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### THE EXPRESS

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Image Courtesy of Shutterstock.com

## Community Colleges to see increased funding after pandemic District awaits state allocation, college plans for equitable use of funds

By Gibran Beydoun

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As the end of the 2021-22 academic year approaches, Chancellor Oakley announced that there remains excessive funds for community colleges following the pandemic. The amount of money Chabot-Las Positas Community College District will receive for 2022-23 is unknown until Governor Gavin Newsom signs the budget in June.

When funds are given to the district, the allocation process is divided between the district and its two colleges. The district retains 10% of the funds while 90% goes to Chabot and Las Positas Colleges.

Because of attendance and the number of individuals on the campuses, out of the remaining 90% of the funds, Chabot receives 54% of the funds while Las Positas receives 36%.

Las Positas uses 95% of the funds for the salaries of its faculty and staff members. The remaining 5% of the funds are

used for materials and supplies.

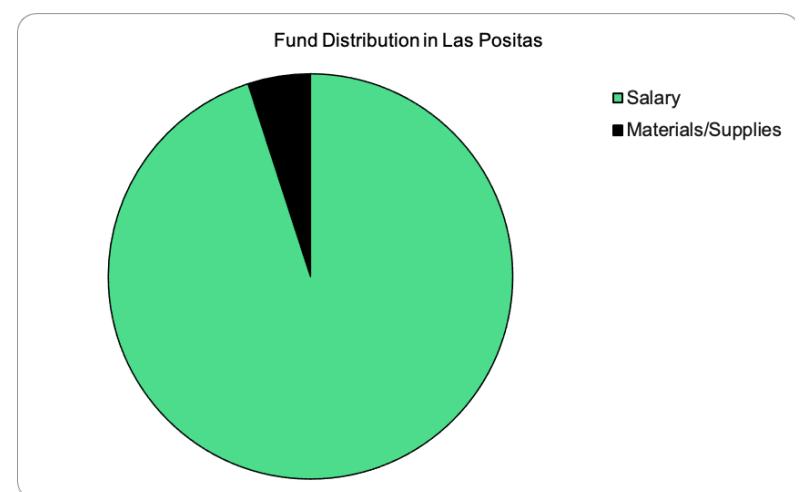
LPC looks at the number of students, and the amount of money that was given to determine the amount to give to departments by percentage. If a department has grown, like the Fire Department, we would increase the budget to match the need. Annette Raichbart has been the Vice President of Administrative Services at LPC since late 2019. Raichbart explained how the allocation of funds is determined.

"We look at the increase we get from the state and try to make it equitable for everyone," Raichbart said. "Same thing goes for cuts. We look at it individually and historically by department."

Additionally, if staff members want reimbursements for certain purchases, they must show proof of it.

"If they are gathering or getting supplies for students, they need to have receipts," Raichbart said. "Everyone needs to know and acknowledge that it was a legitimate purchase."

From the point the college



receives the signed document required for reimbursements, they aim to pay within a week. It should take no longer than 2 weeks to get the necessary signatures.

However, they require a credit card slip and an itemized receipt for proper reimbursement.

If the receipts are not itemized it could prolong the reimbursement process. If there are questions, that could also extend

the reimbursement timeline. If an instructor lost the receipts, they have to fill out a form stating they lost the itemized receipts.

The district will receive its upcoming budget after Newsom signs it. The attendance and amount of funding it receives will determine the financial allocations for the next academic year.

## DYNASTIES

A look at the history of the NBA through the lens of legends.

“ Marcus Thompson is the perfect voice for a book like this. His style is so conversational, you just want to grab a blanket, curl up and get comfortable. ... Once you get started, you're hooked. ”

**Michael Lee**  
The Washington Post

# Umoja bridges educational gap for Black students

By Sophia Sipe

@SOPHIASIFE

Umoja— a word derived from the KSwahili language and an educational organization for students—promote one core value: unity. Additionally, Umoja aims to provide accessibility to a plethora of resources such as specialized curriculums, employment opportunities and individual counselors for Black students.

At LPC, Umoja has become an integral part of many academic careers. According to Umoja Co-Coordinator Kimberly Burks, “students who participate in Learning Communities, such as Umoja, have higher rates of success than students who do not participate”.

According to a Umoja report conducted by The Institute for Social Research, 565 Umoja students from 47 different campuses, not including LPC, concluded that 89% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the program has been effective in improving their views regarding their ability to take charge of their future.

On top of aiding students, Umoja works towards bridging the educational achievement gap, or the disparate educational outcomes of Black students, in comparison to their white peers. According to Tanya Golash-Boza, author of sociology textbook *Race and Racisms*, Black students fare less well in school, whether that be obtaining fewer college degrees or lower grade-point averages.

In a 2010 national study conducted by The Teachers College Record, research showed that African American and Latinx students were underrepresented in advanced math classes in various schools

across the country which ultimately led to lower grade-point averages and rates of university enrollment for these groups of students. Though with the help of race-oriented organizations, these students are less likely to succumb to such statistics.

Furthermore, organizations like Umoja curb negative implications of internally racist practices that are still present in the school system today, such as tracking. Historically, it’s common for educational institutions to “track” groups of children based on their academic ability. As a result, many Black children are placed in low-ability classes and aren’t given equal opportunities to advanced classes.

In Umoja, students have more chances to be challenged with high-ability and fast paced courses known as fast-track classes, which are in session for 8-weeks only as opposed to a full semester. “Umoja is intentional about the success of African American students,” Burks said.

Aside from specifics within the organization, Umoja prides itself on their vision and mission objectives. As stated in the official website for the Umoja community, it’s “dedicated to enhancing the cultural and educational experiences of African American and other students”. Moreover, they inspire self-actualization of such students in order for them to realize their full potential both in the classroom and outside of school.

“The long-term goal of LPC’s Umoja program is for Umoja students to assume leadership or instrumental roles within our local communities and educational pipelines by carving out paths of opportunity and equity for Black students and other underrepresented groups,” Burks said.

According to Iyore Iyamu, a second-year student member of both The Express Newspaper and Umoja program, said that it acted as a family, support system and community.

“Aside from academics, Umoja provides me with a family dynamic and a strong community,” Iyore said.

Likewise, the program has proved to be meaningful for its instructors and coordinators.

“I enjoy watching students positively change their narrative on the significance and role of Black people in America. It is a privilege to witness the bonds and friendships that are made within the Umoja community including our Umoja alumni students, those who graduated and/or transferred,” Burks said.

With that said, Umoja isn’t specific to Livermore, though there are close ties in the history of the organization. In 1988 the first Umoja program, known as The Daraja Project, was founded at Las Positas’ sister school, Chabot Community College.

The Hayward program, derived from the Swahili word Dajara, refers to a set of steps to help students transfer.

After Dajara proved successful for Chabot students, the community decided to unify into one large program in 2007.

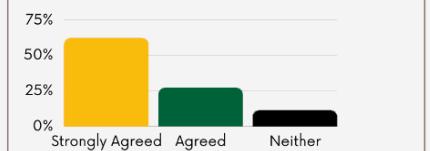
Now, nearly 35 years later, similar programs are included at 60 city colleges and two universities, covering a total of six different regions in California.

With the prevalence of the program at several institutions, joining is as simple as signing up through one’s college website. To apply to LPC’s Umoja program, visit the online application.

## UMOJA SUCCESS RATE

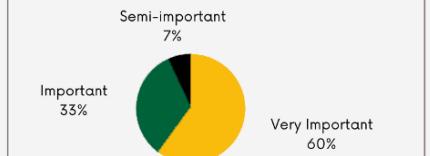
THE DATA BELOW SHOWS VARIOUS LONG-TERM OUTCOMES OF UMOJA PARTICIPATION ACROSS 47 CALIFORNIA COLLEGE CAMPUSES.

### EFFECTIVENESS



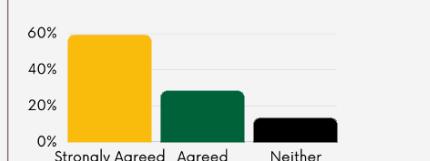
Nearly all students surveyed agreed that Umoja has been effective in improving their views on their ability to take charge of their future.

### IMPORTANCE



Almost all students found programs like Umoja very important to academic success.

### RELATABILITY



The majority of students surveyed strongly agreed that the Umoja curriculum is relatable to them and their lives.

### REFERENCES

Data collected from The Evaluation of the Umoja Community Report conducted by The Institute for Social Research

Infographic by Sophia Sipe

# California governor lifts mask mandate

By Gibran Beydoun

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California Governor Gavin Newsom has announced that the mask mandate for schools will end on March 12th. Starting March 1, the mask mandate will also be removed for unvaccinated Californians. However, masks will still be required on public transit, in emergency shelters, prisons, health care settings, long-term care facilities and homeless shelters.

The mask mandate removal in schools will apply to anyone regardless of their vaccination status. Although mask mandates will be over in most areas during the month of March for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, masks are still recommended for unvaccinated individuals.

In light of this, the political debate over masks is more prominent now more than ever. In a UC Berkeley poll, 61% of parents that have their kids enrolled in schools support the school mask mandates. In another poll by UC Berkeley, 70% of Republicans oppose mask mandates and 85% of Democrats support mask mandates.

In the article “California mask mandate: Is it ending too soon for little children?” written by Cal Matters, parents



Joel Martinez/ The Express

Tuetrung Nguyen shares his opinion about the mask lift with express member Joel Martinez.

wanted the mask mandate gone before March 12th. In the article, Oakland parents tackled the issue. “I think the masks should be optional tomorrow on March 1” Oakland parent Megan Bacigalupi said. “I don’t understand the rationale of a further delay of another two weeks,” Bacigalupi

continued. In other words, she wants the mask mandate to end immediately and doesn’t see a point in keeping the mandate for another two weeks.

On the other hand, there are other people that aren’t really agreeing with the mask mandate being lifted even for toddlers. In

the same article I mentioned in the last paragraph, infectious disease epidemiologist Shira Shafir says, “The wise thing to do is to continue to have children mask until they are eligible to be vaccinated and there is a sufficient number of them vaccinated to be protected.” She’s saying that until toddlers are eligible for the vaccine, they should still wear masks because they can still get COVID-19. And in the same article Kimi Mtovic, who owns Miss Kimi Family Daycare explains her concern about the mask mandates being lifted, “We are not comfortable taking the masks off.”

Although most schools will probably lift their mask mandates, Chabot College and Las Positas will continue enforcing the mandate. According to a statement issued by CLPCCD on March 3, “These recent developments do not yet change our district’s masking policy. Masks are required indoors at Chabot College, Las Positas College, and District offices.” The school districts of San Diego, Oakland and San Francisco have also decided to keep their mask mandate in place for schools.

# Swim and dive season is full of milestones

By **Taylor Sparkman**

@T\_SPARKMAN\_330

In the 11 years that Las Positas College has had a swim and dive program, they have made it to state championships every single year, same for the 2020 and 2021 seasons which were canceled due to covid.

The program has been so successful that it held a five-year consecutive run for winning conference championships, from 2015-2019. A consistent and large contributing factor to LPC's continued swim and dive success is none other than coach Loren Pearson. Although technically an assistant coach, Pearson was recognized as CCCAA Coach of the Year for both men and women's swim and dive, voted on by other head coaches in her conference. This marks the first time in state history that an assistant coach has been awarded this prestigious title for any sport.

The Hawks began their season by hosting a swim invite on April 1-2, where the team of mostly freshmen gained some valuable experience.

"Everyone had a best time or multiple best times, throughout the two-day event; season best and/or lifetime best," said head coach Jason Craighead.

During the Hawk Invite, Ashley Sand set a team record in the women's 200-yard breaststroke with a final time of 2:31.57. At the time, she ranked third in the state for the 200 breaststroke, second for the 100 breaststroke and fourth in the 200 individual medley. Sam Dorn was also ranked eighth in the state for the 500-yard freestyle and competed in her second-ever 1650 freestyle, while posting the second fastest time in the state.

Ross Brown also set some personal records by achieving a few top-15 swims in the state, including the 500 freestyle (sixth), 200 freestyle (11th), 400 inter-medley (15th) and 200 backstroke (12th).

The following weekend was spent in Sacramento at the American River Pentathlon, where Franco Moufarrej became the third-ever Hawk in program history to win the sprint pentathlon. He went undefeated and got progressively faster, winning the last shootout with a time of 21.36.

On the women's side, Sand won the overall high-point total. She swam in all five events (fly, back, breast, free and the individual medley) and became the second-ever Hawk to win the pentathlon crown, capping off one of the many successful weekends this season.

The Hawks dove head first into the NorCal Diving Championship meet on April 16 in Stockton, which served as a regional qualifier for the State Championships and for scoring in the Coast Conference Championships. LPC would see two of its men qualify for diving at the State Championships, despite having just learned how to dive at the Hawk Invite earlier in the month.

"I am proud to say we have some great athletes who not only took to a difficult sport, but did so in a very short time

and very successfully. We have some real gamers," said Craighead. Two of the gamers he's referring to would be freshmen Ryan Clark and Cade Venables.

Clark placed 11th in NorCal and second in conference for the men's one meter dive, while also placing sixth in NorCal and first in conference for the men's three meter dive (state qualifier). Venables tied for ninth in NorCal and placed first in conference for the men's one meter dive (state qualifier) and placed eighth in NorCal and second in conference for the men's three meter dive (state qualifier).

Monica Ureno also did some impressive diving for the women. She placed 17th in NorCal but fourth in conference for the women's one meter dive and placed 13th in NorCal and third in the conference for the women's three meter dive.

The Lady Hawks continued to see more success on day one of the Coast Conference Championships, which was hosted by LPC Thursday, April 21-23. The women's 400-yard medley relay team won the conference championship with a time of 4:21.98. That relay team consisted of Sarah Thompson (butterfly), Gabrielle Benavidez (freestyle), Dorn (backstroke) and Sand (breaststroke). The Hawks were 0.88 seconds behind first place West Valley in the 200-yard freestyle relay with a time of 1:43.46.

Dorn, Thompson and Benavidez finished second, third and fourth respectively in the women's 500-yard freestyle finals. Sand also shaved off over three seconds on her 200-yard intermedley time for a personal record of 2:17.96, good enough to earn third place.

The men's side saw four of its swimmers finish in the top five for the 500-yard freestyle finals — Brown won first place (4:50.59), Kyle Young finished second (5:05.46), Venables was fourth (5:27.95) and Sean Mendez finished in fifth (5:28.37).

Moufarrej also won the Coast Conference title in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 21:27.

Zachary Perry finished in third for the 200-yard intermedley with a time of 2:00.23. The Hawks were second in both the men's 400-yard medley relay (3:38.26) and the 200-yard freestyle relay (1:27.41).

Day two of the Coast Conference Championships saw Sand win the conference title for the women's 100 breaststroke with a time of 1:07.60. This marked the second time this season that she's set a team-record.

LPC had three swimmers place in the top five of the women's 200-yard freestyle finals. Benavidez swam a time of 2:04.42 (third), Cox followed with a time of 2:04.45 (fourth) and Dorn finished with a time of 2:05.61 (fifth).

For the men, Brown (4:23.13) and Perry (4:25.53) would finish in first and second place again in the 400-yard intermedley. Young would earn his first victory in the 200-yard freestyle and by a



**The Express/ Taylor Sparkman**

Coast Conference Coach of the Year Loren Pearson (Left) and Head Coach Jason Craighead (Right) are seen showing off a shirt which displays the team's motto for the season, rainbows and unicorns.

two second lead, with a time of 1:50.60. The Hawks' men also won the 800-yard freestyle relay title in stunning fashion, finishing with a time of 7:17.58. The team consisted of Brown, Perry, Young, and Moufarrej.

Moufarrej placed second in Friday's 100-yard breaststroke finals with a time of 58.89.

On the final day of the Coast Conference Championships, the Hawks had achieved many personal accomplishments but would end up finishing in second place in the men's and women's team overall standings. For instance, Sand finished in second place for the 200-yard breaststroke with a time of 2:28.00, shattering the previous program record by 0:03.50, which she set herself at the Hawk Invite. She also set a new program record for the 100-yard breaststroke with a winning time of 1:07.60.

Dorn also won a conference title for LPC in the women's 1,650-yard freestyle race.

Meanwhile for the men, Brown won some individual titles, including the 400-yard individual medley (4:23.13) and the 500-yard freestyle (4:50.59). He also finished second in the 200-yard backstroke with a time of 1:59.76 and participated in the victorious 800-yard freestyle relay

title for LPC, with teammates Perry, Moufarrej and Young.

Young earned individual titles himself for his efforts in the 200-yard freestyle (1:50.60) and the 1,650-yard freestyle (17:38.11). Moufarrej won the 50 freestyle title with a time of 21.27 and finished second in both the 100-yard freestyle (47.08) and 100-yard breaststroke (58.89).

The Hawks closed out the Coast Conference Championship weekend with a final of 692 points for the men and 569 points for the women. They would finish in second place behind West Valley, which had a larger team than LPC and allowed them to score more points. LPC had a little less than two weeks before their next and final meet, the CCCAA State Championships held at East Los Angeles College in Monterey Park, May 5-7.

There, they would have an impressive pair of top-five finishes at the CCCAA State Swimming and Diving Championships this past week at East Los Angeles College.

Sand finished third in the women's 200-yard breaststroke with a time of 2:29.06 and was also fifth in the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 1:08.19.



Image Courtesy of Alan Lewis

Student Golfers tee up at the Las Positas Golf Course driving range while being mentored by Professor Paul Sapsford (left) during golf class.

# Golf fits like a glove at Las Positas

By Josh Jones

@JONES\_JOSH5

The rapid rise of popularity in golf has rubbed off on students at Las Positas and a team is wanted by many. The potential of a golf team being added to the school has been widely supported by students and staff over the years.

The sport in general has seen more than a 2 percent increase in total participants (24.8 million) nationwide since 2020.

Youth is taking over what has always been known as the “old man’s sport” in recent years with forty-four percent of golfers in 2020 being under the age of 40.

Neither a men’s nor women’s team has been present on campus in its 59 year history despite the near perfect fit. Las Positas has readily available golf courses in close proximity with eager students that have been starving for a team.

The Las Positas golf class has been present on campus since 2015 and remains the only option for student golfers to get involved with the game of golf. It is not currently active as a club and is only offered as an elective class that can be added in the fall, spring and summer.

The golf class is run by current Kinesiology Professor Paul Sapsford who has a strong background in the sport of golf. Sapsford has been involved in the game of golf for over 30 years which includes representing St. Mary’s University in London, England in the 90s and later becoming president of the golf club there. He currently holds his United States Golf Teachers Federation associate professional teaching status that was earned in 2017.

Sapsford has been teaching the golf class for seven years by providing on sight video critiques of his student’s golf swings.

“It is perhaps my most enjoyable class that I teach and we regularly get almost too many students,” said Sapsford.

The class has grown in numbers over the years from what used to consist of 15 to 20 students to now hav-

ing a total of 35 participants. These participants range in age, experience and origin. International students, parents and young golfers participate in the hour and a half sessions held at the Las Positas Golf Course driving range.

As an adult student, I’d love to have more sports teams to participate in and having a golf team would push LPC to the next level as a community college.

— Stefanie S.

Sapsford has been pushing for a golf team at Las Positas for many years and is an advocate for a team being established due to the potential opportunities it presents for the diverse group of students he has worked with.

“I believe golf is a sport where a lot of business contacts and relationships are built,” said Sapsford. “I often work with students at Las Positas who are from less affluent backgrounds, so if we can provide an avenue for them to continue to play golf which could help them in future business relationships, that is a win-win.”

The majority of his students that participate in the golf club have shown promising signs in terms of overall skill.

“There’s a couple ladies in the class right now who would definitely make the team if we had a ladies golf team,” said Sapsford.

Many of the students favored the idea of a golf team for men or women on campus. They have mentioned how fun the class has been and what it has provided them as well as what a team would do for the college.

“As an adult student, I’d love to have more sports

teams to participate in and having a golf team would push LPC to the next level as a community college. It would provide students with more opportunities to show their talents in golf and feel more involved,” said golf student Stefanie S.

“Golf helps relieve anxiety, stress and depression,” said golf student Vennie Tam. “Golf is similar to other team sports as far as competition and being able to meet new friends. It can also help students grow and continue to play even at an older age.”

Bringing a team to campus would require a strong financial commitment by the college.

Las Positas Athletic Director James Giacomazzi shared some insight on how LPC evaluates student and community demand for sports teams.

“We would ask ourselves what would be the impact? Are we offering something that the community wants? And if so we have to look at that hard,” said Giacomazzi. “If there is a demand we try to meet that demand, if we have the facilities to do so.”

Las Positas water polo went through a similar process when being added to the campus. It started out as a club and eventually became an intercollegiate sport after the evaluation of student interest, proper facilities, accessible coaches and funding was completed.

One of the main ways that student interest is measured is through polls on the athletics website that ask incoming and current students what sports they are interested in. These polls get the ball rolling with regards to high demand for a particular sport and can lead to the beginning stages and consideration for expansion of athletics.

The closest team that has existed in proximity to Las Positas was the Chabot College men’s golf team that ended its final season in 2018 with a roster of 13. The team competed competitively in the California Community College Athletic Association’s Big-8 Conference.

The Big-8 conference still remains and includes the nearby Diablo Valley College golf team.

# Student developer spearheads future of makeup AI

By Lizzy Rager

Innovators in the makeup industry are located in Las Positas. A new app, called Sebela, uses augmented reality technology, similar to Snapchat or Instagram filters, to let users experiment with makeup looks and products without putting a single thing on their faces. “Sebela” derives from the Italian word, bella, meaning beautiful.

Las Positas computer science student Neal Conway essentially creates the cogs that operate Sebela. As one of Sebela’s cofounders, he is the back end web developer, putting “all the makeup looks on the database” and making sure “the app can grab that data successfully.” He has also done consulting work with the author of this article for The Express website.

Two others are working on Sebela. Co-founder Anh Thu Le, a business major with a concentration in Tech Entrepreneurship and Design at Babson College, helps attract investors, runs public relations and designs the app. Co-founder Lily Jiang, an Engineering with Computing major at the Olin College of Engineering, works on front-end development, coding the design of the website, domain pages and the subscription system.

“I do the server—you know, the ugly stuff that goes on in the background,” Conway said.

Le initially had the idea for the company in 2021 during the COVID-19 lockdown. A beginner in makeup herself, she imagined some way to make it more accessible.

“I was trying to learn how to do my makeup. After watching Youtube tutorials, I didn’t like the makeup look on me. I ended up wiping it off and spending an hour of my time” said Le.

“I was just driving and I was like, oh, imagine if I could see the makeup look on me before I watched the tutorial,” she continued.

There is nothing quite like this on the app store at the moment, making this app’s future promising.

“It’s such a simple idea, but nobody’s doing this right now. It feels like we’re doing something where we have our own niche, which makes me feel like we’ll be successful” Conway said.

Other makeup companies have tried to do the same augmented reality application with their products, but they did not have the same developer power so the programs shut down. While Instagram and Snapchat have some makeup filter looks, they differ in their smaller scope.

“It’s specifically dedicated to makeup. We go a lot more in depth on exactly how to recreate the look and it’s a lot higher quality,” Conway said.

Conway met Le and Jiang on a beauty-centered Discord channel. “We were talking about beauty routines, like getting our hair done and doing makeup.” Le and Jiang were looking for back end developers through the channel, and that’s when he hopped on the project.

Conway began coding when he was 12 years old on a Khan Academy JavaScript course. He was able to make games and view other people’s games people made and edit their projects.

“Oh my god, it was so much fun. I was

obsessed with that,” said Conway.

From there, he started to get into game development and learned game engines like Unity or Unreal, and general programming languages C# or C++ to help him code. In his junior year of high school he was hired as a code tutor at the Coder School in Pleasanton.

“That really just skyrocketed me, I guess my 10,000 hours moment. I fell in love with it again, because once I got hired there I felt like I had the ability to do whatever I wanted with the computer,”

“That’s when I really decided, oh, I want to do this for the rest of my life,” he said.

Through hackathons and coding competitions, he gradually got better. He worked at an internship building an app called “Alumesy,” a nonprofit online therapy service. He also led self-directed projects like a Minecraft Jojo’s Bizarre Adventures mod, which has 170,000 downloads at the moment, a book-reading contest app and a chess-simulator game, just to name a few. All of which allowed him to provide what Sebela was looking for developer-wise.

Currently, Sebela has a couple dozen makeup looks to choose from and plans to expand that number as it grows. According to Conway, once the app reaches 1,000 users, it will implement a subscription-based system. Soon, users will be able to buy the products they project on their face through offsite links. Alongside letting users see what makeup products could look like on their face, the filters have video tutorials sourced from Sebela’s youtube channel and other makeup youtube channels.

Every time someone clicks that link and buys a product, the company will make a percentage of those funds. They are deciding which vendor company to partner with at the moment.

“Sephora doesn’t really want to pay us that much, but Amazon is thinking of paying us 4% of what we sell,” Conway said about the prospective companies.

One future engagement they have is to turn the app into a social media,

“People (will) be able to comment on what looks good. We’ll also want (makeup) influencers to upload their own custom looks to the site,” Conway said

Conway, Le and Jiang haven’t been without assistance on the way. With the help of advisor Dian Yuan, co-founder of Indico Data Solutions and recently featured on Forbes 30 under 30 list, they’ve had an entrepreneurial one-up. Earning semi-finalist and finalist prizes through “Shark Tank-like” competitions, they’ve garnered thousands of investor dollars.

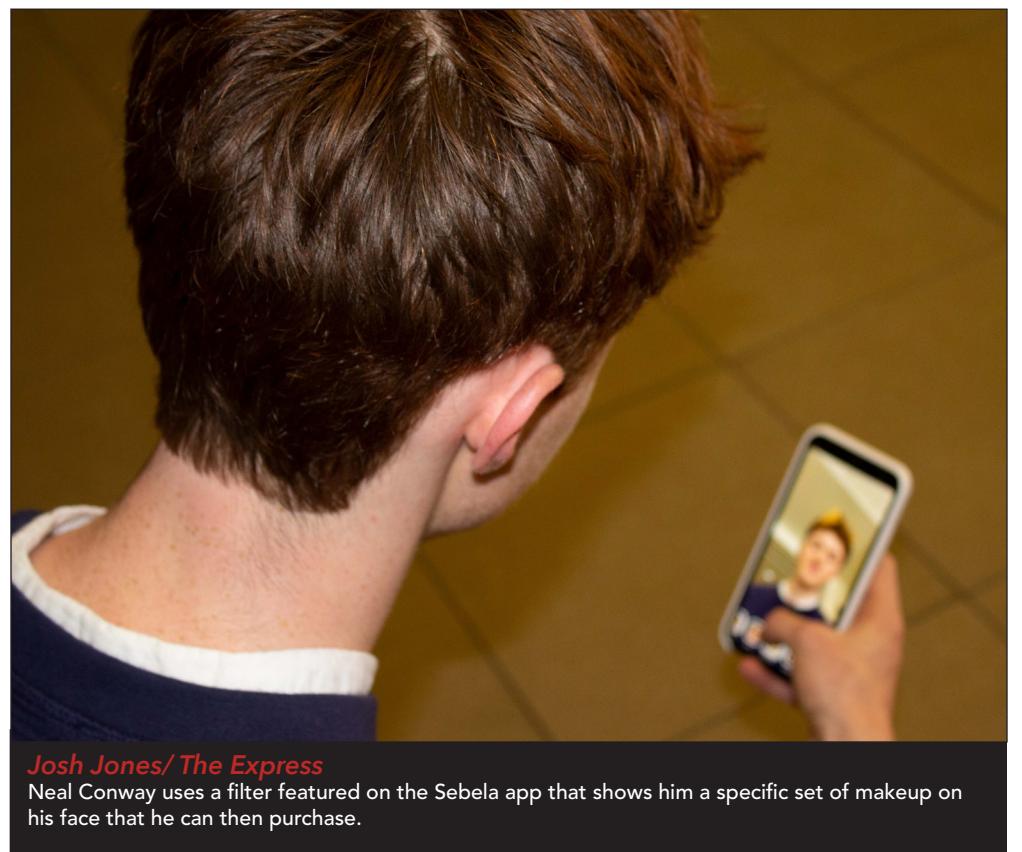
None of these earnings go into their pockets, though.

“We’re all just going to pump (the money) back into social media since all of us are working for free, doing this in our off time,” Conway said.

For full-time students, starting a company is no easy bidding.

Conway credited the Las Positas computer science program and Computer Science club for honing his skills,

“These professors are fantastic. Some



Josh Jones/ The Express

Neal Conway uses a filter featured on the Sebela app that shows him a specific set of makeup on his face that he can then purchase.

of them go and teach at SJSU too. There are really amazing high-level classes that I don’t have to pay a lot for,” Conway said.

“I was able to get into data science and work with API’s through (the club). A guest speaker came in and taught about modifying data using Python,” he said.

An API is an application programming interface which is essentially a connection between computers or computer programs. When you use Facebook or send an instant message, you are using an API. Python is a general programming language that emphasizes code readability. These are both important for Conway’s job, back-end development.

Head of the computer science department at Las Positas, Bill Komanetsky, offers more insight into the world of augmented reality.

“Augmented reality is the ability to take something digital and place it into the real world for you to view,” Komanetsky said.

An example of augmented reality is Pokemon Go, or Tesla’s self-driving cars. The idea of augmented reality being utilized in different industries is still very new.

“The idea of augmented reality came up and only one student out of forty even knew what I was talking about,” he said.

Komanetsky worries if kids are already distracted by their phones and the internet, augmented reality will make them even more distracted. While augmented reality technology is new and exciting, developers need to make sure their technology is “fully-cooked.”

Augmented reality has primarily been used in advertising, but has capabilities to go into public service sectors like medical and education industries. App-Developer Lily Jiang will be conducting research this summer on Apple’s low-level programming language for graphics, Metal, to improve the app’s accessibility to disabled communities.

“I’ll be looking into assistant tools for

blind people or visually impaired people who want to learn how to do makeup,” Jiang said.

“The idea is that the app will be able to look at what makeup you’ve applied to your face and then tell you if it’s uneven, or the foundations a little bit patchy,” she said. “Another feature we want to implement is having foundation be a party of the features, which requires a whole new set of technology” she continued.

“We want Sebela to be inclusive of helping people from all backgrounds and conditions that a lot of other makeup companies disregard,” Le said.

Le emphasized the importance of apps like Sebela, “There aren’t a lot of products in tech that solve a problem for women, so that really drives us as a team to constantly build a product that provides value to a lot of people.”

The three have plans to participate in the Babson College summer venture program, a 10-week experience for student entrepreneurs from Babson College, Olin College of Engineering and Wellesley College. Through the program, they’ll accelerate their start-ups’ progress with the help of expert mentors, dedicated advisors and an abundance of resources Babson’s Blank Center has to offer. The program only selects approximately 15 teams every summer, but Sebela made the cut. Not only do they get professional assistance, but each Babson Summer Venture team receives services with a market value of at least \$200 thousand.

“I am looking forward to being mentored by entrepreneurs that have years of experience that can help us grow Sebela,” Le said.

Spending time away from school this summer will let the team direct all of their attention toward Sebela’s progress. With the team’s continued grit and passion, Sebela looks to have great long-term potential.

# Vocal East and Chamber Choir storm the stage

By Lizzy Rager

The auditorium was dark and vibrating with energy. Slowly, the chamber choir group lined onto the stage behind their podiums, where they laid booklets with sheet music. The pianist, Jeremiah Trujillo, sat to the left of the stage at a grand piano. To begin, the chamber choir performed “God’s Great Dust Storm,” composed by Anna Bergheim and others, using the array of female and male voices in rising and falling dynamics to represent a cataclysmic event. A student at the far end banged a large drum.

The performance by the Las Positas choir program was its first live performance since the pandemic began. Spring semester classes for Chamber Choir and Vocal East prepared their semester’s worth of work in the Spring Vocal Ensembles Concert at the Las Positas Mertes Center. Despite some inexperience, the students’ hard work and grit showed through in their performances.

After performing “Hehlelooyuh” by James Furman, the group dedicated the song “Super Flumina Babylonis,” composed by Giovanni Perluigi da Palestrina, to the Ukrainians fighting for their independence. They also wore blue and gold for their performances, the color of Ukraine’s flags. “Super Flumina Babylonis” was based on a Psalm 136 or 137 in the King James Bible, a hymn expressing longing sung by Jews during their exile from Babylon.

They also performed “Sure on this Shining Night,” composed by Samuel Barber, and “Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord,” composed by Undine Moore.

“A Single Drop of the Ocean,” com-

posed by Undine Moor, was the most memorable performance of the evening. Director of Chamber Choir and Grammy-nominated conductor Ash Walker introduced the performance with the song’s message. Walker said, “He was all the ocean, and she was drowning in a single drop.” He dedicated the song to the relationship of East Vocal’s director Ian Brekke and Foothill’s choir director Katria Brekke.

The Chamber Choir students were able to meet composer Undine Moor for this performance, and their dedication to deliver its message shined through. The audience was beckoned by the waving motion with which the director guided the choir’s voices, which slowly faded like the tide receding into the ocean.

After intermission, the group Vocal East entered the stage. A large cello and drum set were accompanied by LPC professor Cindy Browne Rosefield, who teaches music theory and rock history classes, and applied programs student Ian Sylvester. If Chamber Choir represented the emotions that swell on a moonlit night, the curious and universal ponderings, Vocal East represented the breach of a new dawn, the glow of new prospects and the feeling of sunshine flooding the soul.

First, Vocal East performed “Summertime,” composed by Jescia Hoops. Singing “Ya-de-do,” the group’s voices frolicked on dandelion fields with an upbeat tempo.

Next, they performed “Strollin,” composed by Horace Silver.

Glowing pink cascaded across the stage. Jazzy piano bounced off the walls, and a voice followed. The vocal array was boun-



Image Courtesy of Ian Brekke

Performers take center position during their spring ensemble on April 21.

cy and unpredictable. During one piano solo, the group lined up and snapped to the beat. The song was Michael Brecker’s “African Skies,” which Brekke had wanted his classes to perform for years.

“They sing in a very complex harmony, so individual parts are very hard to learn,” Brekke said.

This year’s group had been talented enough to take on the challenge, and he said he “couldn’t be more proud.”

The next group, composed of members of Vocal East, was called the Early Birds. They are an entirely student-led group, with section leaders Lorenzo Robles and Danielle Perez. Taking time out of their busy schedules, they got together

once a week to practice. They performed “Distance,” composed by Emily King.

Vocal East finished the concert with performances of “Michelle,” composed by John Lennon, and “Ray’s Rockhouse,” composed by Ray Charles, with plenty of wonderful solo moments for the students.

Brekke said he is happy to “get live music back in our lives” with these long-awaited performances. If you are interested in taking choir classes and performing in concerts like this, there are voice classes MUS 44 in the summer, and MUS 23A, MUS 38, MUS 45 and MUS 46 in the fall.

# Local rappers have more room to grow

By Joel Martinez

@JOEL\_MARTINEZZ7

I was surprised to find out that Livermore has a decently big rap scene in terms of the number of artists. Because outreach can be difficult for smaller musicians and especially if they are from a small city few have heard of like Livermore, exposure is everything. Windmill TV, a now-defunct Livermore-based YouTube channel, promotes Bay Area music by highlighting these lesser-known individuals such as rapper Livermore Slick.

Before 2021, I was only familiar with Livermore artists who were publicized through Windmill TV. Once I started listening to Faht Mike and Livermore Slick, I was led down a path of discovery.

Being exposed to a number of different artists, my preference for sound has become more critical over the years. That said, Livermore Slick’s music isn’t for me due to the fact that the rap sound has changed over the years, and I wasn’t really exposed to his style of rap growing up because I never listened to rap like that until high school. Given his songs were created throughout the early 2010s, the sound seems inherently dated and has naturally fallen out of style.

Additionally, a rapper by the name of FamousK landed himself on my rap radar. Like Faht Mike, he has songs on the most popular West Coast rap page “Thizzler On The Roof” with songs featuring hot West Coast artists like Lil Slugg from Hayward, a once-popular Bay Area rapper



Image courtesy of @nicofasho's Instagram

Livermore rappers FahtMike (left) and Nicofasho (right) enjoying a drink with producer and director Nick Smith (middle).

that hit over a million views on songs like “S— Changed” and “22.” FamousK has managed to get more than 10,000 views on his songs “Broccoli” and “Pinocchio.”

Although he is based in a small city, the numbers he garners are pretty impressive. On top of that, he is one of the only Livermore artists to score features with hot

artists like Lil Slugg from Hayward, former SOB x RBE group member Lul G from Vallejo and late San Francisco rapper Lil Yase.

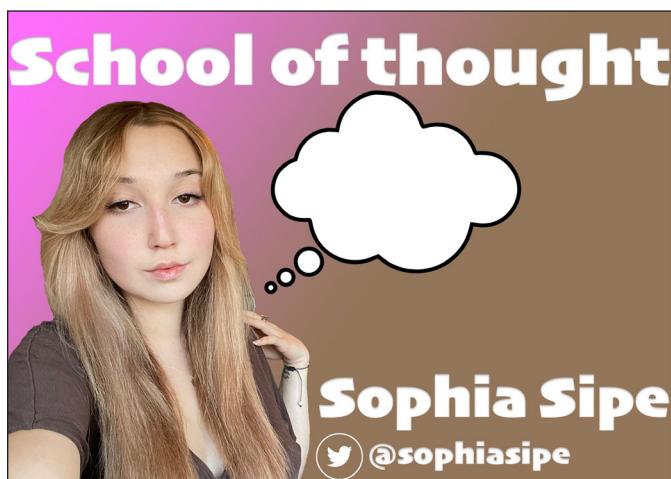
Overall, Livermore has a completely different sound in comparison to the rest of the West Coast. Analyzing the two is like comparing apples to oranges. While some Livermore artists use mainstream beats, there is a mix of other influences from outside areas such as Los Angeles and even Detroit, Mich., where their sound is similar to the West Coast sound.

I prefer when rappers in the area use West Coast beats because I am obsessed with West Coast rap, but I also like the fact that these artists use different beats from other sounds because it expands their fanbase. and it will get them more attention.

Personally, I was surprised to find out that Livermore had a rap scene. As a suburban town, you don’t expect anything interesting coming from it. It’s hard to see anything interesting coming from the Tri-Valley music scene other than legendary Bay Area rapper E-40 living in Danville.

All personal preference aside, the local talent in the Livermore rap scene makes me proud. The small-city aspect brings a uniqueness to their sound. With improvement and consistency, it’s possible that these artists will succeed in the industry.

## High school ruined my mental health but college replenished it



recall swallowing suicidal thoughts on an empty stomach five days a week. On top of that, my sleep schedule averaged about four hours per night, if I was lucky. Now, years later, I'm still trying to rebuild my life after almost making the rash decision to end it amid the stress of what was supposed to be four amazing years.

Some could make the argument that not all kids operated similarly to myself as a high schooler. To that, I applaud you. However, statistically, mentally stable high school students are the minority.

According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "More than 1 in 3 high school students had experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2019, a 40 percent increase since 2009." The CDC also noted that "In 2019, approximately 1 in 6 youth reported making a suicide plan in the past year, a 44% increase since 2009."

The data clearly suggests an increase in depression among teenagers across the country, yet children are still being labeled as hormonal and melodramatic. Even after outbursts, students are punished rather than questioned after obvious cries for help such as not completing assignments or poor attendance.

Realistically, the life of a present-day high school student is far-fetched and unsustainable in the long run. So, it's sensible that many students find themselves frustrated or exhausted.

The five-day school week seen in most public high

schools leaves no time for students to rest, let alone spend time with their family or have moments to themselves. Additionally, weekends have become counterproductive, given students work through Saturdays and Sundays.

Forcing children to give up most of their lives to an institution is demanding too much, yet they do it because time and time again their triggered behavior yields no response.

Expecting children to balance family, employment, education and friendships isn't preparation for adulthood. Rather, this booked and busy lifestyle is a setup for burn out.

On the flip side, college has a schedule that is individualized for each person. Students are able to make time for hobbies without sacrificing one aspect of their life for another. Although poor mental health persists even throughout higher education, differences could be made if people in positions of power caught mental illness or prevented it before progression.

Ultimately, changes in the American education system have been made in light of COVID-19. While more flexible classes are offered using hybrid models, courses both online and in-person, I worry about administrators regressing into old habits.

While some reshaping has transpired as a result of COVID-19, mental health is the next pandemic. It demands as much attention as all else.

Hundreds of young teenagers in one place for hours on end, in theory, has always sounded like a recipe for disaster. Take into account the ridiculously high number of students who consume blue raspberry smoke for breakfast and stress during snack time, there's just no light at the end of the tunnel for most of America's youth.

While there are various contributing factors that affect mental health, school administrators have become complacent in their willingness to help adolescents in ways that make a difference.

Looking back at the time I should've spent carefree; I

*Shoot.*



**The**

*Write.*



**Express**

*Design.*



**Newspaper**