

THE PRESS

A FIRST AMENDMENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LAS POSITAS COLLEGE

FEBRUARY 2021

VOL. 32 ISSUE NO. 3

FIRST COPY FREE; ADDITIONAL COPIES 50 CENTS EACH

One year later: LPC still dealing with the effects of COVID-19

Page 5



Alan Lewis/Express

A C C O U N T A B I L I T Y

Student government not living up to expectations

Page 9

COVID-19 testing site opens at LPC

Page 3



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
NATHAN CANILAO

A&E EDITOR
HAN NELSON

PHOTO EDITOR
ALAN LEWIS

COPY EDITOR
TAYLOUR MARTINEZ-
SPARKMAN

STAFF

GIBRAN BEYDOUN
BRANDON BYRNE
ALESSIO CAVALCA
JOSHUA JONES
RENAE MACHUCA
ALEXIS RAMIREZ
LIZZY RAGER

ADVISER
MELISSA KORBER

BUSINESS MANAGER
MARCUS THOMPSON II

STUDENT ASSISTANT
NEZRIN HASANLY

© 2021 Express.* Reproduction in any form is strictly prohibited. The Express is a First Amendment publication of the students of Las Positas College. The students who staff the Express run an editorially independent newsroom. Unsigned editorials reflect the collective opinion of the editorial board. Other opinions express the views of individual writers and artists are not to be considered the views of the publication's staff, editorial board, advisors, the associated students, the college administration or the board of trustees.

*Students retain copyright ownership of the content they create, including words, photographs, graphics, illustrations, cartoons and other work. The Express retains copyright ownership to advertisements the Express creates. The

Letters to the Editor

The Express is a public forum newspaper that seeks to encourage robust discussion among members of the college community. Letters to the editor, editorial and opinion pieces, freelance articles and photographs may be sent via e-mail or U.S. mail. Pieces must be typed and signed and include contact information, including a daytime phone number. Anonymous submissions will not be printed. All submissions are edited for space and clarity, and upon publication become the property of the Express.

THE EXPRESS

3000 Campus Hill Drive, Livermore, CA 94551-9797
tel.: 925-424-1240 fax: 925-606-5317
e-mail: LPCExpress@laspositascollege.edu
web: www.lpcexpressnews.com



LPC veterans meet with General Mattis



General Mattis speaks to LPC Veterans via Zoom

By Alan Lewis

@ALANLEW89343503

Student veterans at LPC were treated to a meeting with General Mattis on Jan. 26.

General Mattis held various Marine Corps positions, culminating as Commander of U.S. Central Command in July 2010. After his retirement from the Marine Corps, he served in various civilian positions until he was appointed the Secretary of Defense by President Trump. Mattis held the position of Secretary of Defense from January 2017 until January 2019 when he

resigned over some of Trump's positions on world events.

Todd Steffan, LPC Veterans First Program coordinator, said that he, "has been asking General Mattis to come to Las Positas to meet with the LPC student veterans for a couple of years. He finally had the time and agreed." The meeting was held via Zoom.

Twenty-seven LPC student veterans and others including President Foster, Dean Ward, Vice President Whalen and Vice President Raichbart as well as the Veterans staff of Contra Costa College and the Contra Costa

County Veterans office came to observe Mattis' talk.

The meeting opened with all of the participants introducing themselves. Mattis talked about the oath that all those in the military take and what it means. He talked about the differences between military personnel and civilians, emphasizing how the military fights for civilians.

During a question and answer session, Mattis fielded questions from student veterans.

Two questions that were brought up were about technology and the military. Mattis discussed two facets of technology in military use.

One factor is that previously the technology was developed for the military and then adapted for civilian use. GPS was an example of this where the system was developed for the military but soon adapted by the civilian community. Now most cell phones have GPS built in.

Nowadays, most technology is developed by the civilian world and then adapted by the military. One example is the use of Google maps to track enemy positions.

Mattis said more STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) graduates are needed to help develop this technology.

Mattis mentioned that 85% of all combat casualties since 1945 have been in infantry. The infantry has been slow to use technology but is now developing more technical systems and weapons.

A question was asked about the use of social media in the spread of false information. Mattis acknowledged it is a large issue in that false information is spread very rapidly with the use of social media. Before the Internet and social media, it was easier to stop false information as the spread was much slower, he said. Now the speed is so fast one cannot control the spread of false information.

The last subject raised was about bringing the country together again. Mattis said that it is a problem in the country that is now divided and needs to be unified again.

Mattis left the meeting, saying he is proud to be an American and that the military and veterans should be proud that they have served their country.

The Veteran's First Program and the Student Veterans Organization then presented a LPC Challenge coin to General Mattis, emphasizing how thankful they were that they could attend the meeting with a past Secretary of Defense and a high

New state budget supports community colleges across the state with resources

By Renae Machuca

@RENAEEXTRA

On Jan. 8, 2021, Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a statement revealing a massive budget proposal that supports community colleges like Las Positas all across the nation with emergency relief funds.

The budget outlines a specific structure, releasing one-time payments of \$250 million to emergency financial assistance, \$100 million regarding food and housing support, and \$30 million for internet and computer options for students to help work with low income families and the "digital divide."

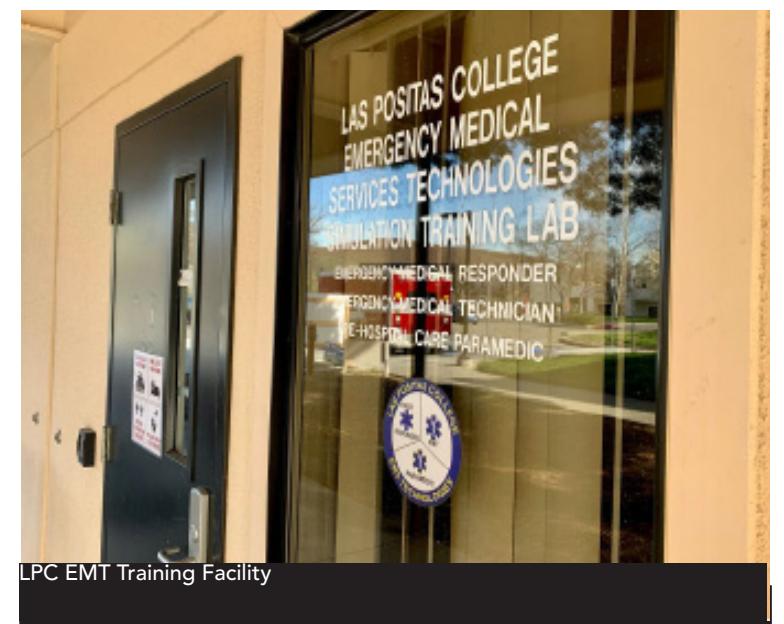
The Governor recognizes that community colleges play a huge role in preparing students to be ready for the workforce, and applauds them for having the largest output of medical trainees and emergency responders into the system. California Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley said, "The inequities of the pandemic and

the economic recession have affected community college students more than any population in higher education. By investing in emergency student assistance and the infrastructure needed to continue bridging the digital divide, we can take the necessary steps to strengthen colleges' efforts to lead our state to economic recovery."

At Las Positas, some of these critical work-based programs include the EMT/Paramedic program and the Fire Service Technology program. Much of the money included in the budget will go towards funding programs like these, and making sure the students have the resources they need to excel and join the essential workforce.

Community college students face the most challenges when it comes to pursuing higher education. Many do not continue on to receive four year degrees or do not have the financial assistance to afford any education, and are left behind in the system, lacking the services they need.

The new budget proposal



LPC EMT Training Facility

could help achieve the California Community College goal with their "Vision for Success," allowing all students to have the resources they may lack. During these unprecedented times with COVID, the digital divide among students and lower income families has become prominent. With

resources more readily available, many students will be able to succeed and join the essential workforce.

COVID-19 testing site opens in parking lot

By Cj Flores

@CJ_MCANFORES

One year ago in January, the first case of COVID-19 struck in the United States. Today the United States has a total of 26.2 million confirmed cases. Alameda County has been deeply affected by COVID-19 and so has the community it inhabits.

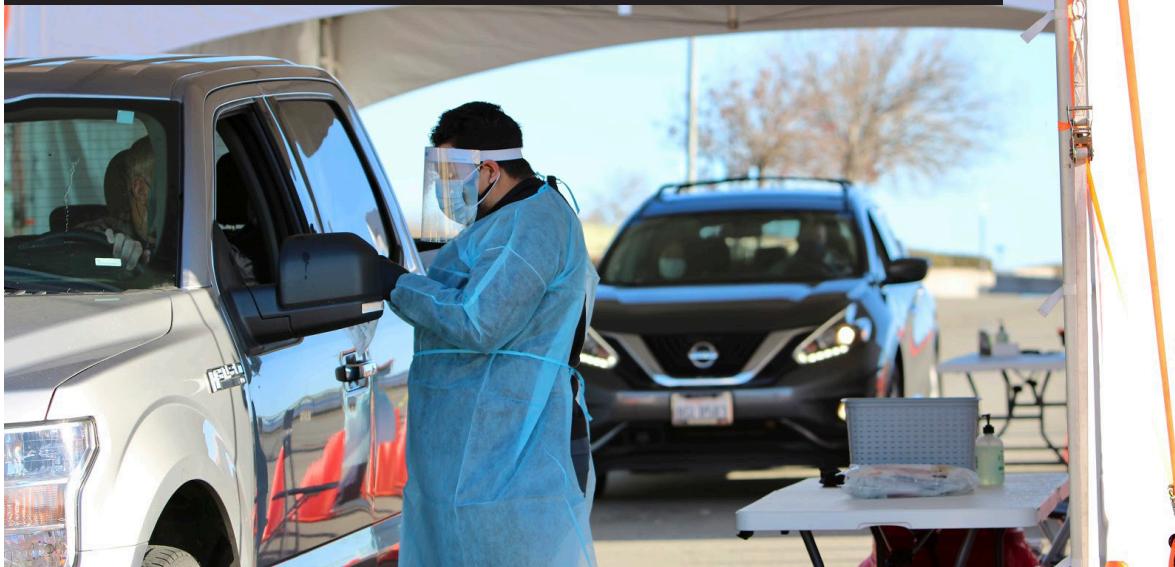
Alameda County alone has had 73,771 confirmed cases in the year this pandemic has arisen. As the people of Alameda County feel the impact of COVID, the county has taken measures and offered many sites to help with the pandemic. One site of which happens to be our very own campus. As of Jan. 21, Livermore has opened a drive-thru COVID-19 testing center open to anyone on the campus. The site is run by the CityHealth organization.

The drive-thru covid testing center is located in parking lot P in front of building 2500 and the soccer field. The testing site is one of many in the Livermore area but seems to be the least busy.

“The shift I worked we only had 20 appointments for the whole day and three walk-ups (drive-ups),” according to a source who works there said.

This is compared to other loca-

Photo by Cj Mcanfores
Cars wait in line as workers give out COVID-19 tests. LPC was seeked out by a third party company to use the parking lot as a test site.



tions like the Dublin sister location that saw about 100 appointments a day or the Alameda Fairgrounds where people report a several hour wait.

This testing site at LPC is appointment based, but does allow drive-in appointments. The testing site is also free with medicare and may be free with other insurances. This location is also a place where one can get tested through airlines for people looking to travel. People traveling to Hawaii are usually sent to this

location by airlines according to the worker there.

This testing site uses a self swab, meaning you can do it yourself instead of someone swabbing you. The workers walk up to your car with a test in their hand and ask some questions about symptoms and exposure time. The workers help coach you through the process of the swab and how long you swab. After the test you then put the swab in a tube and seal it so it can be properly sent back. The results usually take 24

hours to get back but the longest duration is 48 hours.

The Las Positas on campus covid site has no foreseeable closing date or shut down period. The worker interviewed had this to say about it, “It’s going to be at least a year that it’ll be at LPC, they’re trying to keep it around for as long as COVID is around.” As the pandemic goes on Las Positas has and will continue to do it’s part to help during this time.

Get some good information on your wall.

www.facebook.com/LPCExpressNews

Like us on Facebook.

LPC makes improvements to campus infrastructure

By Alan Lewis

@ALANLEW89343503

It is unknown when students will return to campus, but when they do, there will be physical changes to the campus.

Construction and upgrades to the campus did not stop during the pandemic and campus closure. Some upgrades and new construction have been completed, other projects are due to start this year. The upgrades and construction are a result of the Measure A bond fund that voters passed in 2016.

One project that will affect students is the installation of a distributed antenna system which will improve cell phone services within the buildings on campus. Before the installation it was almost impossible to receive cell service in some of the buildings and one had to go outside to make or receive calls.

Wi-Fi has also been upgraded on campus to allow Wi-Fi in parking lots C&D. The computer

network has also been upgraded to have 10 GB/s internet speed to all buildings.

Projects that are expected to start in the year 2021 is the building of a temporary faculty village in parking lot G (behind

the amphitheater). This will allow the faculty members currently in building 2100 to relocate. Buildings 2100 and 2200 will then be torn down and replaced with a new building 2300. The new 2300 building construction is planned

to start in the summer of 2021.

The emergency call stations around campus are also being upgraded.

This year the school is expected to construct a new building for the horticulture program located

in the campus maintenance area behind the turf soccer field.

Construction will begin for a new center for Public Safety as well as one for Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation. The buildings will be located by the sports complex near the solar field on the upper campus. This will replace the facilities in building 800. Building 800 was built in the 1975-1978 timeframe and is outdated.

The counters in the 1600 building for Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Student Services Center and the Information desk will be lowered to meet ADA standards. This is expected to be completed in fall 2021.

The Chabot Las Positas Community College District has continued to make changes to the LPC campus during the pandemic. Students will see the changes once they can return to campus.

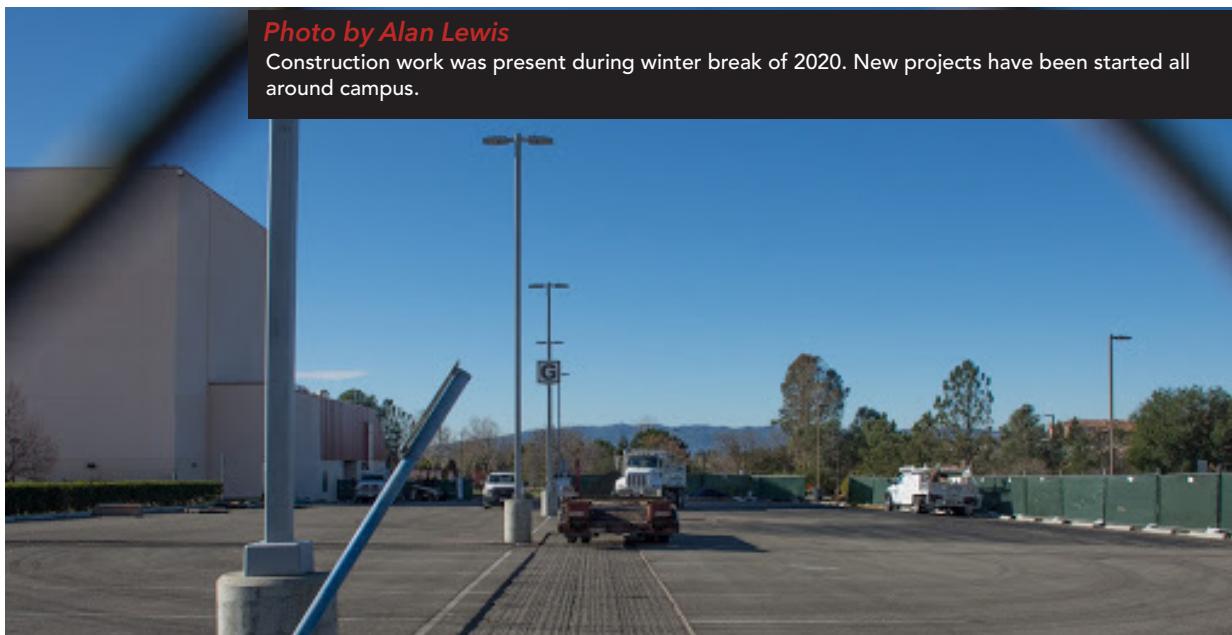


Photo by Alan Lewis
Construction work was present during winter break of 2020. New projects have been started all around campus.

Humans of Las Positas

LPC student body vice president Esmaa Elgarguri



LPCSG vice president Esmaa Elgarguri poses with her dog and skateboard.

By Alan Lewis

If you were on campus prior to classes going online, you may have seen Esmaa Elgarguri traveling around campus on her yellow skateboard. She would not be hard to spot as there are not many other hijab wearing women on skateboards at LPC.

Elgarguri is a second year student majoring in psychology. She started taking classes at Las Positas College when she was 15 years old. She was elected as Student Government Vice President in spring 2020 for a one year term. She plans to graduate in the spring 2021 and transfer to a four year school.

In a Zoom call with Elgarguri, you will see in the background, a skateboard, many plants, a ukulele and drawers full of art supplies, all her passions. When on campus at LPC prior to the pandemic when not in classes or at the Student Life office, you would most likely find her in the 4000 building hanging around other artists, theater majors and musicians.

All her life, Elgarguri has been a high achiever. She got a work permit at age 13 so that she could work at the local library as the assistant to the events coordinator. In this role she helped with events for girls in the area of STEM, writing, art and other

subjects. As she knows some coding in HTML and Java, she was helpful in getting the girls interested in computers.

At age 16 she graduated from the California Virtual Academy where most of the classes were conducted online, a system students at LPC, because of COVID-19, are familiar. Elgarguri started full time at LPC soon after graduating from high school, and she will graduate from LPC at her current age 18. During her tenure at LPC, she has completed five honors projects, making her an Honors Scholar.

In her student government candidate statement, Elgarguri said, "I would like to be able to make our experience at school more alive. I want to introduce new ideas and assist in creating an atmosphere where everyone is comfortable with each other. I want to attempt to make our college of strangers feel less strange, because each student deserves to be recognized." In her role as Vice President of Student Government, she interacts with the other officers and senators, a role she enjoys. Elgarguri also enjoys helping and mentoring fellow students.

Elgarguri is a Muslim. She proudly wears the hijab as she said it empowers her. Most of

her professors and other students have been very supportive of her religion. She said Jim Ott, English, an English professor, and Lucas Hasten, an anthropology professor, as very supportive of her.

Elgarguri said it feels very safe and supported on campus. She has experienced no major incidents of harassment. She did have three incidents where a male followed her walking around campus, but when she met up with some friends, he left. The person never spoke to her.

Off campus is a different story. After the recent presidential election, she was harassed in downtown Tracy. One person told her to go back to where she came from, which in her case would be Corvallis, Oregon where she was born. To stop the harassment that day, she hid in a store until the harassers left the area.

She also left her job at the Tracy library when she was harassed by some of the patrons for being a Muslim. Elgarguri said that in addition to the hijab, her mother wears a veil covering her face. She receives more harassing comments than Elgarguri does with just the hijab. In the COVID-19 era when she wears the mask, it leaves her open to more harassment as her identity is also covered.

Elgarguri is a very open person and enjoys being around other people. She has many friends at LPC, which she considers odd since she attended high school online, which is mostly a solo activity. She is happy to answer any questions about being a Muslim and the religion, questions beyond "Are you forced to wear the hijab? Why do you wear the hijab? Why do you dress so conservatively?"

Since Elgarguri will graduate at the end of the spring term, it is unlikely you will get to see her riding her skateboard around campus this term.

Music Department rises to the challenges of online classes

By Alan Lewis

Teaching singing to a person you never met is a challenge. Not being able to rehearse as a group is a challenge. Teaching music and voice over the internet is a challenge. The LPC Music department is rising up to the challenge though.

Professor Dan Marschak said, "The biggest challenges have been poor audio quality, internet issues, and our ensembles can't rehearse together without sound delay. We are working around it as best we can with various software and hardware, but it's far from ideal."

When LPC transitioned to online classes, the music department had some challenges. Significantly, the department was challenged about how to have a concert or vocal performances of a chorus.

One of the technical challenges is that Zoom does not work for concerts and choruses as latency issues and a time lag between the different computers, tablets and cell phones would cause each participant to be off a little on timing. Some students don't have a place to practice as they live with their families. Other people in the home may be having classes or business meetings at the same time as the class or lesson.

Professor Ian Brekke explained the process currently in use. He said, "I'm speaking primarily with the use of soundtrack, and I'm talking primarily about the vocal. The instrumental ensembles have also been doing some recording. But they may have a slightly different process. They are facing the same limitations we are. They can't play in real time live."

In response, the music department has switched to a web based software program, Sound Cloud. Sound Cloud allows the editing of a performance. Each performer records their piece and uploads it to Sound Cloud, where it is edited to the finished product by the music department instructors.

Recording an individual

piece is not ideal as the first students to record cannot hear the other performers, which can cause their timing to be off. Subsequently, the students who follow can listen to the first recording and record their parts.

The first vocal piece done with this method was "Baby Mine," which was performed by the virtual choir in the spring semester. One advantage of this piece is that the students had started rehearsing prior to the campus shutdowns, so they had some experience performing as a group. The program received positive feedback from those who watched. Many were impressed with how well the procedure worked. The performance can be found at: <http://www.laspositas-college.edu/music/index.php>.

One area that has worked well is applied lessons, according to Brekke. Applied lessons are individual lessons, so there is no need to coordinate between different performers. After three semesters, the students have a performance that is judged by the faculty members. The performances were live, but since the switch to online classes, they are done virtually. One recent performance was by Laura Lentz is on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlihh82k8AU&feature=youtu.be>.

Lentz's performance was well received but without some technical issues. The performance was filmed in her kitchen so the lighting was not as good as on a stage. The sound quality, which is the most important aspect of music performance was good.

Both Brekke and Marschak said that the challenges have been difficult, but the music department has worked together and resolved some of the issues. They are learning as they go, and the fall semester has been better than last spring semester when the college was abruptly switched to online classes as the program was adapting.

Enrollment is down for spring semester LPC study shows

By Renae Machuca

@RENAEEXTRA

First time enrollment at community colleges is down at an all time low of 21%, and many continuing students have not yet returned due to the COVID pandemic, studies from 2020-2021 show.

As students face a number of challenges, school seems to have been temporarily put to the side for many. Universities, state schools and community colleges alike all seem to be experiencing these same issues of declining enrollment, though community colleges have experienced the worst decline. Even locally, colleges like Las Positas have also been hit hard, experiencing a drop at 8.26%, according to Dr. Tom Orf, a geography professor and member of the Chabot Las Positas Community College District Enrollment Board.

"We ended up cancelling over 100 classes this semester. That is the most I've ever seen," said Orf at the February Town Hall Meeting for . Due to the pandemic, many students may be experiencing financial issues, family troubles and trouble with online learning. Helping with family financial demands and not having enough funds to cover tuition seem to be the top reasons students have either dropped out or have not enrolled for the first time.

When the pandemic hit, many

assumed that students would abandon four-year universities in droves and register for community colleges in order to save money and not to waste on a more expensive tuition. Community college is a place where people can learn basic skills for a job during a hard market crash. This wasn't the case.

"This is the first time in the last eight years that we have seen a decline in the total number

of students earning their first undergraduate credential, and it has been driven by drops in associate degree and certificate earners," said Doug Shapiro, Executive Director of the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, which covers enrollment trends in Community Colleges across America.

Among older students seeking a two-year degree, enrollment has dropped 10%, as many of them

may be struggling with lost jobs, trying to find work or supervising their own children also taking virtual learning classes.

Community colleges are often geared toward students who may be lower-income, undecided on a major or are returning students attempting to graduate with a degree. These types of people are the ones who are being the hardest hit by the pandemic and have experienced significant money

and time loss.

"The majority of them are working, many of them in industries that have been decimated by the pandemic," said Martha Parham, a senior vice president for the American Association of Community Colleges. "Trying to navigate that and take classes is a very daunting challenge at this time."

The online learning system has clearly hit community college students the hardest. Many of them may not have long-term access to the tools needed. What worked for the remainder of spring and fall 2020 may not be as prudent for another semester in 2021.

These numbers have significantly highlighted racial and social gaps in the college system. Not only did general numbers drop 21%, but among hispanic communities, numbers dropped even lower, between 28 to 29%.

These trends are completely contrary to what has previously been seen during any economic crash in the past, where numbers usually spike at community colleges.

"Community colleges have got to get their act together. COVID is accelerating all the challenges they were facing beforehand and intensifying the competition they're facing," said Davis Jenkins of the Community College Research Center.

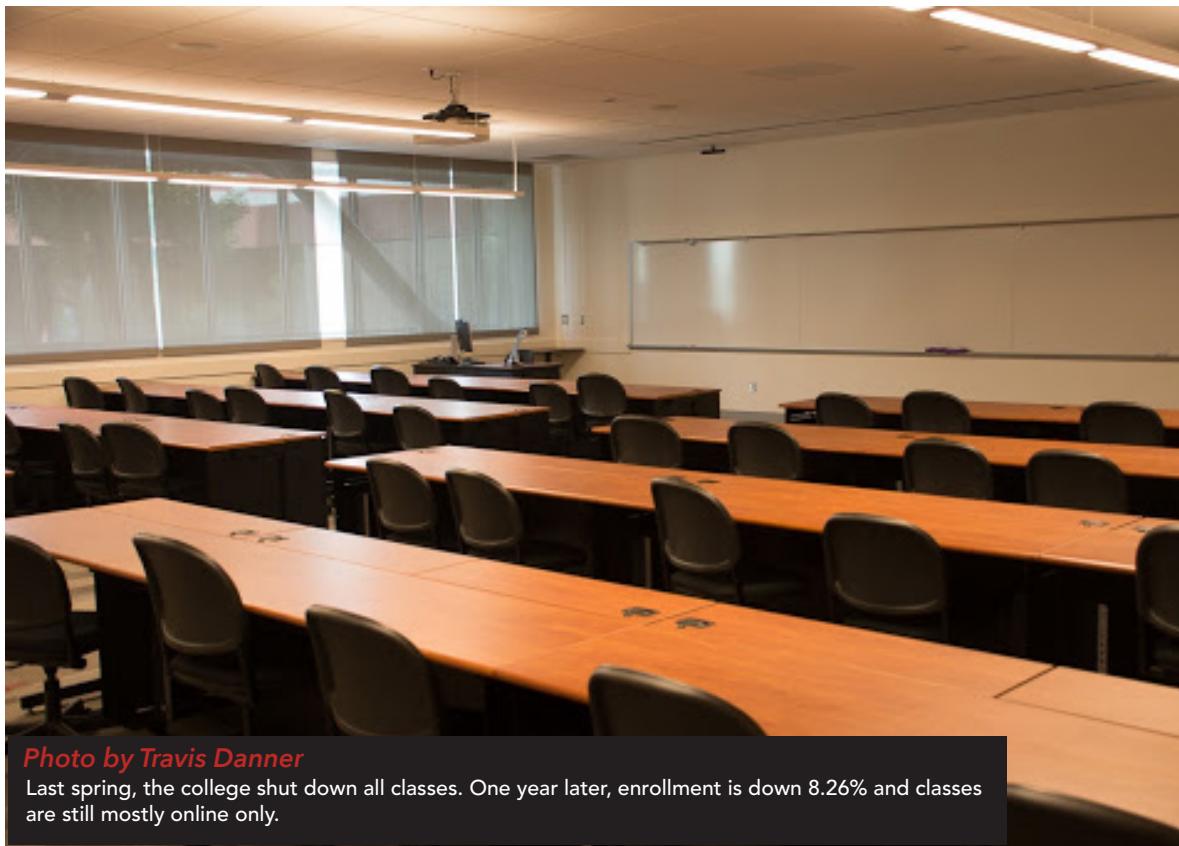


Photo by Travis Danner

Last spring, the college shut down all classes. One year later, enrollment is down 8.26% and classes are still mostly online only.

Covid on the brain: My battle with COVID-19

By Alexis Ramirez

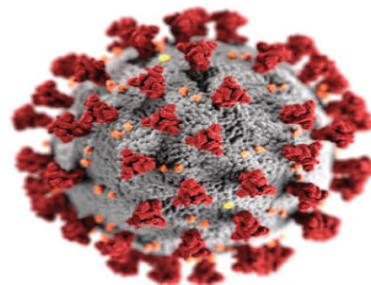
@LEXITRAM

Since November I have had little to no sense of taste or sense of smell. "COVID brain," which causes a COVID survivor to suffer fatigue which affects speech, memory and the ability to focus, is something I struggle with everyday

COVID's transformed the casual workday as I knew it. As an essential worker, COVID scares have become a normal occurrence. Weekly we receive emails stating whether or not we've been exposed and may or may not need to quarantine based on the level of exposure.

Two weeks after my sister contracted COVID, we were given the all-clear to return back to work. A couple of days before I was scheduled to return, I was called by a fellow associate whom I had come in contact with days

prior. She told me she had lost her taste and smell and was going to get tested as soon as possible. Not thinking much of it, I remained at home.



The next few days passed, and I began showing some strange symptoms. After receiving a drive-through test at the local Rite-Aid, I began having body aches, fatigue and low-grade fever to start. As time went on, those symptoms faded and were replaced by coughing and sneezing. After these symptoms ran their course, I was slammed with

the killer: shortness of breath.

The shortness of breath felt like I had something at times lodged in my esophagus. Small tasks left me wheezing. When I had coughing fits, I took extended amounts of time to recover. There often were times where I wondered if I needed to take a trip to the ER with how severe my symptoms had become. The last symptom I developed was Anosmia, or loss of sense of taste and smell.

Even after my symptoms subsided, I still feel lingering effects. After "recovering" I've found that I haven't really recovered, even after three months. I have hopes that these lasting effects will fade in time, and my next stop is to get vaccinated as soon as vaccinations become available for my category.

THE EXPRESS

Get some good information on your wall

www.facebook.com/LPCExpressNews



Talk Hawks cite team values as key to success

By Gibran Beydoun

@GIBRAN580MSCM

The Forensic Speech team of Las Positas College, the Talk Hawks, have been successful this semester. The team is coached by Jim Dobson and Natalie Kellner.

Alexis Bondarenko, a member of the Talk Hawks, was not initially interested in joining the team. She heard about Talk Hawks after she took Coach Kellner's Communications 1 class and was recommended to join the team.

Alexis said, "the main thing that leads us to our success is definitely just our team being a really big family. We support each other, not only through forensics and our events, but we also support each other in academics and our personal life... and having that support system is what really drives our team to success."

According to Bondarenko, the Talk Hawks have coaching sessions every week, practice their performances beforehand and give each other feedback. This helps them prepare for upcoming events. The team also does vocal and physical warm-ups ahead of the tournaments.

Despite being a first-year member of the team, Bondarenko said the team has a welcoming environment and a good support system, which has helped her feel at home with the team.

"I'm part of the middle college program on campus and I remember being really nervous that I was the youngest one on the team, but they really helped me see my true capabilities. And I'm so lucky to have a great team that boosted my confidence in myself," said Bondarenko.

According to Bondarenko, victory is not crucial to the team. Instead, the team thinks improvement is more important than a win. "Success on our team is definitely not all about winning," she said "it's about improving your-



Photo courtesy of LPC Talk Hawks

self and becoming better at your speeches and events throughout each tournament. If one member on our team succeeds, then our whole team succeeds."

There are always obstacles in one's path to success. Everyone has failed at something, learned from it, and strived for improvement. Bondarenko is no exception.

Bondarenko said, "I guess sometimes we have a little fumble in our speeches every once in a while, but I'd say the biggest thing that I've struggled with at

the beginning was just overall being confident in myself and not doubting my capabilities."

With events such as tournaments, which tend to be competitive and can put pressure on some people, Bondarenko tells us how she handles the pressure.

"I'd say the thing that helps me overcome my forensic jitters would definitely just be hanging out with the other teammates during breaks in the middle of the tournaments. They're all really encouraging and we're all going through the same experience at

the same time, and boosting each other's confidence definitely helps with overcoming the pressure. I know that no matter what happens in the tournaments, my team's always going to be there to support me."

"Having a group that you can go to and feel comfortable with makes the experience even greater," Bondarenko said. "Our team is really full of super talented people. [We]... all academically excel, but overall, the team is full of really nice people. I'd say that's what makes the Talk Hawks really special."

The forensic speech team has many benefits and lessons for its members. In case anyone wants to join or might consider joining the team, Bondarenko highly recommends you do.

Bondarenko said, "First of all, not only can somebody learn about how to improve their public speaking skills, but they really get to find their unique voice and somebody can really learn how to have confidence in themselves. They will find that they are capable of so much more than they have thought. You also learn the value of an amazing team."

Freshman Gabriel Hawkins looks forward to new season

By Gibran Beydoun

@GIBRAN580MSCM

Gabriel Hawkins, a basketball player and transfer student from St Mary's, has joined Las Positas amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

The virus and the pandemic have impacted millions upon millions of Americans in various ways. Hawkins tells us about his personal love for basketball and his side of the story about quarantine.

"I was just attracted [to] the game of basketball. I played on the playground every day before elementary school and fell in love. The first year I played organized basketball I was in third grade and I haven't stopped since. I love everything about basketball. I love the competitiveness of it, I love being able to prove [you're] better [than] someone. I love showing your will to see who wants it more. I just love everything about the game."

Every athlete has a role model or multiple idols that they look up to. Whether it's a favorite player they look up to, or someone they model their gameplay after. Hawkins shares his role models.

"My favorite athlete right now

is LeBron [James] because he's my favorite player in my favorite sport. However, my favorite athlete of all time is Muhammad Ali, not only because of how great he was at boxing but how outspoken he was about issues in America."

Hawkins, an avid watcher of basketball, models his game after those he sees on TV.

"I would say that I model my game after Anthony Davis because he can do everything on the floor and that's what I want to be able to do. He can shoot, get to the basket, and defend, all at a high level."

Like many others during these difficult times, Hawkins had to adapt to the new temporary norms that the world had to adapt in order to control the spread. He and his family have taken appropriate and necessary measures to remain safe while the pandemic is ongoing.

"It's been tough going through the pandemic. You can't eat in a restaurant, you can't go to the gym, you can't have parties, but I've been blessed to say that I haven't lost anyone close to me..."

"At family events, everyone is spaced out and [we have] masks on. We don't have more than ten people and we rarely have family

events at all."

With the virus impacting people and their daily life, extracurricular events had to be put on hold in precaution for everyone's safety, including college sports. Hawkins explained what his personal views of the pandemic are like and how the team has been training now that they can return.

"Coach G has done a great job making sure we are all safe while we work out. All of our practices have been outside either on the track or turf field. We stay at least six feet apart at all times [and] wear masks. If we have to run, we have to take our masks off, we stay 12 feet apart [to] make sure that we are staying safe."

Alameda County is among the California counties to be in the purple tier. The majority of the state is still in the purple tier.

"We stopped working out when the county turned purple, but we just started up again following the same guidelines as before. We also now get tested two times a week for COVID-19 to make sure we are safe."

Another thing to think about now that college sports are coming back is the expectation ahead of the seasons. Many teams in the state have not played in over

a year and athletes hope to have enough film to send to other colleges. The hopefulness, optimism, confidence and expecta-

tions ahead of the big games. Hawkins says "my expectations for our team is to be one of the best teams in the state."

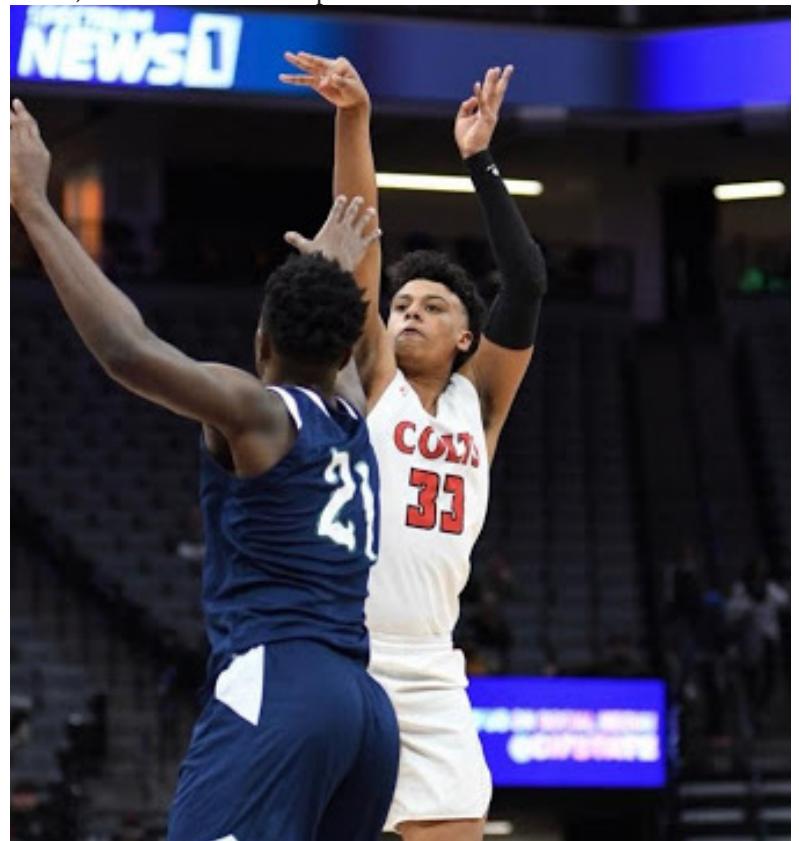


Photo courtesy of Gabriel Hawkins
Hawkins shooting over a defender in a California state playoff championship. Hawkins is itching to get back on the court this season.

Men's soccer to resume play after year long hiatus

By Alessio Cavalca

@ALESSIO CAVALCA

It was on Nov. 15, 2019 when the Hawks men's soccer team played their last official game facing Monterey Peninsula. In that occasion, the first game of 2019 playoffs concluded with a loss for the LPC team. And that disappointing ending left a bad taste to the players, the coach and not lastly the supporters.

Specifically, the 2019 statistics showed an overall 7-11-1 which effectively reflected the negative season of the Hawks. So a fresh start with the players seeking for positive results in order to leave behind the past season was a must. But the unexpected long break had a significant impact on the team.

Indeed, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictions, the entire college level sports environment faced a dramatic stop. Entire sport seasons got canceled, and for several months even a team training on the pitch was an

utopian scenario.

However, the news everybody was waiting for is finally official: the LPC athletes are coming back.

As happened for the other LPC sports teams, the men's soccer team had to deal with several incognites over the last period. But one of the constants that characterizes soccer at Las

and hopefully be back on the field and competing against other colleges this semester," said the coach about the new season. Coming back after several months is definitely exciting. And it is evident that the whole environment around the team is thrilled because of the new start, including the players.



Photo by Alan Lewis
Hawks player Tyler Lewis on the pitch. The Hawks will be playing for the first time in 15 months

"I can easily say that me and my teammates are so thrilled and excited to finally have a season and get back to the sport that we all love and cherish," affirmed Tyler Martinez, defender of the Hawks who has provided an important contribution to the team during the

working hard on the pitch and keeping a solid mentality.

"Would you keep in mind the tendencies of the opponent, but from my experience it's better to just focus on our objectives in our system rather than trying to adjust what we do according to our opponents," explained the coach.

If half of a team's quality is built up on tactics, relationships between players are the other essential aspects that make a team competitive.

And according to Tyler Martinez, the group is more than solid. "We have an amazing group of boys that work extremely hard day in and day out on and off the pitch. The chemistry between the boys is on another level as well," said the Hawks' defender.

It seems that the LPC soccer team is ready to start a new season with emphasis and quality in order to achieve the good result they deserve.

Finally, both Cumbo and Martinez shared some of their best memories from their past seasons with the Hawks.

The defender who admitted to being inspired by Sweden's top player Zlatan Ibrahimovic

(and that explains his offensive propensity) remembers a game played against Lassen in August 2019.

"The very first game we had last year I got put in with 3 minutes left in the half and scored off the bench to put the team up 2-0 in a 3-0 victory," remembers the Hawks number two.

Instead, Cumbo remarked one of the best seasons for the LPC Hawks highlighting the important achievement reached by the team on that occasion.

"One special memory I have with the men's team was a couple years ago at San Francisco city college and not only did we clinch an important road win, but we clinched an undefeated season and conference play that year," said the coach. That Hawks' triumph might remind the older soccer fans of the "Invincible Arsenal" of the 2003-04 season when the team of London achieved the title after a fantastic season without a single defeat.

Certainly, the Hawks' comeback is already good news. But supporters also wish the best to the players and the coach in order to assist to a fantastic season that this gritty group of guys deserves.

Positas College since 2016 is Andrew Cumbo, the head's soccer coach. And today, after a long break, he is ready to start again and to prepare the team for the coming competitions.

"We're just excited to train

2019 season.

But in addition to those positive feelings about the comeback, there was also space to put the lights on the tactical aspects of the team. And, Andrew Cumbo has a clear idea for the team:

Former hoops star comes to LPC after pro basketball stint

By Alan Lewis

@ALANLEW89343503

Las Positas freshman Fire Technology student Tracey Walker was a star basketball player at Santa Clara University and also played professional basketball in Iceland.

Walker is not a typical LPC student as she graduated from Santa Clara and served in the Navy for 9 years prior to enrolling in the Fire Science program at LPC. Not only is she the first family member on her mother's side to graduate college, she also played professional women's basketball after college.

Walker began her basketball career playing at Valley Christian High School in San Jose where she was named the Central Coasts Freshman, Sophomore and Senior player of the year. Her senior year she averaged 25 points per game, 10 rebounds, six assists and five steals.

At Santa Clara University she was very successful in basketball. Walker was only the 18th player to earn 1000 career points at Santa Clara. She also holds the record for the most games played, 120 games, by any player at Santa Clara University. Her senior year she started in all 29 games and

averaged over 37 minutes per game. She averaged 12.7 points per game her senior year.

After graduating from Santa Clara, Walker's agent sent films to several teams and she was given a contract to play in Iceland for the Keflavik Women's Basketball Club. The Keflavik team is Iceland's most successful women's basketball team with 16 national championships.

Her professional career was short lived as she resigned from the team after a few months. She experienced culture shock in Iceland and was homesick. Living in Iceland was a challenge as she was the one of the only Black Americans in the country. Walker found that she often received unwanted attention by people pointing and staring at her as they have not seen many black people. She also realized that she enjoyed

playing in front of family and friends, but she did not have family and friends at the games in Iceland due to the distance, time and expense of traveling from California to Iceland.

Walker returned to the United States not sure what to do. One evening a cousin's boyfriend told her about his Navy experience, Walker found his stories to be interesting about the travel and

where they played a game against a team from Bahrain during a port stop. Walker also served on the USS Vinson and was onboard the Vinson during the ship's overhaul in Bremerton, Washington.

While in the Navy, Walker qualified for both Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist and Surface Warfare Specialist. Both qualifications require obtaining the knowledge required, demonstrating required skills, taking a written test and passing an oral board. Not many sailors qualify both surface warfare and aviation warfare specialist.

An air traffic controller sits for long hours in one place which is not Walker's style. She wants to be active as her hobbies are outdoor activities such as hiking. She decided to leave the Navy to pursue another career which is how she ended up at Las Positas College. She is remaining in the Navy Reserves as she enjoyed her Navy experience.

Walker chose the Fire Technology program as she wants a job that is exciting and active. After graduation she plans to apply at fire districts that are very active or for Cal Fire. Cal Fire is the organization that fights the forest fires within California.



Photo courtesy of Tracey Walker
Walker running the offense at Santa Clara University. She played pro basketball in Iceland before coming to LPC as a student.

The food was also a shock in the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables. Most fruits and vegetables in Iceland are grown in greenhouses or flown in making them expensive if available. Icelanders diet is heavily on fish, people in Iceland eat fish 6 or 7 days a week, and even have fish for breakfast.

fun in the Navy. Based on his stories, Walker then enlisted in the Navy and was trained as an Air Traffic controller.

She traveled the world on a cruise while stationed on USS Roosevelt, an aircraft carrier. During the cruise Walker played on the Roosevelt basketball team

Where have all the clubs gone?

by Alan Lewis

In the fall of 2019 there were 41 recognized clubs on campus. In spring semester 2020, 26. Fall 2020 semester, just 17 clubs. Clubs are still being recognized this semester so a final count is not available. Some of the decline can be attributed to the COVID-19 switch to online classes, but not all. Many of the older clubs are no longer recognized clubs, such as Christ in Action, Queer-Straight Alliance and Black Student Union.

Some clubs are affected by the switch to online classes because the clubs' activities are not readily adjustable to online. Other clubs do not want to change to online meetings, which accounts for some of the decline this semester. Another likely reason is the amount of paperwork a club must complete before it becomes active.

In order for a club to be recognized, it must submit an application to the Inter-Club Council (ICC). Application requirements are having an advisor, at least six members and a minimum of three officers, consisting of president, vice president and treasurer. An ICC rep must be designated but can be one of the other officers. A club is also required to

have a constitution.

Once recognized by the ICC, the club is funded \$500. The ICC representative must attend the ICC meetings. Missing more than two meetings a semester can be cause for decertifying a club.

A large factor that negatively affects clubs is the administrative burden put on clubs. To apply as a club, two forms are required with signatures of club officers and advisers. When clubs met in person, it was relatively easy to get all the information and signatures. Now that everything is online, many emails and texts are necessary to get all the information and electronic signatures.

Clubs are also required to write minutes of meetings. Once the club has authorized spending, the club has some choices to purchase items. A club member or adviser can make a purchase using their money and get reimbursed later. This, of course, requires another form, copies of the minutes and receipts. It can take two months to get the funds reimbursed. Camera Club spent over \$500 for frames, and it took over two months to get reimbursed. Many students can't float \$500 for two months.

The college does have an Amazon account, but to use the account, the order must go through the Student Life office to make a purchase, this can take weeks. Items purchased cannot be sent to a student's or adviser's home but must be sent to the college, which can delay things further before the item is delivered to the adviser's office.

Guest speakers can cause another issue. If a club wishes to have a paid guest speaker at a meeting, the club is required to have a contract, a contract questionnaire, a vendor profile application, a W-9 form and a business license. This must all be in place prior to the guest speaker meeting, and then there must be a vendor invoice and a reimbursement request for the speaker to be paid.

There are other administrative requirements. Among these are: a facilities request form 10 days prior to the meeting, fundraising request form, travel forms, Copy Center forms and bulletin board posting approval of flyers. The requirements place a burden on the volunteer club advisers and officers.

Some advisers came to the January 2020 ICC meeting to

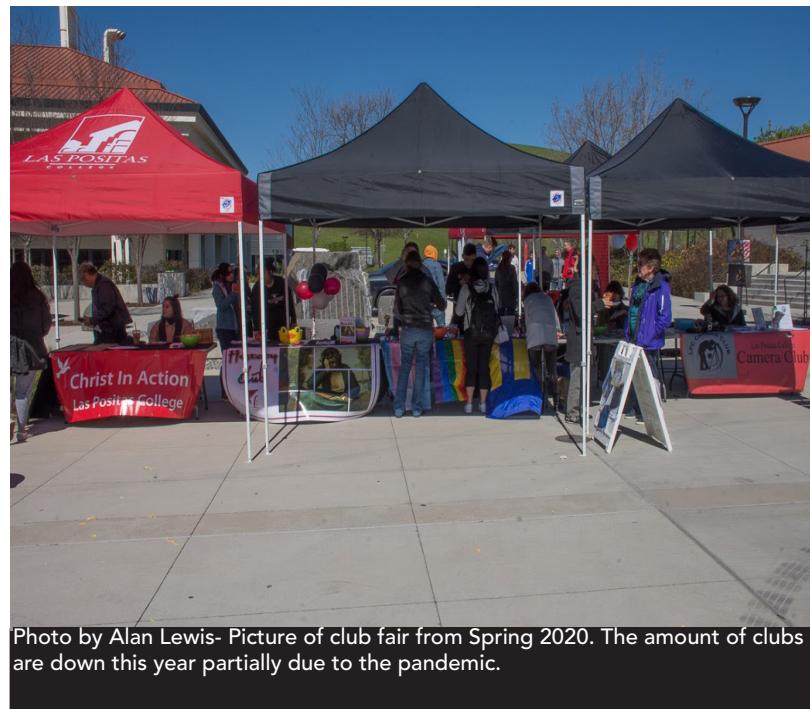


Photo by Alan Lewis- Picture of club fair from Spring 2020. The amount of clubs are down this year partially due to the pandemic.

complain about the administrative requirements placed on clubs. The club handbook, where most of the requirements are listed, is 56 pages long.

The office of Student Life and the ICC need to focus on helping clubs market themselves and what activities can be done online. Currently clubs are told what they cannot do, such as meet in person, hold field trips or off campus activities, but no guidance is offered about what clubs can do except to hold meet-

ings via Zoom, and each club has to set up its own Zoom meetings.

Club administrative procedures need to be simplified in order to reduce the burden on club advisers and officers. There is no incentive during the pandemic for anyone to volunteer to be an unpaid adviser or club officer. The student life office and ICC needs to help clubs survive in the COVID-19 pandemic during online classes.

Vaccine distribution is to slow

By Brandon Byrne

@BRANDONBYRNE18

In order for life to go back to normal, we will need large portions of society vaccinated for COVID-19. However, it is hard to get vaccinated due to a shortage of the vaccine.

Because of the number of people that live in California, there is a shortage of the vaccine, and California is restricting vaccine distribution to specific groups. There are also phases for the age groups, and currently, you have to be 65 or older to get the vaccine or in a critical need category. Also, this is because of how the weather is and how they store the vaccines. California's vaccine rollout includes different phases over time, taking age and jobs into consideration when deciding who gets priority. Currently, you either have to work in a critical need category or be age 65 or older in order to be eligible to receive the vaccine.

The critical job category includes healthcare workers, long-term care residents, agriculture and

food workers, education and childcare workers, and emergency service workers. Not only is distribution limited for the vaccine, but the demand is far beyond the supply at the moment, as 29 million Californians await the vaccine. It doesn't help that there are also shortages occurring of what is actually in supply. Sutter Health miscommunicated with the government and now 95,000 people have gotten their appointments for vaccination canceled.

There isn't one specific place to get an appointment for the vaccine. One has to go through multiple websites such as your medical network, California Department of Health, drugstores and other websites.

Some people may not understand what they need to do to get on the list for the vaccine, particularly for older people. This is very interesting because people older than 75 could have gotten the vaccine last month. Older residents could also be disadvantaged by a technology gap, making it more

difficult for them to get on the list as many appointments are made online.

I recommend to people that are having a hard time getting the vaccine to talk with their primary care doctors. I think that we need to have better ways of administering the vaccination because there are a lot of people in the Bay Area who could have a problem getting on the vaccination list. Currently, the only people eligible to get vaccinated are those aged 65 and older or those in a critical job, or people in education, but they need to be able to easily make an appointment for the vaccine.

Hopefully, the number of vaccine doses will increase and the distribution of it will be more easily accessible so that enough people can get the vaccine and society can return to normal. When the vaccine is more readily available, life can start to go back to normal, and more venues will be able to open back up.

OPINION

Student government has failed to adapt during the pandemic

By Han Nelson & Alan Lewis

@ALANLEW42227056

@SCP_TLDR

Grey is to gray as the student government is to a fish piloting an airplane.

Basically, it has been pretty abysmal.

The Las Positas College Student government is an organization made for the representation and betterment of students and communities around the LPC campus. In better times it has been able to provide services such as club coordination, fairs and community events like The Market.

From practical outcomes alone, one can see that the current student government is not living up to expectations set by its predecessors. Student clubs have been struggling to retain presence, one-third of market events were canceled and the digital fairs held in absence of campus events have drawn so little interest that on occasion the only visitors to booths are student journalists sent to cover the event.

A singular one-time event to connect with students that were proposed in October has been delayed so much that it still has yet to announce a date at the time of this article's publishing.

If the student government is to step up and be a valuable service to the student community, some big changes need to be made.

The performance and canceled events of the semester have led to an eyebrow-raising consequence. The student government now spends more of its budget paying its members than it devotes

to any other purpose around the campus.

Ten of your dollars go to the student government each semester. Usually, this fee is well used to support campus necessities. The past semester was not a usual semester.

LPCSG consists of a six-member executive board, up to 25 senators and two advanced senators. Members of the executive board and the advanced senators receive a scholarship each semester ranging from \$600 to \$2000 depending on the position. These scholarships are directly funded by student activity fees.

The fall 2020 scholarships were far beyond justifiable for the services provided to the student body.

Over \$100,000 is collected each school year in student activity fees. Last semester the student activity fee account had a balance of \$241,575, student senate accounts for \$53,036 and ICC accounts for \$34,386. The activity fees are placed into the activity fee account and transferred to the student senate account as needed. The student senate transfers some of these funds to the ICC as needed.

The budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) has not yet been passed but the draft budget shows expenditures of only \$50,000. Of this, \$24,500 is for the ICC and clubs, \$10,400 for the student government scholarships.

It is notable that during this time period, the number of clubs that filled out the paperwork qualifying them for club funding reached an abysmally low 17 clubs. Five hundred dollars is allocated to each club for a total

of \$8,500.

Take notice that 4,500 is less than 10,400. This indicated that the student government is spending more on their own payment, than they are spending on all campus clubs combined.

With the excess of funds in the student government accounts,



student government should explore reducing or suspending the fee for a semester or two. This would not only allow the excess funds in the accounts to be reduced but would also help students whose income has been reduced during the pandemic.

Bottom line is that the student government has not done much for students this year. While they have made some efforts, they ultimately have failed to overcome the problems that have been presented by the pandemic.

Moving forward, it is clear that the student government needs to change if it is to be a useful service to the student body.

Student government needs to get creative in how to support students during the pandemic. The best place to see this in action is to observe how other programs

around the campus have made strides to stay connected with students.

The Veteran's First program can provide some good examples of the support provided to student veterans. Each week there is a Chill and Chat, a time to call in and talk with fellow student veterans.

The Student Veteran's Organization also held an online pizza and painting event. Members signed up and were provided with a gift certificate for pizza, a set of paints and brushes and a canvas. On the night of the event a Zoom meeting was held with the participants that was led by one of the veterans and those that attended had a great time!

The Veteran's Organization also hosted an online trivia night. A trivial contest was held via an online trivia program.

Many of the students do not feel connected to the college. Many first year students have never been on campus and only participated in classes via Zoom or online.

Student government could hold events that can be done via Zoom or other online platforms. Those events should be open to all students and staff to try and get the students connected with the college.

Student government tries to not duplicate services that can be obtained on campus. Laptops can be checked out of the library, free wifi is available on campus including parking lots C & D. This has reduced the opportunities for student government to support students.

The one event that the student government supports is The Market. The Market is held the

third Tuesday of every month and is a free food distribution to students, staff and the public. However, your activity fee funds are not used for The Market, The Market is funded by grants and the East Bay Food Bank. The one exception is that there is a small budget for refreshments for the volunteers at The Market. Unfortunately, The Market was cancelled in November, December and January.

Another example of how student government didn't do much for students in fall 2020 was it took a while to get the positions filled. At the first meeting of the semester only three of the six executive positions were filled, the other 3 were vacant. At the Sep. 2 meeting the first senator was appointed. It wasn't until the Oct. 15 meeting that all the executive positions were filled.

The lack of senators may have had an impact on planning events to connect with students.

With the excess of funds in the student government accounts student government should explore reducing or suspending the fee for a semester or two. This would not only allow the excess funds in the accounts to be reduced but would also help students whose income has been reduced during the pandemic.

Student government is well funded and needs to connect more with the students at LPC by planning events or activities and finding new methods of connecting with students. Student government needs to figure out how to get students to feel connected with LPC and to represent all students at LPC.

Alan's Ramblings: Experiences with my dating and sex life

By Alan Lewis

@ALANLEW42227056

On our first date after dinner my date said to me "I hope we are having safe sex tonight?"

I was naïve about sex when I was dating. Which is strange since I had dated in high school, college and was previously married. However, I did not expect sex until after I dated someone for a few times and we had a relationship. I was wrong. Sex sometimes happened earlier in dating than I expected.

Her name was Mindy. She worked as a mechanic for United Airlines. On our first date we went to Happi House which is a fast food Teriyaki place as she had

a two for one coupon. After dinner, she suggested we get a bottle of wine and go back to my place. I was not expecting this. She also said "I hope we are having safe sex tonight". I replied, "Yes, but I need to stop at a drugstore first."

Later in our dating period we had planned a date on a Saturday, but I called her and tried to cancel as my hot water heater had failed and I needed to change it. Mindy suggested she come over and help me. As she was a mechanic, she helped by doing the entire job as I held the flashlight and handled her tools.

After another lunch date, she took me on a tour of the United Airlines Maintenance Base at San Francisco airport. I was fasci-

nated! Did you know the entire bathrooms and galleys come out of the planes in one piece? Mindy was fun while it lasted but she broke up with me so she could date another woman she met.

Another person I dated for about two years was Janice. Janice lived on the island of Kauai. We met in Honolulu when I was there performing my military duties as I was in the Reserves at the time.

Janice was open to almost anything sexually, I never did find her limits as my limits were less than hers. On our first date we did not have conventional sex but she masturbated in front of me and on the second date, sexual intercourse.

Janice was wild, she identified

as a dyke, I never did understand why she dated me. Her favorite sexual activity was backdoor. She loved anal, the only woman I dated who did.

What broke us up was not the physical distance but the lifestyle differences. I paid more in taxes than Janice earned in a year, I know as I did her taxes the two years we dated.

Janice is a vegetarian, I am a meat and potatoes guy. Janice got her TV at the dump, I got mine at Best Buy. Janice got her clothes from Goodwill, I got mine from Mervyn's. Janice was a devotee of Adidam that worships a spiritual guru Adi Da Samraj, I am an Atheist.

But we had some good times

and a lot of fun together. I visited her in Kauai a few times a year and she came to California a couple of times while we were dating (usually I paid for her ticket). She even stayed with me on the boat I was currently living on at the time. In Kauai, we went hiking, kayaking, body surfing and explored the island. In California, we visited Monterey, went skiing in Tahoe, hiking and other activities.

Find the rest of Alan's column at LPCEXPRESSNEWS.COM under the opinion section.