

# #E PRESS

Oct. 24, 2022

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Vol. 34, Issue No. 2



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*Image courtesy of Gabriel Carver*

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# LPC remains a transfer-led campus after lockdown

By Gibran Beydoun

@GIBRAN580MSCM.

The time of learning during the pandemic lockdown has been past, but the aftermath it left for community colleges proves it cannot be ignored.

Transfer enrollments at community colleges have taken a deep dive in the first academic year of the pandemic and the trend continued to a second consecutive year.

“We showed students a different way to take their classes. We are down 22% in enrollment. Across the state, all California colleges, UCs and CSUs are down in enrollment,” Terrance Thompson said. Thompson is the coordinator of LPC’s Career and Transfer Center.

However, the number of students transferring out of Las Positas in the past 2 academic years have taken a different direction compared to other schools. Rather than signifi-

cant declines as experienced throughout the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of students transferring from LPC since the 2019-2020 school year has steadily increased.

“We are ranked number 5 in the state for transfer,” Thompson said.

According to LPC’s Office of Research Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, the number of transfer students at Las Positas have spiked upward after the first pandemic year by 199 students. In sum, 864 students transferred in the 2020-21 academic year compared to 665 in the 2019-20 academic year.

Though the 2019-20 academic year had fewer transfer students than the year after, it was the first noticeable decline in transfer students for the first time since 2012-13. Following the 543 transfers in 2011-12, there was a decline by 42 the following year.

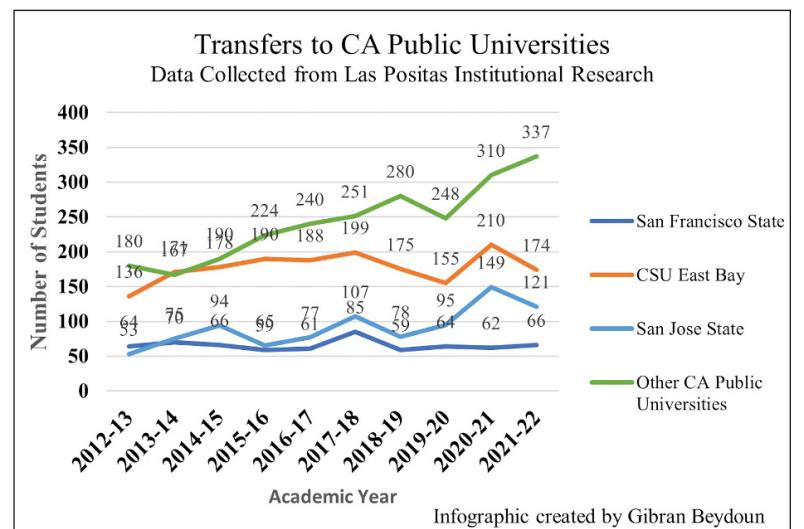
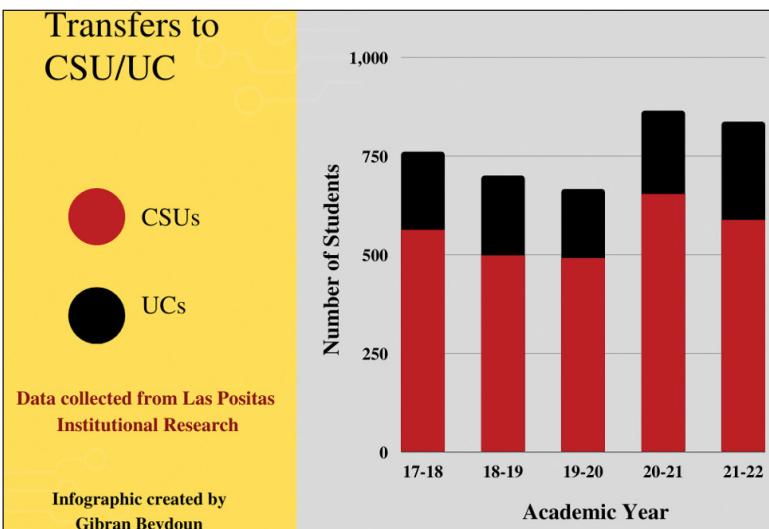
The upward trend complements the amount of students transferring to California

public universities outside of the Bay Area region, which has increased by 35% from 2019-20 to 2021-22.

Contrarily, some nearby California state universities and university of California campuses in the Bay Area have experienced a one-time spike in 2020-21 before falling in 2021-22. The exception being San Francisco State, which has experienced a steady amount of students entering from Las Positas.

The current transfer application window for CSUs and UCs has opened up since Oct. 1 and will be available for most campuses until Nov. 30. Some campuses may give extra time to apply for programs they have available for future student attendees.

If you’re planning to apply to a university, visit the transfer center for guidance. The website updates regularly with information about university representatives coming to LPC.



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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  
newsroom: Room 2409



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# LPC Mini-Market sweeps expectations

How the student life office went above and beyond with a California legislation



Lizzy Rager/Express

(Left) Gabriella Sanchez picks out feminine hygiene products. (Center) The Las Positas men's soccer team stocks up on supplies after practice. (Right) Computer science students deliberate on which hot sauce to pick.

By Lizzy Rager

@RAGERWRITER

The Las Positas mini-market, which opened on Oct. 3, provides free food, hygiene and cleaning supplies for all students and faculty on a daily basis. It's located in the student life office at the front of the 1600 building, with the word "welcome" plastered across the window. It's open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

The mini market sets out to help any and all students, regardless of how much 'they need it.' Josue Hernandez, the Program Coordinator of Student Life and Leadership, says if you can save five, ten, or fifteen dollars a week by using the market, it's a cost-saving resource for students.

Upon entering the student life office, students are greeted by a comfy environment complete with couches, candy jars, a mounted TV-screen where students can play an office-provided Nintendo switch and study spaces. Inside the office, to the left, is the new mini-market.

To use the market, all students need to do is sign in with their W identification number at the computer desk next to the entrance.

The mini-market is funded by the 2020 California Community Colleges legislation, AB132, which requires schools to bill some kind of basic needs and to employ a basic needs coordinator.

AB132 is a one-time fund worth \$200,000. The mini-market must use all these funds within the year, but it can roll over. These funds were budgeted toward building the mini-market and restocking supplies.

Most of the mini-market's supplies come from the Alameda County Food Bank, which also supplies Las Positas' monthly program, The Market. The Market gives out food and other supplies to the local community, not just students.

Since the food bank only gives out supplies monthly, the student life office must restock the mini-market to meet student demand. Shawn Taylor, Jeanne Wilson and Josue Hernandez utilize stores like Costco Business and Dollar Tree daily for supplies.

Director of Student Equity and Success, Shawn Taylor,

says, "we don't want to compete with the cafeteria and the bookstore, but we want to make sure people get what they need. We want to make sure they take foods you have to cook and instant food to try to be balanced."

According to Hernandez, while Las Positas had a pantry before, "students didn't want to come or they didn't feel like they could grab things."

In an attempt to resolve this issue, the pantry was renamed the mini-market to remove any stigma for students who may need supplies.

"I didn't want to use the traditional shelving. I wanted students to have the experience. I want them to feel like they're shopping...the stigma that 'I'm feeling bad taking something'--that's something we wanted to take out."

Other community colleges have pantries for students, but nothing quite at the level of Las Positas. When an accreditation team, a group that ensures an institution maintains educational standards, visited Las Positas, they wanted to steal the idea.

In the first week, Hernandez says he heard stories from students saying that their experiences at the mini-market were the first time they felt welcomed at Las Positas. He has also heard appraisals from staff about what a great resource the mini-market is for students.

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"Usually when students come and say, 'I just wanna look,' I tell them, 'I will guarantee you that you will take one thing.' And then they do."

— JOSUE HERNANDEZ

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Gabriella Sanchez, a student at LPC, has been using the market since opening. "I needed some hygiene and feminine products...It saved me some money," Sanchez said.

Taylor said one student's mother sent a four-page email thanking the mini-market for giving them food, toiletries and cleaning supplies. "I can't believe they did that at a

school," Taylor recalled from the email.

"The common things students have taken have been the basic things. That includes deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste and toilet paper," Hernandez said.

Projects like the mini-market can take several months to a year to finish because of how long the authorization process can take.

Hernandez said his goal was to complete the mini-market in one month.

His main argument for the swiftness he demanded was the urgent need for student resources, but there was no recorded data to support it. Now, with the market's daily log record showing that almost 100 students use the mini-market daily, Hernandez can prove it.

"It makes you feel like you accomplished something. The reaction is priceless. This is why I did this, this is why I care so much and this is why I was so passionate in doing it," Hernandez said.

Hernandez understood that a resource like the mini-market is super important to students because of his experience in foster care. He had to cook on a budget and felt shameful asking for food.

"For me to convert that into a positive, and to say this center is for those of me that were once hungry, but it's open for those who should not be fearful of grabbing anything that they want, that's the bottom line," Hernandez said.

In the future, the student life office wants to post more compost bins and outdoor areas on campus, contribute more produce items to the mini-market and integrate a career closet. The closet, set to open in January, will allow students to check out formal clothing for internships or job interviews, among other services.

Furthermore, a basic needs coordinator will be hired in November to manage the needs of the mini-market.

"This is open for every student and when I say every student, we're not looking at your income, this is for you. For the state to tell and to recognize this is a basic need across California, that speaks volumes, it's a right to have," Hernandez said.

# How apples and bananas became



## CLPCCD Trustee Luis Reynoso's LinkedIn posts causes concern among LGB

By Lizzy Rager

@RAGERWRITER

The image was of a sullen pale and bony person with bright purple hair, clothed in only a rainbow sash. Dark hair speckled their legs and chin, juxtaposed with bright red velour heels and lipstick. On top of their head is a bald spot to connect some sort of 1984-like contraption. An incubator is hooked into their hip, and phone-like devices are etched into their skin. To top it all off, the trans woman is cooking maggots in a stew. To this, Luis Reynoso, a voting trustee of Chabot and Las Positas colleges, had this to say:

"The decay of masculinity, are you surprised?"

Reynoso, a trustee since 2020, upset many with his recent activity on LinkedIn, an app used for professional networking. The derogatory illustration depicted above is only one of many harmful activities Reynoso made publicly available on his LinkedIn, posting anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-abortion rhetoric.

"This is a Banana. If you see an Apple, you're a Right Wing Extremist.

-Luis Reynoso

"This picture is commonly used as an Anti-Transgender joke. I am hoping you are not postin this type of content in a harmful anti-LGBTQ+ way."

-Kyle Johnson

"It's only harmful to common sense if you think the apple is a banana."

-Luis Reynoso

Public awareness of his activity was initiated by one particular post. About apples and bananas.

In late September, Reynoso posted a picture of an apple with text reading: "This is a Banana. If you see an Apple, you're a Right Wing Extremist." Little did Reynoso know, this post would be the initial spark to a reputation bomb.

Former LPC Student Government 2021-2022, Kyle Johnson, was updating his LinkedIn profile when he noticed Reynoso's post. Johnson, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, replied to the post:

Hi. I would like to note that this picture is commonly used as an Anti-Transgender joke. I am hoping that as a trustee for the Chabot Las Positas Community college school district, that you are not posting this type of content in a harmful anti-LGBTQ+ way.

Reynoso replied: It's only harmful to common sense if you think the apple is a banana.

That's when everything exploded.

Apart from his role as a trustee for the Chabot Las Positas Community College District, or CLPCCD, Reynoso is a visiting business professor at Notre Dame University and Devry University. He also formerly served on the Hayward Unified School District, or HUSD, board from 2002-2022. When he was elected CLPCCD trustee, Reynoso tried to serve on both CLPCCD and HUSD boards, refusing to step off either, until HUSD voted him off due to the conflict of interest.

Hayden Sidun, a second-year LPC student, replied to Reynoso's post: Harmful and insulting to the student bodies you were elected to lead.

Las Positas College attempts to create LGBTQ+-inclusive spaces. LPC has a Queer Straight Alliance Club, canvas options for preferred pronouns, an LGBTQ+ resource website and Smart Shops with the goal of raising awareness. Last Thursday, Las Positas raised a pride flag atop of the campus hill.

LPC President Dr. Dyrell Foster spoke at the flag raising. "Our college is outstanding because we provide an inclusive, welcoming, learning-centered equity-focused environment for our students...The flag is a symbol of our inclusivity, and it's a statement to our community that says 'you are welcomed here, you belong here, you can be your authentic self and your true self,'" Foster said.

According to Johnson, Reynoso did not appropriately respond to him and other commenters.

In the thread, Reynoso called out Sidun for instigating hate, ignoring common sense and promoting victimhood. He said to Sidun and repeated in his replies to other commenters: Politics is about unit-

ing not dividing.

Johnson brought the comment thread and post to the attention of Las Positas Chancellor Ronald Gerhard, who then talked to the trustee. It wasn't until then Reynoso acknowledged the intention of the post.

Reynoso clarified six comments into the thread: My posting above never mentioned any groups but rather

a simple picture about an apple and how it gets redefined by others

Johnson was not satisfied with this answer. He replied: if what you say is true, offer your support for the LGBTQ+ community. Validate trans identities.

The comment, up to the date of this article, has not been replied to by Reynoso, but he has liked replies defending his position.

On October 6, collaborating with Johnson, Chancellor Gerhard sent out a statement on "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Belonging" on the behalf of the CLPCCD. He stated the district strives "to create learning and work environments that reflect the communities we serve."

Gerhard disclosed that Reynoso would offer to have a conversation with the students in the thread to explain his intentions. According to Johnson, neither he nor the other students in the thread were contacted. Johnson also personally messaged Reynoso on LinkedIn.



Image Courtesy of CLPCCD District website

Luis Reynoso smiles for his headshot when he was voted for CLPCCD trustee in 2020.

"Our trustees are really 100% supportive of our LGBTQ+ community," Gerhard said.

When asked about Reynoso being in support of the community, he said, "I think I could...He expressed that the picture, in the intent of which he posted it, was different than how people perceived it"

Upon showing Gerhard the photo described at the beginning of the article, he said "he was not aware"

In a post from two weeks ago with big bold yellow letters reading "California now allows you to kill born-alive babies after failed abortions," Reynoso commented: Judgement day comes to all and God will not care too much about the semantics of "reproductive rights" or "it's my body my choice."

Two months ago, in a post depicting a group of Native Americans captioned "WHAT A BEAUTIFUL OLD PICTURE. THE BEAUTIFUL NATIVE AMERICANS. THESE SO CALLED SAVAGES SAW THE FUTURE AND WHAT WAS COMING." Reynoso replied: At a

# ...a slippery slope to homophobia

TQ+ community



Sophia Sipe/The Express

time when women were women and men were men.

Three months ago, in a post about a trans female athlete being nominated for NCAA “Women of the Year Award,” captioned, “All ‘real’ women need to just drop out of NCAA sports until this is remedied and all men in NCAA sports should support it by doing the same thing,” Reynoso replied: So, this is the future of women sports?

A post from a year ago, with a picture of George Orwell saying “Boy did I call it or what?” is captioned by Reynoso: I wonder what he would say today about our elections, indoctrination of wokeness, gender fluidity and suppression of free speech.

“(He’s) insinuating that respecting a student’s gender-neutral pronouns means that his religion is under attack, and further insinuating that we don’t have to respect the pronouns of our students,” -Kyle Johnson

Johnson calls Reynoso’s posts, “horrific alt-right memes.”

LPC Professor of Sociology and former Academic Senate President, Sarah Thompson, was active in spreading awareness of the trustee’s activity with faculty once Johnson shared the information with her. She is also serving on an advisory committee this semester to implement LGBTQ+ resolutions from spring 2021. These resolutions include having specific language in class syllabi and making chosen names and pronouns an easy process through Canvas.

“We have a grant from the state where we’re implementing all of these different changes, we’re going to make our landing page much more fleshed out, we’re going to make sure that we fund queer art and make sure the queer straight alliance has an opportunity to hold more events and do outreach,” Thompson said.

Thompson said if Reynoso had initially apologized and taken the post down, no issues would have ensued. She and others are calling for Reynoso’s censure, or a formal statement of disapproval, from the board.

A student or multiple students would need to file a complaint that Reynoso’s statements have personally affected them. Censure would require two members on the board of trustees to speak out.

Another option Thompson provided is to wait until the 2024 elections when Hayward district voters can

decide then to vote on the issue.

Thompson discusses the protection of free speech as a member serving a public institution.

“...It’s a privilege, but it’s also a responsibility, right? To speak out where other people who may share similar viewpoints don’t necessarily have that consequence-free environment,” Thompson said.

Johnson discredits Reynoso’s effectiveness as a board member for the time he was a student trustee in 2021-2022. He recalls Reynoso pushing for a motion to heavily arm security guards on campus to prevent school shootings, which was denied, and another motion to make the vaccine mandate on campuses a suggestion.

“I would say that his motions typically die because his viewpoint and his desires are not shared by the rest of the board,” Thompson said.

Johnson elaborates, “He loves to ignore the entire board meetings. He pretty much sits on his phone and scrolls on Facebook or whatever form of social media he’s on. How would I be able to tell that if I’m sitting in these board meetings? Ironically, the reflection of his glasses shows exactly what he’s doing.”

“Elected leaders like him get away with stuff like this all the time...I predict that he will remain as a board member until 2024,” Johnson said.

Reynoso was contacted for an interview and initially responded but did not follow up.

## New women's basketball coach brings passion to LPC

By Mason Newbould

@MASON\_NEWBIE

Caleb Theodore has taken the reins of the women's basketball team for the Las Positas Hawks. This is Theodore's first year as a head coach, but his experience in the sport more than affirms his claim to the position. Just three years ago, Theodore was flourishing overseas as a pro player. Now, he is using his wisdom to coach up-and-coming athletes.

Theodore, a Modesto native, attended Big Valley Christian College Prep from 2006-2010, where he made his mark on the area with high level play.

Caleb would move on to play collegiately at William Jessup University, where he graduated in 2016 with his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. While his passion for basketball is remarkable, education has never taken a backseat for coach Theodore.

"There is value in knowledge, and it lasts much longer than your knees will on the court," Theodore said.

After playing at William Jessup, Caleb landed a professional gig playing in Montenegro for team Tara Basket from 2019-2020. There, Theodore won league wide Newcomer of the month in Oct. 2019. This made Caleb the first graduate from Big Valley Christian College Prep to play basketball professionally.

There were no signs of stopping for Caleb, coming off a great season and preparing to play in Australia with hopes of earning a long-term spot. Unfortunately, Theodore wasn't immune to the life-altering consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"So I was heading to Australia as a player, just coming off a very good season in Montenegro. I had won Newcomer of the Month in October, and my agent and I were basically locked in, ready to go. March 18, 2020, was when I was supposed to leave. March 10, 2020, was when the international shutdown happened, and that's when I found out that many places weren't welcoming outsiders because of the state of the world at that time," Theodore said.

He continued, "I immediately knew that if I couldn't play anymore, my backup plan was using my mind, so I had to go back to school to get my Master's... So was I expecting the abrupt shift to happen as fast as it did? No. But just like anything else in life, you can never really time it."

From there, it would be a slow grind. Theodore didn't just jump from pro-hooper to head coach. Prior to coaching full-time, Theodore served as a graduate assistant at the University of the Pacific and then as an assistant coach at California State East Bay.

Theodore credits his coaching prowess to working under people like Coach Bradley Davis at the University of the Pacific and Coach Shanelle Styres at California State East Bay, who now coaches at California Polytechnic State University.

"That, as a coach, taught me and educated me on a lot of things. Being able to work with high-level players and minds made a big difference for me,"

-Caleb Theodore

He continued, "Being a head coach demands more responsibility from you. As a graduate assistant, I had more of an operational role on the staff. It's different when you have a job as a head coach. You're responsible for every single person that wears a jersey and represents the school. You're responsible for the coaches you hire and ensuring that you get everything done according to your higher-ups. So it's just way more responsibility."

Theodore earned his master's degree in Coaching and Athletic Administration just one year ago, but he didn't stop there. Now, he is working towards his second master's degree from Concordia University Irvine in Exercise Science. If all of that wasn't enough, he has also dived into a Ph.D. candidacy program at the United States Sports Academy for a doctoral degree in Sports Management.

Theodore has high hopes for his inaugural season as a head coach. "Everybody's calling it a start-up year, and they're writing it off as that, but we have a special group of girls here. When they all put it together, they can do a lot of great things, and I do think they can make an impact on this league," Theodore said.

Both college educated and incredibly savvy in his field of expertise, Theodore will use those resources as the season unveils. His journey will begin on Nov. 2, when his squad will take on San Jose City College for their first regular season game.



Image courtesy of Gabriel Carver  
Caleb Theodore poses for an on-campus photoshoot on Oct. 5, 2022.

### HAWK SQUAWK

#### Women's Soccer

In October, women's soccer obtained 1 win, 1 loss and 1 tie, accumulating 4 conference points thus far.

Alyssa Fitting and Cebrina Chagoya were top scorers, garnering a total of four goals.

#### Men's Soccer

In October, men's soccer won 1 game and lost 4 others.

Christian Neves and Rylan Stowell were top scorers, garnering a total of 2 goals.

#### Women's Volleyball

In October, women's volleyball won their first game after 12 consecutive losses.

Rachel Dayton scored 49 points and Sophia Kim scored 31 points, becoming the top scorers of the month.

#### Men's Waterpolo

In October, men's waterpolo won 4 matches and lost 2.

Ross Brown, Zachary Perry and Kyle Young were top scorers of the month.

# Filmmakers Association established at LPC



Image courtesy of Filmmakers Association

Filmmakers Association reviews their script prior to shooting a student film.

By Sagurika Ujjal

@SAGURIKAU

Lights, camera, action! LPC welcomes the Filmmakers Association to its plethora of clubs and extracurricular activities offered on campus this fall. The Filmmakers Association, distinct from the Film Club, provides students with the opportunity to write and produce original films with other individuals who share a similar passion. The club meets every Friday in room 713, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

“If someone comes in and they really want to make a film but they don’t have the means to make a film or they don’t have a crew, we want to be there for that person and say, ‘Hey, you know what? All of us here can jump on and be your crew or if you need actors, we have connections,’” Jose Luis Peralta, President of the Filmmakers Association, said.

The Filmmakers Association focuses on the creation of films by students, utilizing resources provided by both students and the school. The process involves everything from pitching story ideas, screenwriting and compiling the sound and camera crew, to casting actors, location scouting, production and post-production.

Austin Coyne, a member of the Filmmakers Association, describes his experience participating in the club, “My favorite part of this club is that there’s a lot of people in this club with some experience in making movies and some others who maybe have a little less experience. I just think that it’s very helpful to learn.”

The club also lends its focus to teaching and instructing students in camera work or audio technology, enabling students to gain skills, knowledge and experience in new

avenues of film.

“We’re just trying to help people who want to get into other parts of it, too. Like, there’s lighting, there’s sound, there’s set design, all of that, so, we’re trying to help people get into those roles to see that there is more to filmmaking than just director, writer, cinematographer and actor. There is a whole community of different people who come together to make a film,” Peralta said.

The Filmmakers Association emphasizes the idea that no prior experience or skill is required to join the club.

Tony Alfaro, professor and advisor of the Filmmakers Association, states, “Sometimes people feel intimidated by coming to clubs like this, thinking that they haven’t made a film yet or they haven’t worked on a project so they might be nervous to join us, but there’s filmmakers from all levels. Some people join us who have never made anything or really watched many films, but as long as you show up with a passion to do something or to work on the project, everyone’s welcome.”

The club plans to enter more film festivals throughout the Bay Area, as well as host fundraising events and film events to exhibit films created by LPC students.

The Filmmakers Association also showcases LPC’s film department, with the intention that those interested in film can find the resources and support they need to make their ideas a reality.

Alfaro states, “Our films are our babies, so by coming together and creating a sense of family, we’re each supporting and helping raise each other’s projects until the end, when we can share them with the world.”

## EXPRESS YOURSELF What is your favorite Halloween movie?



“ Coraline ”

– Ameris Ames,  
Nursing



“ Monster House ”

– CJ Willard,  
Business



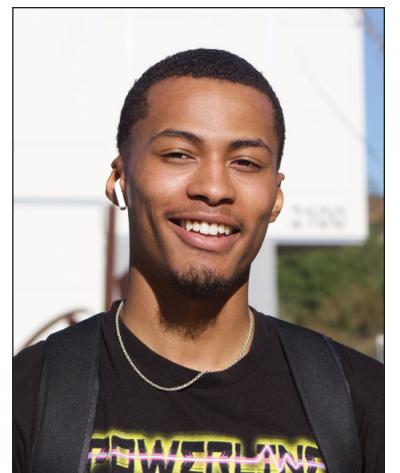
“ Scream ”

– Beberly Aldaraca,  
Political Science



“ Nightmare Before Christmas or Corpse Bride ”

– Aaliyah Vories,  
Psychology and Criminal Law



“ Any of the Conjurings ”

– Marshall Loft,  
Arts and Communication

THE EXPRESS  
**PODCAST NETWORK**  
 

# The school's large budget can't afford paintbrushes



Asia Alpher/Express

Marcello Deguzman Antonio, drawing a cow skull for an assignment in course 20623, Introduction to Drawing.

By Asia Alpher

@ASIAADANAE

Art transforms the mind and soul by allowing imaginations to run wild. It holds the ability to change the perception of the world through hard-hitting impact.

However, why are professors charging their already paying students for materials? Considering how Las Positas College has money for various events, the school should have enough money for art supplies. Either the

school needs to step up, or the professors should figure out a way to make this possible.

Class materials are important in order for students to perform successfully in a class that is required to graduate.

The art department at LPC is home to expressive students who aim to have the resources needed to produce their creations. But let's not be naive, materials cost money. The question is— who's paying?

In addition to paying tuition, art students fall at the hands of resource fees. Though this has prompted ques-

tions, especially considering the origin of the money that paid for the school's new buildings.

Dave Wagner, LPC's Art Instructor and Discipline Coordinator, provided a brief explanation.

"To create art, you need your art, and it is standard everywhere. There is no budget for it. It is similar to a textbook or a lab cost. And it is something that students are expected to pay for," Wagner said.

Realistically, this doesn't make sense. No budget? I don't buy it. There is plenty of money to go around especially in a place as thriving and profitable as the LPC.

That said, these so-called standard expenses can run students up to hundreds of dollars. According to art student Elani Scott, she paid \$212 on materials including brushes, paint and books depending on the course.

In spite of the costs, Scott maintains a positive disposition towards art. "Much of what is bought lasts far beyond the course," Scott said.

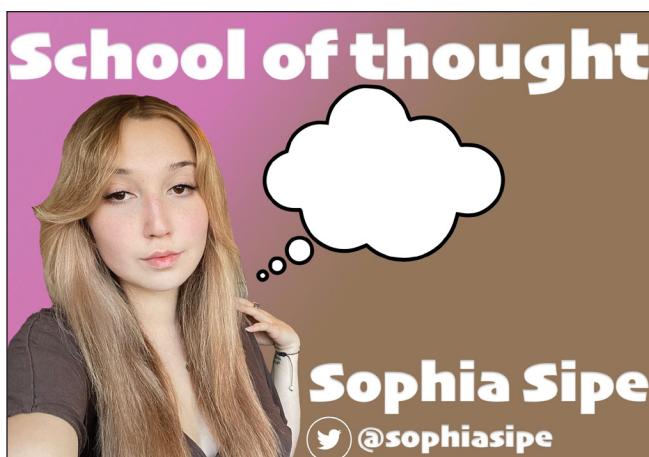
Scott continued, "With how dedicated I am to art, I know that I will find a way to make the expenses work no matter what... But if the school had enough money, I do think providing art supplies to students could be a great idea."

Although Scott's determination is admirable, having the ability to cover such costs is a privilege, not a given.

Ultimately, the district should reconsider how they distribute funding for the art department. Though professors may turn blind eyes to the enormous costs of materials, LPC should provide where it's due.

After all, the campus seems to have more than enough to cover the costs of nonnecessities. If they are as good as they say they are, they should be able to provide students with the means necessary to create extraordinary art.

# I've forgotten most of my childhood memories



By Sophia Sipe

@SOPHIASIPE

After a long day spent reading page after page in class, the time to abandon creaky desks and loud pencil sharpeners finally came. The clock waved its small hour hand at three, and immediately I made my way to my car and buckled in before heading home.

Although the freeway became more congested with each passing minute, I had no other option. It's too late to change routes. Cars are stopped in an endless line, yet upon glancing in the rearview mirror, a small vehicle sped up in the shoulder lane.

As the car raced near, it began to side sweep mirrors, taking others' car paint along with it. Soon enough, the crazy driver approached my car with force. Just as the car collided with mine, the beeps of my morning alarm bounced off of my bedroom walls. I woke up in a puddle of drool and confusion.

Like my dreams, most of my childhood memories feel incomplete. Though the two aren't correlated, they share a similar trait— lacking an ending. Like a word on the tip of my tongue, there are several years from my childhood that

feel seemingly familiar yet I don't remember them.

This pitiful experience has coined the name "a repressed memory." Studies from Northwestern Medicine show the brain tends to automatically hide or repress memories that are traumatic in an attempt to save itself, or cope, from the stress of recalling such moments.

It's like being blackout drunk for three years in a row. Sounds miserable, doesn't it? A black hole, seemingly ever-growing, is burned into the spot that's supposed to be memories of my precious adolescence.

Though ignorant bliss is lovely for a while, studies have shown repression to cause significant damage — including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and dissociative disorders.

According to Northwestern Medicine, "When patients are unable to remember their experiences, therapists can struggle to help them identify and treat the root cause of their symptoms." When these symptoms go untreated, they manifest into poor mental health.

Disappointingly so, repression is notoriously hard to resolve.

Since the harmful memories were formed during a specific state of mind, scientists argue accessing them requires being put in the same emotional state or mood. This process is known as "state-dependent learning."

While emotions are important, the environment is equally significant. Simply Psychology accredits this to "context-dependent learning," a theory that suggests physical surroundings aid memory formation.

When an environment changes, like moving households, it's harder to recall specific memories. To retrieve them, the context-dependent learning theory requires the same surroundings that the memories were made in.

However, recreating memories by being placed in the same environment is hardly a considerable option. No sane person wants to roleplay traumatic arguments with their parents. In the case that they do, people, noises and conversations must be strikingly similar in order to retrieve forgotten memories.

Though even in the same surroundings and mental

state, the American Psychological Association deems recovered memories a rare phenomenon.

Oftentimes, I grapple with the early stages of my OCD that manifested in my elementary school years. I look to this time for an explanation of how my current habits and obsessions were formed and, more importantly, why they've formed.

Despite not knowing for certain, some negative experiences in my pre-teen years regarding my at-times dysfunctional family would be textbook breeding grounds for repression. I credit those experiences as the start of my mental downfall.

While I remember the beginnings of those experiences— the build up to arguments, and the anxiety I felt— I am stuck at a dead end. This has created a lot of self-doubt and internal questioning. When you feel like your brain can't do its job, it's hard to trust the things it tells you.

And so the cycle begins. I recall the start of a memory but the ending is hazy. For a second, I can see through the mental fog, for a glimpse of how it ends. Then at once, the clarity disappears and I question whether that was the real ending. There is something isolating and dark about not knowing how your past actually took place. It calls into question everything — your identity, your history, your value and your worth.

Such doubts about my own existence, in collaboration with my depressive episodes, have proven near fatal multiple times.

While memory repression is a fairly new concept, ties to repression and suicide are common. The Centre for Suicide Prevention states that "in extreme cases, (this) repression results in suicide — or self-murder."

Despite struggling to come to terms with the patches in my childhood, my mental health maintains a steady increase. In conjunction with anti-anxiety medication and dialectical behavioral therapy, a talk-therapy designed to regulate emotions, I have found a middle ground.

So I lay my head down to rest, with the hopes that I slip back into a realm that feels somewhat familiar to my childhood. There, at least I can narrate an ending.