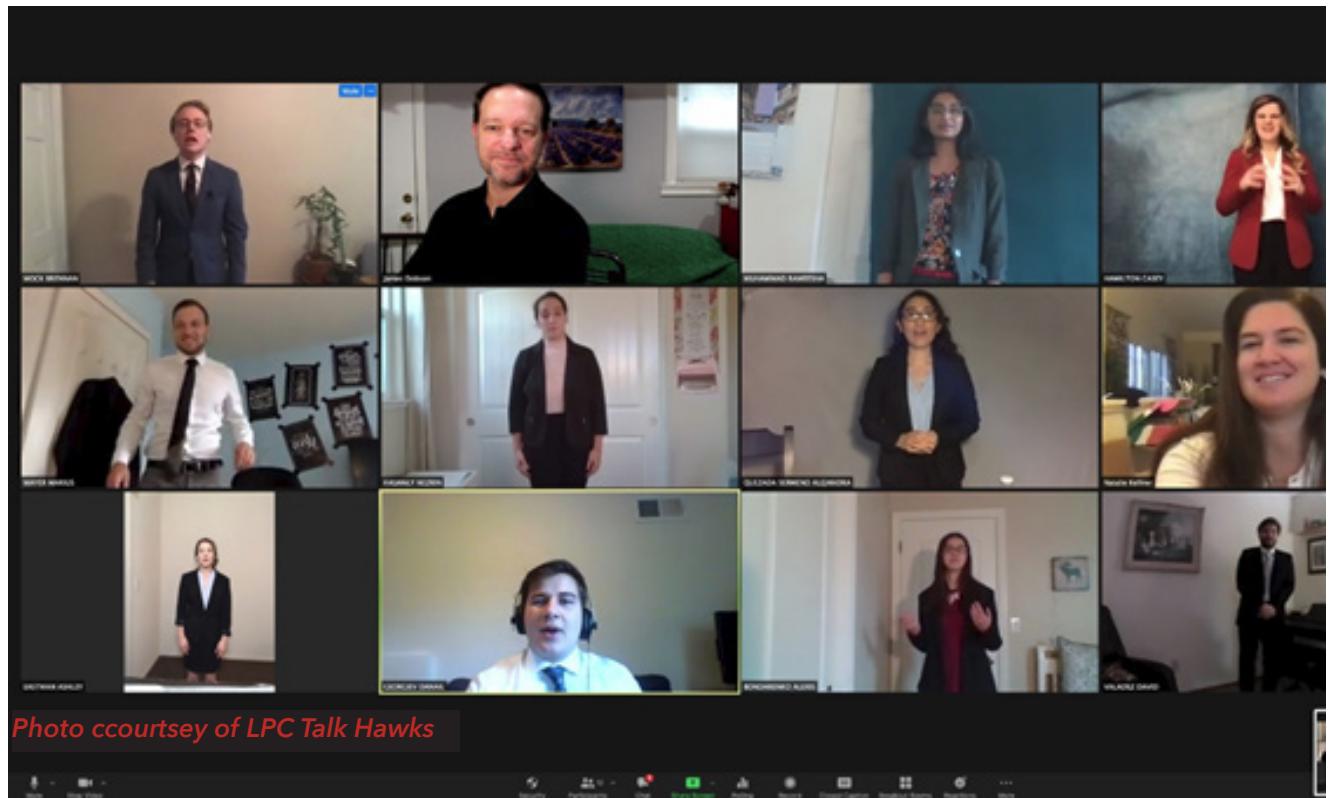


Photo courtesy of LPC Talk Hawks

speaker and top Public Address speaker at the awards ceremony. In this tournament Hasanly finished first in after dinner speaking, Georgiev finished first in Novice Prose Interpretation, Alexis Bondarenko finished sixth in Varsity Information and was the top novice. Informative speeches are the teaching speeches. Students are encouraged to find topics about new medical breakthroughs, technological advances, or a growing social concern. Students must research and include a minimum of ten source cites in each speech. What makes this placing special is that Bondarenko is a high school student attending LPC as part of the Middle College program.

The second tournament of the season was held the weekend of Sep 26/27. Las Positas team finished sixth of the thirty teams in the competition, of which 22 are four years colleges. In this tournament Hasanly finished first in after dinner speaking, Georgiev finished first in Novice

Prose Interpretation.

Alexis Bondarenko finished sixth in Varsity Information and was the top novice. Informative speeches are the teaching speeches. Students are encouraged to find topics about new medical breakthroughs, technological advances, or a growing social concern. Students must research and include a minimum of ten source cites in each speech. What makes this placing special is that Bondarenko is a high school student attending LPC as part of the Middle College program.

The Talk Hawks are coached by Professors' James Dobson and Natalie Kellner, assisted by past team members volunteer coaches Brannan Mock and Casey Hamilton.

The team hasn't dropped of since last year and the success continues. The Hawks are poised for another great showing if they continue their success

LPC takes in more students from bigger universities

By Kiano Deperalta

@KKDEPERALTA

The Las Positas student body is like the student body at any other community college, as it has a large diversity of people with different backgrounds. While on campus, you may see a variety of faces, from the mother who has decided to return to school to the 17-year-old student who is looking to take as many credits as possible in order to transfer early to even the students with degrees already looking to change career paths.

This medley that is Las Positas' student body has recently gained another variety of students looking to gain an education from this community college. These students are those who are coming to Las Positas from a four year university.

These students are coming back to Las Positas from universities primarily due to COVID-19. This decision could be looked at as beneficial for these students for multiple reasons whether it be for convenience, financial, or even just logical reasons



Photo illustration by Kiano Deperalta

"I came to Las Positas College to take a variety of classes while saving money and staying safe from COVID-19 as well," said Wesley Shamblen, an ex-Arizona State University student, who has decided to return to Las Positas. Shamblen made sure that her decision was the

best for her stating, "If students are not comfortable going back to their college campus, and it's still open, I do think

they should take classes at LPC (or any other community college)."

This decision did not come easy for Shamblen, "At first I was sad to be going home because my two closest friends would be going back to the campus," she said. While some students are coming from a four year to a community college, the inverse also seems to be true. Some Las Positas students are waiting to transfer due to the fears that come along with COVID-19 and the financial costs that come with attending a four year university for online classes.

"I was planning on last semester being my last semester here at Las Positas, but when COVID hit, I decided that maybe I should stick around in order to retake some classes I'm not too happy about my grades in and avoid paying a university tuition to receive an online education," said Anjelica Gonzalez, a student with her transfer degree. She expressed concern about the uncertainty in her future that came with COVID-19.

Those who have returned may appreciate what LPC has to offer, too. Despite her disappointment about not returning to Arizona State, Shamblen was positive about attending LPC. She said, "Las Positas has great professors that will help continue you on your path. It saves you money, and it keeps you safe."

One thing that is present during these times is uncertainty, but also there is hope in Las Positas will be able to accommodate anyone who chooses to attend.

LPC statistics show African American students less likely to succeed

By Nathan Canilao

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According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the graduation rate for African Americans attending a two year college is 23 percent. The average graduation rate for African Americans attending a four year college is even lower at 21 percent.

LPC recently shared its statistics regarding student success rates among different races of students. A glaring statistic was that African American students were at the bottom of almost every statistical category given.

Some of those statistics include course success rates, Fall to Fall retention rates and student withdrawals during the 2019-2020 school year. The statistics are eye opening, especially in the time of COVID19 where all students are having a harder time adjusting to distance learning.

Success rates for African American students were at fifty eight by the end of Fall semester 2019. Fall to Fall retention rates were at fifty five percent and student withdrawals were twenty percent for Spring 2020.

Historically at LPC, African American students have been at higher risk for not graduating. President Dyrell Foster is in the

second semester of being LPC's President and he very well could be one of the most influential President LPC has ever had. Covid-19 has not made his job any easier, but one of the issues at the top of his list is how to improve graduation rates for African American students.

"Do I feel a responsibility to help Black students? Absolutely. There needs to be a sense of urgency from me and the college to fix this issue," said Foster.

According to the study done by LPC, African American students withdrew from classes at a much higher rate than any other race of students. The withdrawal rate was 24% for African American students while the next highest was Hispanic students at 16%.

The course success rate for African American students also dropped in the 2020 Spring Semester from 67% to 60%. LPC historically has had low year to year course success rates for African American students in the last five years with 2019 having a success rate of 58%. This is a regression as African American students were at a success rate of 63% just two years ago.

Though the numbers were trending upwards for African Americans students two years ago, they were still very low considering where other races of stu-

dents were around the same time. In 2017, Asian student success rate was at 75% and white student success rate was at 73%. The average student success rate for that year was 72%.

President Foster, who's been at community colleges throughout the state, believes that the issue of African American students not succeeding is not solely on the students themselves.

"It is an institutional responsibility. There has been a narrative in the state community college system that it's the students' responsibility. Regardless of how they come to us, we have to meet them where they are, and we've got to help them through. We can no longer say these are our expectations, and they either meet it or they don't. We also have to make sure we provide the support that they need to get through," said Foster.

An area where African American students are struggling nationwide is in mental health. In a study done by Boston College, forty percent of their African American student population met criteria for a type of mental health disorder. Additionally, 7 million African Americans have reported to have some type of mental illness in 2019. There is also a disparity in the treatment rates for African American stu-

dents. White students who were diagnosed with a mental health disorder were able to get treatment forty six percent of the time while African American students were only able to get treatment twenty one percent of the time.

"We need to figure out a way to put our services out there so that all students can take advantage of them. We need to see how students in Umoja or BSU (Black Student Union) can know that they have access to the services we provide," said Foster.

Though the numbers are alarming, there are programs in place trying to help aid African American students. The Umoja program which was launched 2017, helps guide African American students through the community college experience at LPC through counseling and learning about the African American experience through history and English courses.

The Black Student Union is a club that raises awareness for issues that concern African American students on campus. They have held on campus protests in the past and the club has been a reliable resource for African American students on campus.

LPC also surveyed students on how comfortable they felt on campus. Seventy two percent of

African American students said they felt safe on campus. The number isn't that alarming at first, but compared to other races, the number is significantly lower. Eighty nine percent of Hispanic students said they felt comfortable on campus as well as 90 percent of white students.

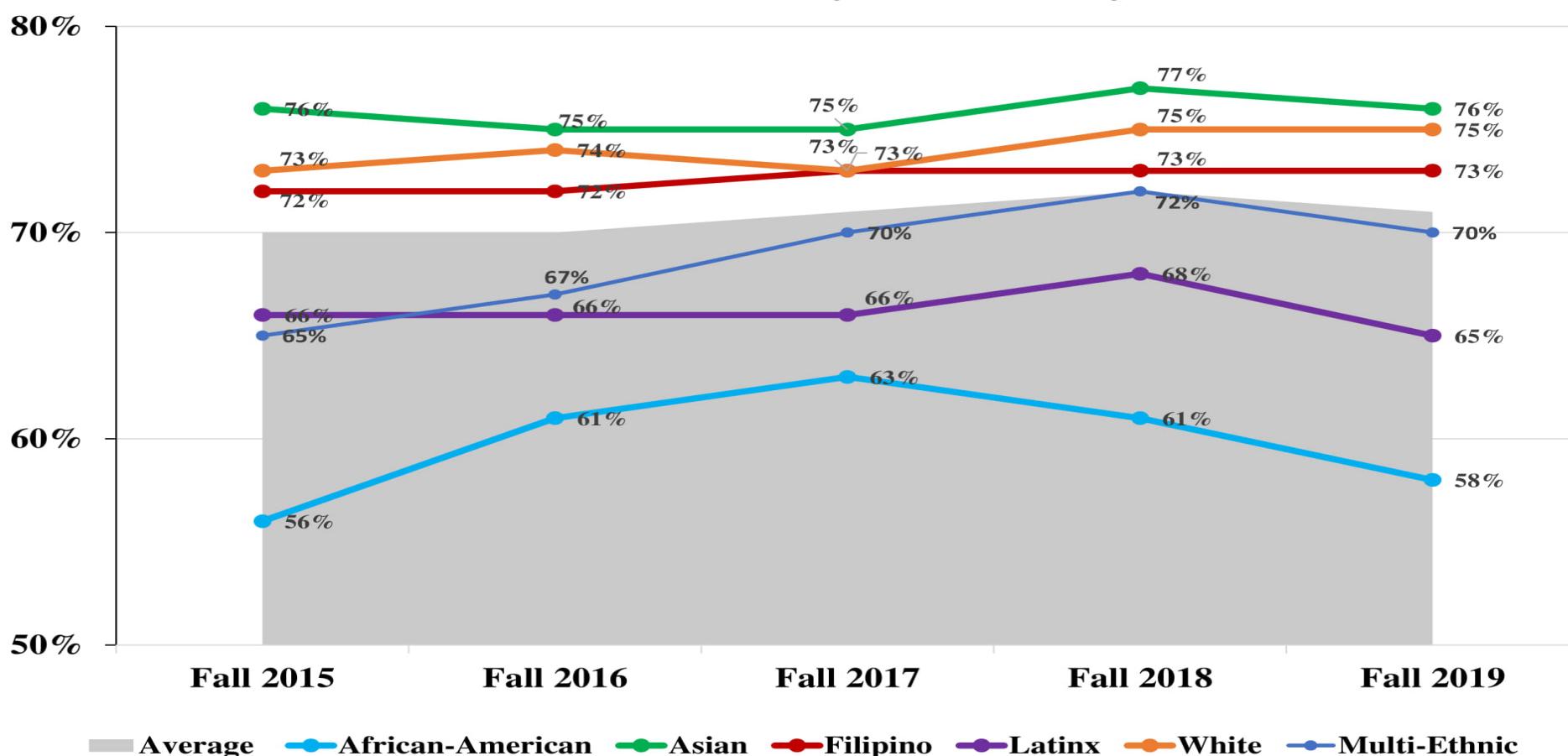
"The bigger question is why these students feel this way. I would like to talk to more (African American) students to see why they are uncomfortable and what we could do better," said Foster.

The African American student success rate at LPC has been on a downward trend in the past decade. Even when success and graduation rates have risen, they are still far below average.

Foster, a person of African American descent, feels the need to address this issue immediately. COVID-19 and the adjustment to online learning have been on the top of LPC's priorities, but the issues of African American students are a pressing matter.

"One of my passions that I have carried with me to LPC is my commitment to equity and social justice. I care about bringing success to all students at our campus, but there is also attention I am paying to African American students on our campus. I am truly looking forward to the work we are going to do," said Foster.

**Las Positas College
Course Success Rates by Race-Ethnicity**



Summer of 2020 defined by protests in streets around the Bay Area

Nathan Canilao
@NATHANCANILAO

The Summer of 2020 was a turning point in this country. The murder of George Floyd and the shootings of Breonna Taylor and Jacob Blake sparked non-stop protesting in the streets all across America. The Bay Area in particular was vocal in calling for police change even though the cases of brutality occurred thousands of miles away. Some protests were peaceful while others turned violent. Below are just some of the many protests that defined the Summer of 2020:



Nathan Canilao/The Express
Protestors walking through downtown Pleasonton. This protest was by far the biggest bringing in around 500 people,



Nathan Canilao/The Express
A group of Protestors at the intersection of S. Livermore Ave and First Street. They kneeled for 8 mintues to pay respects to George Floyd whp laid on the ground for eight mintues before passing



Nathan Canilao/The Express
LPC Professor Steven Chiolis at a Black Lives Matter Protest in Livermore.

LPC alumni fend off worst California fire season yet

By **Taylor Sparkman**

@T_SPARKMAN_330

California is experiencing a record year for wild land fires, with 8,300 incidents and over four million acres burned as of Monday Oct. 5, Cal Fire states that over 8,687 structures have been destroyed and that there's now 31 confirmed fatalities linked to the fires. After burning a combined total of nearly 760,000 acres, the LNU and SCU Complex Fires have both been declared 100% contained as of Oct. 1, while the CZU Complex Fire was 100% contained as of Sep. 22 after burning through 86,509 acres.

Current fires that are still large concerns to the state include: the SQF Complex Fire (Tulare County) which is at 65% containment with 158,000 acres burned, the Creek Fire (Fresno and Madera counties) which is at 48% containment with 322,089 acres burned and the August Complex Fire (Mendocino, Humboldt, Trinity, Tehama, Glenn, Lake and Colusa counties) which is only at 54% containment with one million acres burned.

Many Bay Area residents will recall on Sept. 9, the skies were lit up a deep orange or red, and they did their best to stay indoors when the air quality was bad the following week. The sky was barely recognizable and the air was thick. Meanwhile some residents were suiting up to combat the fires that caused the apocalyptic skies. Some people like the Deputy Chief of Fire of Operations for Livermore Pleasanton Fire Department and also the Las Positas College Fire Academy Coordinator, Aaron Lacey, have been fighting the fires since Aug. 16, back when there was a lightning storm that caused many of the fires that are ongoing today.

"Early that morning around 2:30 a.m., I woke up to thunder and lightning. Shortly after my phone started exploding with messages saying 'confirmed fires', and at that point I left my home immediately and ended

up being the incident commander for one of the first large vegetation fires that started off of Arroyo Road in Livermore. Shortly after that, I was a Strike Team Leader for the state," said Lacey.

A Strike Team Leader is an individual who can take out five pieces of equipment, such as five fire engines, at a time and lead them on massive fire missions that are burning out through the state. Lacey said he was asked to take out five Type-1 Fire Engines to the LNU Complex - Lake Napa Unit, also known as the Hennessy fire. The five Type-1 Engines he led were acquired from a mix of Alameda County, Berkeley, Hayward and Oakland fire departments.

"When I was at the LNU Lightning Complex I actually saw two of our students that recently graduated," Lacey said. "One from our Spring 2020 LPC Fire Academy, Jessica Beristianos, who was working on that fire having just graduated in May and then Jake Williams was with her who graduated our first firefighter academy in Spring 2019."

Lacey said he sees LPC graduates often during his work. At the time of the interview, he was at the Creek Fire in Fresno County near Shaver Lake. When he got off a shift that morning, he saw another graduate Dean Taylor, who was also working for Calaveras Consolidated Fire District.

Lacey explained that the Creek Fire had assistance from specialized state management teams trained to manage large fires, including Cal Fire state teams and federal teams. The lead instructor for LPC's Fire Academy for the wild land portion was fire captain Matt Thau. He was a situational unit leader on Cal Fire Management Team One, which was managing the Creek Fire.

Lacey said, "So our former students that were taught how to fight wild land fires by Matt Thau, are fighting on the Creek Fire, which he is leading, which I think is pretty cool."



LPC fire academy coordinator and Dep. Chief of fire operations Aaron Lacey.
Taylor Sparkman/Express

LPC fire program shines light on women in the industry

By **Ana Delgadillo**

@AAANAKD

When firefighters are depicted on TV, in books and even in neighborhoods, the normal experience has always been seeing men take on this job. In elementary school when the local fire department came in and talked to the school, nine out of ten times it was men who were present. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), only eight percent of the firefighters in the nation were women in 2019.

However, firefighters locally are working to change that perception.

On Wednesday, Sept. 16., Las Positas hosted part one of three of the Las Positas College Women in the Fire Service online seminars. This seminar was moderated by the recently retired Elizabeth de Dios, who served with the Richmond Fire Department for 24 years, 13 of those as an Engine/Rescue Captain. She has also served as a trainer for the Richmond Fire Department and other departments throughout the Bay Area.

During part one of the seminars, she spoke on topics such as the gap between men and women firefighters, taking the right first steps to this career path and what one endures and needs for preparation in a firefighter academy.

Session one consisted of the general overview of the program, while session two will focus on going over the application process and the written exam that comes with it. Session three will include the oral interview and the background/medical check. A final

session is scheduled for students and applicants to practice their mock orals to get a feel of the real deal.

LPC offers different programs for women interested in becoming firefighters. These include the A.S. in Fire Service Technology (the Associate of Science Degree), LPC Regional Fire Academy 21-01, an EMS program where students can receive their EMT certification, career fairs, outreach events and can create a strong network.

For many little kids, it is their dream to one day grow up and become a firefighter. Host De Dios spoke on the topic of the first steps in doing so and how parents and loved ones should encourage their kids to one day become local heroes.

She said, "We don't start women young enough. Parents will usually only encourage their sons for such jobs." She emphasized her point, recalling that in elementary school, girls were always encouraged to follow career paths such as becoming teachers or nurses, leaving the more physically intense jobs for the boys.

Present were also guest speakers Richmond Fire Department Firefighter Jessica Waar and Julie Mao, Captain of 19 years at the San Francisco Fire Department. They each spoke about their experiences in that workforce and spoke about what it is they loved about their jobs.

Waar said, "The best part of this job is that it is always changing. You will never have the same day twice."

For women who desire a career in which they are actively on feet, facing changing and challenging situations each day, a firefighter position could be what is right for them.

Also speaking in the seminar was recent LPC Regional Firefighter Academy graduate Jessica Beristianos, who touched on the great experience she had while at the academy and



A group of LPC firewomen graduating from the fire academy in 2019.
Las Positas College East Bay Regional Fire Academy/Facebook

Q&A with fire academy graduates

By Taylour Sparkman

@T_SPARKMAN_30

California has recorded a high of 4 million acres that have been destroyed in this year's fire season. 8,700 structures have been incinerated and 31 people have been killed. Fire departments all over the state have been overwhelmed prompting California Gov. Gavin Newsome to sign Assembly Bill No. 2147 which allows inmate firefighters to have a clearer path towards permanent careers in the fire department due to a need in for more firefighters across the state. Danielle McNety and Jessica Beristianos, two former LPC students who are now firefighters, shared some insights on themselves and what their experiences fighting fires so far has been like.



LPC fire academy alum Jessica Beristianos (right). She was assigned to the Lake Napa Unit this past fall. Taylour Sparkman/Express

What's your role in the recent Lightning Siege of 2020 fires? What base or complex were you assigned to?

McNety: "I was assigned to the SCU Lightning Complex. My engine company was one of the first engines on scene fighting fire in the Livermore area."

Beristianos: "I was assigned to the LNU (Lake Napa Unit) Complex. I went up to the LNU Complex as a single resource on a Type-1 engine. The crew and I were assigned to the Helitack base as part of the crash rescue team. We were staged at the helicopter base in case of an emergency with any of the helicopters. We were in constant communication with the various pilots in order to know how to best navigate through their specific aircraft. (For example, how to shut off fuel, shut off power, turn off the rotor, knock out windows, extricate them). The fires that we were near were the Hennessey Fire and the Walbridge Fire."

What are your average duties like in a shift, what is it you actually do?

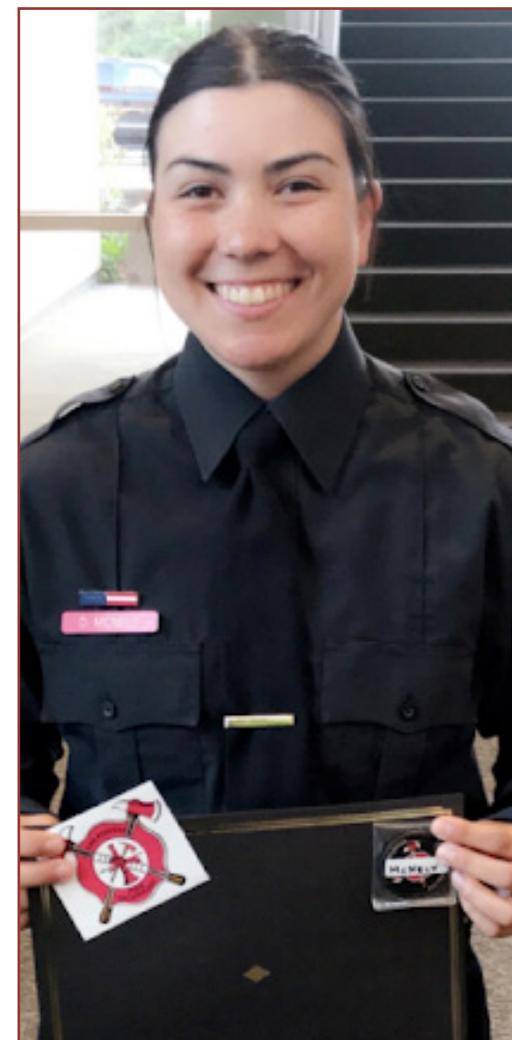
McNety: "As a firefighter for Cal Fire there are many responsibilities. Our minimum shift is 72 hours, but we are likely to work more during fire season. Firefighters are to ensure all of their safety gear and equipment on the engine is ready to go in working order at all times. On a normal day, the engine company cooks meals together, completes a workout, daily training and station projects. We are an all hazard department, meaning we can go to any emergency at any time of the day/night. Cal Fire is also known for traveling to other units in the state to help fight wild land fires."

Beristianos: "Like I previously mentioned, there are so many roles that go into these big complexes. From those fighting on the fire line to those working with logistics/planning/operations. Everyone has a role, and each one is just as important. My assignment this time was part of the Crash Rescue Team, where I was staged at the helicopter base. As for shifts, we worked 12 hours on and 12 hours off since the helicopters could not fly at night. Other shifts will look like 24 hours on and 24 hours off. During our 12-hour shift, we would participate in morning briefings where we would be updated on fire containment, goals for the day, weather behavior for the day and days to come, as well as different helicopters that were coming in/out for the day. Every day we would tie in with the pilots/helicopter crew to check in for emergency procedures as well as run drills with the water tenders. A lot of our job was to stand-by and be ready."

Is there anything you've encountered so far that the school can't prepare you for?

McNety: "I believe the academy set a great foundation for me to work as a firefighter. Every emergency situation is different, making it hard to prepare cadets for every given situation. These things include active fire, working with other agencies, environment, the public, etc."

Beristianos: I believe the LPC program did all it could to prepare us for the career in the fire service. One of the biggest lessons I learned from my instructors is that there is no better way to fully prepare for the job than by getting hands-on experience. The LPC Fire Academy provided great simulations and filled us with the knowledge but applying it to real life is the ultimate way to prepare.



LPC fire academy graduate Danielle McNety. Taylour Sparkman/Express

How did the fire program at LPC help prepare you for the fires you've been dealing with?

McNety: "Going through the Fire Program at Las Positas, including the Fire Academy, greatly helped me prepare for my job. After the academy I felt confident in my knowledge and abilities to become a new firefighter."

Beristianos: "The fire program at LPC did a great job of providing the knowledge and the preparation for the job. In the academy, we had two whole weeks dedicated for Wildland (which is the type of firefighting we are doing on these big fires). I was able to use a lot of the things I learned from the academy and implement them in real life situations."

How long have you been actively involved in combating these fires?

McNety: I have been on shift for 23 days so far, but anticipate a longer road ahead due to other parts of the state having large fires.

Beristianos: "I was out at the LNU complex for 14 days. It was my first time 'Out of County' which means leaving the county you currently work for (in my case it was Calaveras County) and going out to a different county to help with mutual aid. This was a great opportunity for my first time out. It was a great learning experience. I got a chance to see how everything works from base camp, radio communications, morning briefings, etc. There are many different parts that go into the whole process that I got to witness first-hand. I learned so much!"



Courtesy of ABCnews.com

Hawks prepare for shortened season amid delay in play

By Nathan Canilao
@NATHANCANILAO

COVID-19 has led the college to cancel all sports for the entire fall semester. This includes the LPC men's basketball team, which had high hopes for returning to the playoffs this year despite key departures from last year's team.

The cancellation of sports has affected the basketball team in other ways as well. The team usually trains throughout the summer and fall leading up to the season, but they were not allowed to meet in person due to the guidelines set by LPC. This meant players are required to come into this season in shape and ready to hit the ground running when the season starts in January.

The shortened season means that players will have little to no time to build team chemistry on the floor. The coaching staff will have to prepare for new players learning the system on the fly while also getting returning players ready to overcome new challenges that they haven't faced before.

But the team has found a way to stay connected throughout the

fall semester through Zoom calls and online learning. The coaching staff has made it a priority to ensure the players stay in shape and connected throughout the pandemic.

"Everything we do has had to happen a lot more remote. More phone conversations, more Facetime calls. We have had a lot of Zoom meetings with parents. Every team is on the same boat, but we're just trying to navigate it a different way and try to do the best we can with what we're working with right now," said head coach James Giacomazzi.

The Hawks finished the season on a high note last year. They went 20-9 and made it to the Norcal Regionals as the 13th seed. Three players made the all conference team, including forward Michael Hayes, who went on to become the MVP for the state and commit to playing for Chico State this upcoming season.

The Hawks are hoping to continue their success into this year by going back to the state playoffs and competing for another state title.

"Our goal every year is to win a state title every year," said returning point guard Nikko Echallas.

The making of a state title team is not a fast process. Teams train and prepare months before the season starts to ensure they are ready for the long season ahead. That is why missing the summer and fall is a big blow to the Hawks as they are eying another state title run.

One of the bigger issues facing the Hawks during this time is getting the players to keep their minds on basketball. Players were tasked with getting themselves in shape instead of going to team workouts in the summer and fall.

"We're trying to keep them active. Obviously mental health is such a huge point right now. Guys are in the house, and we're really focusing on getting guys to exercise and stay in shape before the season starts," said Giacomazzi.

A shortened season means that players will have less time to prepare for games that will mean more down the stretch. The team does not have much room for error as most games will be against conference opponents that will count towards their playoff bid.

The team lost many key players last season and have reloaded with a batch of freshmen that

still need to adjust to the new system. Coaches have also had to have more meetings remotely to discuss scouting, player development and strategy.

Giacomazzi is hoping that these Zoom meetings will be helpful in speeding up that process. Not being able to meet in person is a setback, but it is a disadvantage that most college teams in the state have as well. Every team is finding its own way to keep players engaged and focused on the upcoming season.

On top of coaching, Giacomazzi will be juggling the role of Athletic Director, a position he has accepted this year. Despite the heavy workload, Giacomazzi says he is comfortable in his new role.

"I've been an assistant Athletic Director for so many years now that I feel like I've been trained well to know how to handle the responsibilities. I feel like I can make a good difference in the whole athletic department for the positive as well as to continue my role and do great things as a coach here for our players," said Giacomazzi.

The team will have high expectations for this year, boast-

ing a solid recruiting class along with experienced veterans from last year's team. The pandemic has shortened the season, but the Hawks are preparing to make another state title run. If all goes well, the team should be in the hunt for a conference title, but more importantly, a shot at a state championship.



Photo by Alan Lewis
The Hawks will be competing in a shortened season due to COVID-19 procedures.

HAWK SQUAWK

Hawks Men's Basketball 2019-20 Recap

State MVP

MICHAEL HAYES
FORWARD
21.3 PPG, 11.4 RBG

All Conference

MICHAEL HAYES
Wesley Burse
Andrew Mork

Milestones

Michael Hayes-
1,000 Career Points
Coach Giacomazzi-
300 Career Points



All Academic

LEE JONES JR.
Andrew Mork
Tyler Lamgowski
Nikolas Echallas
Matthew Roseby
Evan Gosel

Team Stats

20-9
86.5 PPG
50.0 FGP
8th in attendance

Key Returners

Nikko Echallas
Lee Jones Jr
Evan Gosel
Matthew Roseby

THE EXPRESS

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Theater program hosts virtual showing of 'Romeo and Juliet'

By Han Nelson

@SCP_TLDR

The times we live in are cold and alien. The sky is grey, and the warm sparks of comfort remain distant. While the times may be rough, and appetites for normalcy rampant, LPC's performance of "Romeo and Juliet" may help a charming bit of theatrical familiarity find its way into your evening.

In our ever isolated world, LPC's "Romeo and Juliet" pops the bubble of distance and brings a familiar story tantalizingly close.

The first virtual showing of LPC's "Romeo and Juliet" was broadcast at 7:06 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 2. The broadcast was the first-ever LPC production to be produced entirely under social distancing conditions.

Despite the constraints placed upon the performance, LPC's "Romeo and Juliet" portrays the character and drama of Shakespeare's work. Through an unconventional medium, "Romeo and Juliet" embodies the classic story in all its depth. Through a delicate dance of positioning, acting, dialogue and scene setters, the cast creates an atmosphere that, while lacking a literal set-piece, conveys the ambiance that one would expect of the world that Shakespeare's characters inhabit.

The expressive atmosphere of the performance is an even greater feat to behold when considering that the entire play was produced and acted with minimal physical contact. During the vast majority of the play, none of the actors appeared to be in the same location. Notably, there is an exception to this rule in Act I, Scene 5 in which the actors seem

to be present in the same location during what can only be assumed to be a prerecorded segment.

While the play is certainly a momentous accomplishment, it is also not without flaw. To understand the familiarity and experience the play may bring one must first understand:

The Good: Romeo and Juliet features a wonderful cast, creative use of virtual setting and positioning, and many scenes

ing several of the scenes from good to fantastic. Along with the stars of the show, the performances of all the main cast including Kyle Burgess, Stephanie Foster, Martie Muldoon, and Salim Razawi show real dedication and bring their characters genuine life and emotion.

Detail: Upon initial impression, one may think that a play performed in the manner of LPC's "Romeo and Juliet" would

Though different from traditional staging, the performance repeatedly elicits a substantive atmosphere using novel methods. The result is a deep atmosphere conveyed in spite of expectations, drawing the story closer to the viewer than one might expect.

The Bad: The play had far too many technical problems for a live performance.

At multiple points throughout the play, the call ringtone for

continuity was not kept particularly well. In particular, the (presumably) pre-recorded Act 1, Scene 5 had completely different costumes from scenes prior. Despite this, it is fairly impressive how costume changes were cleanly implemented for the other live portions of the play.

The play had a false start, and at one point an actor received a phone call that they presumably had forgotten to silence.

Actors were accidentally left muted twice. However, this was not as immersion breaking as one would expect. The technical aspects of the play's delivery are, without a doubt, flawed. But, if one is willing to suspend disbelief, the play still can convey the illusion of theater and create the story as intended.

People who have attended the second performance have said that there are fewer technical issues, however it is still worth noting that these issues happened.

There are two sides to every coin, however. The question of present remains: Should you spend a couple of coins to see the play?

Is It Worth Seeing?: In this reviewer's opinion, unequivocally, yes. LPC's production of "Romeo and Juliet" is entertaining and a unique experience to watch. The blend of the familiar writings of Shakespeare combined with creative new perspectives designed by this year's team creates an interesting and fresh feeling experience during a time when a conventional play is hard to produce. While weak in technical aspects, the strength of actors and the attention to detail hold the play together into an amicable, enjoyable, refreshing and ultimately worthwhile experience.



Photo courtesy of LPC Theatre

that subtly draw the viewer deeper into the story. The ingenuity shown in getting these scenes to work in a purely digital format shines through and remains consistent throughout the performance. While not all characters have everything down to a point, the majority of the acting is expressive, deliberate and quite entertaining.

Acting: A bit of acting that one may particularly enjoy is the wondrous dramatics of Danny Georgiev and Liva Langer playing Romeo and Juliet, respectively. Georgiev and Langer effortlessly bring their characters to life, tak-

suffer significantly in aspects of staging and visuals. While it is true that some scenes are thematically dull, a good portion of the performance displayed a fine attention to detail.

For example, lighting was considered in many scenes. In Act III, Scene 1 in which Tybalt dies, it is clear that the cast has taken a deliberate choice to make the scene dark. In support of the atmospheric change, when the fight between Tybalt and Mercutio breaks out, there is a universal change in camera angle, mimicking the thematic shift in a simple but subtle way.

the video program used to stage the play was broadcast. On occasion, this drowned out dialog. While this problem may not be earth-shattering, the consistency at which this happened makes it the most significant technical problem of the production.

The video and audio quality was notably low quality for certain portions of the play, with low frame rates causing both audio and video to be jittery at times. While not bad enough to destroy the play's viewability, viewers may need a minute or two to get acclimated to the video.

In certain portions, costume

REVIEW IHEARTMUSIC Festival delivers despite no audience in attendance

By Michelle Pacheco
@MISEON7MICHELLE

The IHeart Music Festival was on September 18th and 19th. The fans of many artists from all over the world came together to virtually watch performances by many artists.

The fans watched the artists perform and commented on what the artists were wearing.

Fans commented on the interesting backgrounds that the musicians used to what special effects were shown. Musicians Alicia Keys, Coldplay, BTS, Kane Brown, Keith Urban, Migos, Miley Cyrus, Thomas Rhett, Usher were some of the artists who performed in this virtual festival.

Leilani Manoban a past student at Las Positas and a fan of Alicia Keys believes that Keys did give a good performance and really brought in and connected to the audience.

Manoban said, "Even though Keys didn't perform her classics hits but stuck with her newer songs the performance was still really nice". Keys truly performed the way she is known for even to even dancing a little bit by moving her hips a little to the Song "So done".

The fantastic light show and the special guest performances made the Festival even better. When asked what she thought about how the fans were shown while some artists were introduced?

Manoban replied, "That it was a good idea for fans to be shown". Fan faces were shown at the very end of some performances of musicians' performances.

Manoban doesn't think bringing fans' faces into the performance is really necessary. Abby Min a student at UC Davis and a

fan of BTS has a different opinion.

Min explains dancing is a must because dancing is a really big part of KPOP in general! Min says that a BTS performance wouldn't be complete without dancing because it showcases one of their many talents.

Min says "I loved how they performed their most recent songs Dynamite and a few other songs of theirs (Make it Right, Spring Day, and Boy with Luv) which are perfect for comfort during these hard times". When asked whether if it was a good idea for music fans to be shown for some artists.

Min feels like that it was really cool that they did that. Min said that "It showed the real people who like that artist's music plus it gave a nice opportunity for the artists to see more of their fans and for fans to show their support."

As for having a fan's faces shown when artists performed. Min feels like it's a bit weird, but it did work out OK. Min believes performances should focus on the artist. When they are not focused on artists that it was a little distracting.

Bailey Moon a student at Las Positas and a fan of Coldplay. Honestly didn't know how to react. Since it is the 10th anniversary of the IHeart music festival, she believed they went all out on the performances.

The Festival did have great lineups, of various artists from the last decade. However, there was not a full audience (of real) people.

As for Moon's favorite artist Coldplay. Moon knows most of the songs by Coldplay.

Moon enjoyed their music. Moon doesn't really follow too



Photo Courtesy of The CW

KPOP boy band BTS performing at the IHEARTMUSIC Festival on Sept 18. The band has crossed over as global superstars and have already broken many streaming records. They currently have 31.5 million followers on Instagram and have been featured in the latest Apple iPhone 12 commercial.

many musicians, but really believes that they performed well!

Moon wishes she could've seen them in a concert, pre COVID! When asked about how her favorite artists were like compared to others. Moon says "They performed socially distances and with instruments, but not all out like BTS or some of the other performances!"

Moon feels that Coldplay is a relatively chill, just a singing group. Moon thinks they did well by performing there hit song "Viva la Vida," because a lot of their other popular songs are more on the lower end.

They have a couple of newer songs that are possible dancing songs: "Hymn for the Weekend" or "Adventure of a Lifetime". Moon believes it would be a nice twist to see them dancing instead

of seeing them just normally sing and play their instruments. As for songs Moon really only knows their older songs, so she didn't really connect with the performance. Compared to other fans who know their songs nowadays.

Like "The Scientist", "A Sky Full of Stars" and maybe a newer one such as "Hymn for the Weekend". Coldplay has been creating prominent music throughout the last decade, so Moon was happy that they played an older song, along with some new stuff.

Moon was shocked that fans were shown for some artists. Moon thinks that it was interesting, cool for the fans, but really does not know if that it was a good or bad idea.

Moon says "I think it's cheesy and corny. Maybe lowkey creepy? I don't know, you do you though."

As for me the writer of this article without music honestly I would probably be in a low point of life. Music is my passion!

With music, there is a place for everybody. To creators releasing what they want to say to the world.

To music being a place where many people go to listen for comfort showing our love for the musicians' works.

Whether it's music you listen to, cry to, or to make a moment more enjoyable. Music is international.

There is music for every language out there. I believe that music is a really great therapeutic outlet for many especially for many students from all colleges including Las Positas, especially during these hard times where everyone is indoors!

Shoot.



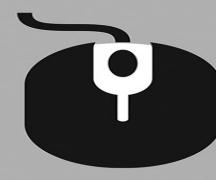
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Alan's Ramblings: Sex education over my lifetime



Alan Lewis/Express

By Alan Lewis

@ALOLEWIS1

The sex education I receive in high school back in the 1960's made me more confused than educated me. I am an older student; I graduated high school in 1972. No, that is not a typo but is 1972.

Sex education has come a long way from its inception. Sex education was first started in schools in the 1920's but didn't become mainstream until the 1960's. The education I received was before sex education became mandatory. The California Healthy Youth Act passed in 2015 requires comprehensive sex education at middle school and high school levels.

What I remember of my formal sex education in school was two movies and a session with the gym teacher. The movies were dated even then, and went through the science of the sperm fertilizing the egg, but never went into any detail about how the sperm and egg get together. One of the movies also had information about changing bodies during puberty and menstruation. I left the class more confused than before the class. I was naive, but for a long time I thought a woman could get pregnant just by the penis being in the area of the vaginal such as during clothed dancing if the boy and girl were very close. I did not know about ejaculation.

I also remember the gym teacher taking my male gym class into the locker room and discussed venereal disease. During the class the gym teacher said that you can get a VD in the mouth and asked if we knew how. One of the more vocal students answered with a slang word for oral sex. The teacher replied that "yes", and that "some girls will do this disgusting act."

The girls got different sex education, I remember in 6th and 7th grade all the girls would leave class and go to the all purpose room. I also wanted to go as they missed whatever class was in session then. It turns out the girls were given instruction on menstruation during those sessions.

Topics such as alternate lifestyles, sexual orientation sexual abuse, birth control, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and other topics were not discussed.

This is the extent of my sex education in the 1960's as I remember which is ironic as this was during the summer of love on the west coast (I lived on the east coast at this time). I was naive about sex and my sex education did not help. For example when I was kissing a girl and she stuck her tongue in my mouth, I was shocked and confused. In high school when I was doing some heavy petting with a girl, she was wet. My initial thought was "did she pee herself?" as my sex education did not cover this.

So where did I get my sex education, on the street of course through friends, older brother and other students. There were also a few books, one I remember was "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex* (*But Were Afraid to Ask)" by David Reuben. The book was in the form of questions. The book was well received then as it was number one on the bestseller list. However, the book also had its critics as some of the advice in the book was questionable. One item I remember from the book was a recommended form of birth control: to use Coca-Cola as a douche afterwards as the acid in the soda would kill the sperm.

Compare what I received as sex education to what students get today. In California the Education Code has very specific requirements that must be taught, at least once in junior high/middle school and once in high school. The purpose of the California Healthy Youth Act is to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect their sexual and reproductive health from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and from unintended pregnancy and To provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to develop healthy attitudes concerning adolescent growth and development, body image, gender, sexual orientation, relation-

ships, marriage, and family

The code requires a comprehensive education covering many topics including HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, information on abstinence, all methods of birth control, parenting, adoption and abortion, sexual harassment, sexual abuse and human trafficking and violent relationships. Information on local resources must also be given.

Rebecca Henderer, a former LPC student who transferred to Grand Canyon University, opted out of sex education in middle school due to her mother pulling her out.. At Livermore Valley Charter Preparatory High Schools which has since closed, she took the class in the summer which consisted mostly of reading a book and answering questions on worksheets. Henderer did say that she felt awkward during the class, she remembers condoms being mentioned, but not other forms of birth control. Henderer learned more about sex education after high school and specifically mentioned two classes at LPC (Intro to Psychology and Abnormal Psychology) that covered alternate life styles. LPC has two classes, while are not specifically sex education but cover sexuality: PSYC 10, Psychology of Human Sexuality and SOC 7, Sociology of Sexuality.

Sadie Spektor who attended high school at Santa Clara High said she does not remember much from the junior high sessions, but was taught in high school in various forms including videos, lectures, guest speakers and interactive games. Spektor did say that she was a little annoyed as the classes only cover male and female and did not explore other types of relationships. Spektor also stated she first got education in menstruation in the fifth grade.

What is still not taught is how to have sex, foreplay, masturbation or intercourse. Henderer said that she does not remember any instruction at school on menstruation, that she learned about from her mother. Perhaps the state needs to revisit the sex education topics and make changes to the curriculum.

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