

## LPC STRUGGLES WITH WASTE PROGRAMS

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# THE EXPRESS

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# LPC has issues with recycling and composting

## Campus leaders are proposing sustainable solutions with help of non-profit group

By Lizzy Rager

@RAGERWRITER

Las Positas College recycles and composts. But it's not perfect.

The college's trash hauler is Texas-based Waste Management, the leading waste company in America. Like most vendors, it doesn't sort the recycling and trash. It delivers LPC's waste to Republic Services, a landfill in Livermore. Republic Services, the second-largest waste company in the nation, does not have a trash sorter at its Vasco Road location, either.

Livermore Sanitation picks up recycling collected from designated recycling bins around campus. The sorting is up to whoever initially throws away their trash.

The school's custodial staff doesn't sort the recycling, due to bandwidth issues. So the school's recyclable products in trash are never recycled. In addition, LPC does not provide compost bins across campus or compost kitchen waste.

There are legal implications for not having recycling or composting programs at an institution like Las Positas, but enforcement of these laws is up to the strictness of the corresponding jurisdictions. According to Assembly Bill 341, passed in 2012, commercial businesses and public entities producing four yards of solid waste or more per week must arrange recycling services.

Senate Bill 1383, passed in 2022, requires educational institutes to recycle organic materials. The 3300 building composts green waste, according to horticulture professor Thomas Fuller. Green waste is any organic waste that can be recycled like grass clippings, leaves or kitchen waste. Walter Blevins, the director of maintenance and operations (M&O), says groundskeeping makes piles of grass clippings and reuses the material.

Blevins, who has worked at LPC since 2015, said the college is not out of compliance with these laws because of the campus recycling bins and composting piles.

Although Las Positas used to sort its own recycling, the college has not arranged for a new sorting program since it was retired in 2014. As there is no formalized recycling coordinator at this moment, no one is at the head of managing a recycling program.

"I don't think they (LPC) care that much for the recycling on campus," Julianna Rasak, a member of the Students for Environmental Action Club said. "You look around the cafeteria,

you could just tell there's not much initiative to make it easier for sorting to be done."

However, some students and faculty have been working to improve LPC's waste practices.

In spring 2022, Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN) — a non-profit that helps colleges tackle unsustainable infrastructure — partnered with Las Positas and Chabot colleges to research how they'd achieve zero waste. The first stage of this project, funded by PLAN's Movement Building Fund, was to assess the campus waste streams.

Morgan Garner, PLAN fellow and former LPC climate intern, noticed discrepancies in the school's waste streams while interviewing department heads.

"We would start with asking them their view of how Las Positas did with trash, recycling," Garner said. "And then we asked specifically how the recycling or trash works in their different departments. Like, do they recycle? How do they recycle? Do they recycle certain goods?"

PLAN's assessment gave Las Positas an overall system score of 42.06% (out of 100%) for the management of surplus property and hard-to-recycle materials, and an overall score of 38.35% for the management of food and single-use materials.

The scoring was based on how well participants answered survey questions. If a program only recycled some items, they would earn some but not all of the possible points.

"What we found out," Garner said, "was that we don't actually recycle at Las Positas because we don't have anyone to sort through our recycling, so it gets contaminated from people not knowing how to sort it correctly."

Daniel Cearley, anthropology and drone studies professor, says bin standardization could be key to improve recycling and prevent contamination. Using multi-spectral drones and smartphones, Cearley and drone interns Garner and Garion Nicdao created a geographic information system map of trash receptacles across campus.

They found the campus has a total of 141 cans, with 12 different types ranging from cement receptacles to cigarette and aluminum receptacles. Of the receptacles, a third have trash, recyclables and paper, and 40% are trash only — which is too high of percentage, per Cearley.

He also noted that signage on the three-slot bins was faded, making it unclear where to sort trash. Kaitlin Dickinson, LPC's

climate coordinator and supervisor of PLAN's project, said recycling can vary by type of plastic and city rules, making it difficult for the campus to know what exactly to recycle.

Collected from bins across campus, the school's recycling is emptied into two three-yard mixed recycling bins at the top of campus. They are then cleared out weekly by a Livermore Sanitation hauler. The school also bales cardboard waste with a compactor and sells it to an outside vendor every six to eight months, but gets a very small reimbursement, said head of custodial Art Valencia.

But to get the necessary sorting would cost the college more money. The school doesn't do it now because M&O doesn't have the bandwidth for the task. According to Valencia, M&O has one custodian per 3,200 or 3,500 square-foot building and that has to mop, sanitize, refill supplies and empty trash receptacles. Adding sorting to their duties would be untenable.

"I wish that I could have a plan and say to do this," Valencia said.

Las Positas did sort its own recycling before 2014. Fuller was the former head of groundskeeping and a formalized recycling coordinator. LPC also dumped its own trash instead of servicing Waste Management and Livermore Sanitation.

The program Fuller established was kept up for a couple of years after his retirement 20 years ago, but eventually stopped as employees he trained left the college. No recycling coordinator has been appointed since. Fuller said whoever adopted the task would have to go above and beyond their normal duties since the school hasn't hired someone to focus on that aspect.

Fuller, now a horticulture professor for LPC, said contracting with these companies made the campus lose sight of important details.

"We were gathering information about recycling and reporting it to the state," Fuller said. "How many pounds of material was being recycled, plastics, glass, compost, landscape trimming and stuff like that."

This involved weighing all the materials that were recycled so the college could take advantage of a recycling rebate. One year, the college was reimbursed \$230,000. However, Fuller said, none of that money went back to the program. It went toward balancing the school's budget.

"We wanted to use \$11,000 to buy some better holding bins

for recycled material," Fuller said. "And the district manager said, 'Nah, can't do that.'"

"It becomes a lower priority if you do all the work and you don't get any of the rewards back," Fuller said.

Blevins said at the time, the college had a much larger staff and now the recycling rebate is no longer offered. As state incentives have diminished over the years, college climate solutions have geared toward help from non-profits.

In the second part of PLAN's project, conducted in fall 2022, PLAN fellow and LPC climate intern Avery Payne researched zero waste solutions based on the spring assessment.

One of its proposed solutions is standardizing bins and signage. This would cover bin color and shape for compost, recycling and landfill and possibly a liquid and non-perishable food collection. Payne said the current set up isn't standardized, instead different building to building. Blevins said moving the bins around campus would not be an issue for M&O.

The project also noted the LPC Earth Tub, a machine that breaks down organic material to make compost, has not been used since 2020. Valencia said M&O is in the process of relocating the machine closer to campus, as it's currently located where the viticulture building is under construction, and repairing it for use. It's currently inoperable.

A more difficult aspect to tackle will be getting a process for dealing with the cafeteria's compost food scraps. Valencia said proper training will be necessary plus student involvement. First, someone is needed to oversee the recycling, he said.

In March, Cearley and Dickinson applied for a three-year \$150,000 grant through Altamount Waste Management Company. The grant would help create a process for educating the campus about waste streams. They are waiting to be approved.

M&O is funded through the Chabot-Las Positas Community College district, not the college itself. Vice President of Administrative Services Annete Raichbart said applying for grants is a great way for M&O to afford sustainable solutions. Raichbart also said students could start their own sorting program, but it would be volunteer-based.

"Some of the stuff is a real big deal and has labor implications and cost implications," Blevins said. "But some of the things that we can do, we're moving forward."

# Is LPC safe from shooter threats?

By Brijae Boyd

@BBOYD\_EXPRESS

Who do you call, what do you do and are you prepared?

In light of school shooting incidents, like the recent Michigan State shooting in February or the Nashville Covenant shooting in March, worries continue to increase over the security of school campuses against mass acts of violence.

Las Positas is no exception to that threat of violence. Not more than a couple miles from the school, the Granada Bowl shooting in 2022 resulted in two deaths last year and surged Bay Area news circuits. Between 2020 and 2023, there were 136 instances of reported aggravated assaults, and four reported murders in Livermore, according to Livermore Crime Graphics.

Sean Prather, head of Las Positas' security, has worked at the college for five years. In order to give a comprehensive breakdown of the factors leading to these violent events, Prather based his opinions on a study by the Department of Education and the Secret Service. It examines active shooter incidents over the past 35 years.

"Statistically, these incidents happen more in suburban areas. This doesn't mean that schools in rural areas shouldn't focus on active shooter drills, or that suburban schools should practice more. All schools should be equally prepared," Prather said.

There have not been any drills since the campus reopened. Prather revealed the

security officers often test the operating system, sounding alarms at low volumes so as not to disturb students.

As for updates and improvements regarding general system maintenance, Prather explained they recently finished a campus-wide upgrade of every building's electrical locks. For the event of a shelter-in-place lockdown, they plan to install a panic button to lock all doors immediately.

Prather says the security office is focused on ensuring Las Positas' staff is up to date on safety training and shelter-in-place drills. Throughout the school year, Prather is scheduled to make presentations to different divisions of faculty. The staff is responsible for closing blinds, turning off lights, barricading doors and guiding students to where they need to be.

"It was interesting, I learned a lot about hunkering down. To use anything that is around me as a weapon. It was eye opening," Virginia Edwards, one of the resident library technicians said.

"We actually had to put our training into practice in 2017," referring to an incident where a suspicious person was reported near the science building.

In 2017, a student was spotted with what appeared to be a large gun hanging out of his backpack. This resulted in a hour-long campus lockdown until the student was found. The student explained that the weapon was a toy Nerf gun brought for an out-of-school activity

"It was scary. I remember we had to keep them (students) calm. One girl was really crying. You know your imagination goes wild in those situations," Edwards said.

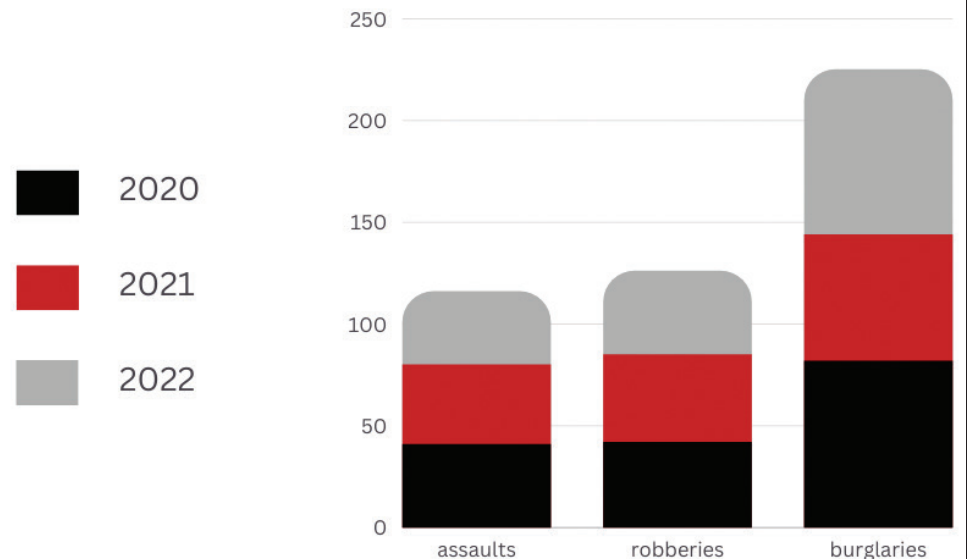
"I think that students should receive more training as well. It really came in handy," Edwards said.

A shelter-in-place drills are announced the same week they're scheduled. The security office notifies students through email and text. Shelter-in-place drills are also announced over the campus intercom five minutes before they take place.

Before the pandemic, drills were held once a semester. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, active drills came to a halt. Now that the campus is slowly settling to pre-pandemic conditions, the security office will resume holding drills once a semester. They will come back by the 2023 summer semester, once new hires are trained.

Campus security heavily relies on reports from students and staff. Prather says it is important that people report

## REPORTED CRIMES IN LIVERMORE FROM 2020-2022



Data taken from Livermore Police Department Crime Graphics  
Infographic by Brijae Boyd

actual threats to campus security, and not just suspicious activity. He details that the protocols for dealing with suspicious behavior involve calling mental health services. Actual threats would require the security office to coordinate with the Livermore Police Department.

Despite the fact that campus security depends heavily on student involvement

said.

Syed was there though, bright and early. It was an annual occurrence for the school to receive some sort of threat.

In terms of accessibility to information of Las Positas protocols and procedures, Prather says it is the responsibility of students to find it. The security office

It was scary. I remember we had to keep them calm. One girl was really crying. You know your imagination goes wild in those situations.

- VIRGINIA EDWARDS

when determining a threat, students don't know what they should do if an active shooter were on campus. When second-year data science major, Juliana Rasak, was asked what to do during a shelter-in-place emergency she said, "I would have no idea, I would probably wait to see what a teacher is doing or see if anyone knows what to do."

Ibraheem Syed, third year computer science major, is no stranger to the threats many campus' face. "When I went to Dublin High, there was a bomb threat by a former student my freshmen year. Even though the police didn't find a bomb, half of the school didn't come that day." Syed

assumes this generation is more aware of the dangers of mass violence than previous ones. However, the administration and security team may put too much reliance on students past drill experience, students say.

"It can lead to panic amongst students if students don't know what to do (in active shooter settings). One drill a semester would definitely help with that," Ali Holm, a senior Middle College student said.

If you see someone making an active threat to campus please notify campus security at (925) 424-1690.

### 34.6 Corrections

Express wants to clarify mistakes made in the Express 34.6 edition. In "Black students share their experience at Las Positas," we said that AB 705 was a barrier to a source. It has been changed online to reflect that it was helpful. In "Hawk Squawk" Ashley Sand's name was misspelled. In "Express Yourselfs," Ryan Sanchez was incorrectly identified as Neal O'Conbhui. In "Hawks triumph through trials," the photo of Jalen Patterson is incorrectly labeled as Evan Johnson. The accompanying stats were also Jordahn Johnson's, not Evan Johnsons.



# KICKING & STREAMING

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OPINION

## Where is an LPC track program?

By Gabriel Carver

@CUP1DCO

An eight-lane track lies on the Las Positas campus. An installation worth hundreds of thousands, only being used by the college running/jogging class.

In 2017, Las Positas traded its track and field program as well as the cross-country program to Chabot College for women's volleyball even though the programs had success under Kyle Robinson, the previous Las Positas coach for cross-country.

"I just remembered it being really good. I remember the coach was really good," James Giacomazzi, Las Positas athletic director, said.

With athletes like Jason Intravaia, who ran 8,000 meters in 24:41, which is a 4:58 each mile, and Janae Mayfield, who ran 6,000 meters in 24:20, 6:32 each mile, the program proved to foster burgeoning athletes.

"He was teaching at Chabot, and he was doing a lot of work on that side. So that's when they brought cross country to Chabot," Giacomazzi said in reference to why the schools traded sports. Other reasons were detailed in a memo by the former Athletic Director Amir Law to the LPC Academic Senate in 2018. They included the preferences of students at the campuses and cost savings.

Even though the program had its success,

it seemed Las Positas did not want to gamble on keeping the program and hiring a new coach.

As of 2023, it was like the program never existed. Most students on campus didn't know there used to be a program.

Liliana Vela is a student in the running/jogging class that meets on the track every Tuesday and Thursday.

"I actually did not know that," Vela said when asked if she knew about the previous cross-country program.

"It's honestly a coping mechanism and I find it fun," Vela said. The act of running is a common way to help get rid of stress as well as something that can bring you positive endorphins, according to the National Institutes of Health. The benefits occur to anyone, whether someone is new to running or a veteran at it.

Running students in the class expressed an interest in competing in cross-country. The class had about six people with only two having any prior running experience.

"I feel like that'd be something I'd be interested in," Vela said, "Yeah, of course," said Cara Lee, in the running class.

A revival to the cross country and track team could offer more opportunities for student athletes at Las Positas. Colleges fight for the ability to get a track and field while the Las Positas track collects dust.



GABRIEL CARVER/THE EXPRESS

Cara Lee works on her strides during a running and jogging class on April 11 at the LPC track.

## HAWK SQUAWK

### Swimming

At the Hawk Invitational swim meet, March 31 to April 1, LPC finished with 11 victories and five meet records.

#### MEN'S TEAM

Ross Brown placed first in the 1650 freestyle (16:50.43). Marcu Holunga was first in the 500 freestyle (4:45.72). Zach Zauhar-Kurr had meet records in the 400 IM (4:03.94), 100 breaststroke (57.89), 50 breaststroke (26.85) and 200 breaststroke (2:05.22). Ryan Ridosko won the 100 IM (54.36). Steve Ragatz was first in the 50 backstroke (28.21).

The Hawks got second in the 200 medley relay (1:39.41) and the 200 free relay (1:27.89). They also got second in the 400 medley relay (3:36.46) and the 400 free relay (3:13.13).

#### WOMEN'S TEAM

Ashley Sand took first in the 100 breaststroke (1:08.33). She also earned meet records in the 50 breaststroke (30.81) and 200 breaststroke (2:28.45). Sam Dorn took first in the 1650 freestyle (9:04.14).

### Diving

Three, possibly four, divers are headed to state finals at East Los Angeles College in May. Ryan Clark, Zachary Perry and Steve Ragatz are set to go to the finals, with Zach Ulrich as an alternate.

## Basketball Hawks reach new heights

### Monique Cavness gets All-American nod, Jordahn Johnson makes All-State again

By CJ Flores

@CJ\_MCANFORES

The bright spot of the Hawks' women's basketball season got even brighter. Monique Cavness was recognized as one of the best women's junior college players in the nation after leading the state in rebounding.

The Women's Basketball Coaches Association, or WBCA, named Cavness as one of 25 players across the nation, making her the first player in Las Positas College history to make the list. The WBCA named 10 players to its 2023 All-America team. Cavness, who averaged 14 points and 17.8 rebounds every game, was one of the 15 players named Honorable Mention.

"When you grab hold of an opportunity every chance you get, you can make history," women's basketball coach Caleb Theodore said on the Las Positas Athletics website. "Las Positas College couldn't be more proud."

Men's basketball star Jordahn Johnson also received high honors. The California Community College Men's Basketball Coaches Association named Johnson as one of 24 players to its All-State team. Johnson was also named first-team All-Coast Conference.

This is his second consecutive season making the All-State team.

Johnson averaged 18 points and 11.6 rebounds as the men's basketball team fell one win shy of back-to-back trips to the state tournament. Johnson, as the defensive anchor, also totaled 55 blocks.

"Jordahn is so physical," Hawks' guard Isaiah Victor said. "It feels like he doesn't care about his body because he's unafraid to put himself in the action."

Johnson's days with the Hawks are over. He is expecting to sign with a four-year school, and has already received scholarship offers from Cal State Dominguez and Humboldt State. But Cavness is expected to return next year.

The freshman forward solidified herself as the anchor of the Hawks' revitalized program, which returned to action this season for the first time since before the pandemic. Las Positas went 3-24 this season, the worst record since the program debuted in 2012-13.

While wins came hard for the Hawks, they found the centerpiece for next season in Cavness.



BRIJAE BOYD/THE EXPRESS

Monique Cavness, No. 22, keeps the ball away from the opposing team on Feb. 8, 2023. Cavness contributed 12-points to this game against Chabot college.



BRIJAE BOYD/THE EXPRESS

Sophomore Jordahn Johnson, No. 32, plays in a no-spectator game against Cañada College on Feb. 1, 2023. Johnson secured the Hawk's 13-point lead that won the game.

# Swimming savant sets record breaststroke times

By Gabriel Carver

@CUP1DCO

You can always find sand near water. This is especially true for Ashley Sand, the swimming Hawks returning star in breaststroke.

Sand continues to break new water, and records, in her second year on the swim team. Sand is not new to success, ranking ninth nationally in both 100-yard and 200-yard breaststroke in 2022. This year, she is finishing first place in most of her events.

At the most recent Hawk Invitational on March 31 to April 1, Sand put together a total of three first-place finishes. Her specific events were the 100-yard breaststroke (1:08.33), the 50-yard breaststroke (30.81) and the 200-yard breaststroke (2:28.45).

Sand is no rookie to this sport. Her stellar performances can be traced back to her early years as she started swimming around the age of five. Both her parents are collegiate swimmers, and they wanted the same for their daughter.

"My dad actually started a club swim team in Hayward, so I have been swimming on that year-round competitively since I was little," Sand said.

With her overall experience and history of competitive ability, she tends to have a level head when entering races.

"Doing well in our conference and Northern California definitely gives me some confidence going into our bigger

meets that have a lot more swimmers," Sand said.

Many can see this confidence in her performances as last year, she had two top-five finishes in state. Jason Craighead, the Las Positas swim and dive team coach, has been making sure Sand is working harder to place higher.

"We've just stepped everything up. Everything is more difficult, more challenging, longer," Craighead said.

Sand has made sure, even with the ramp up in training and faster performances, that she keeps her mind calm and collected. She's also making sure her team is in a place to succeed and get better. Since she has been swimming for years, she is familiar with the pressures of competitive swim, physically and mentally.

"Visualizing my races before is really important. When I'm at the meet, I'll be listening to music, or I just try to stay focused. It usually gets me through it," Sand said.

Sand is not just thinking about her own races. She is also hoping for the best team performance.

"She's a leader in practice," Craighead said. "She's always aware of where we are at in a set and helping the others, making sure they are on task and doing the right thing at the same time."

"I hope my performances would gain points for my team. I hope my teammates can be happy with that," Sand said.



ALAN LEWIS/THE EXPRESS

LPC swimmer Ashley Sand swims breaststroke during a race at the Hawk Invitational on April 1, 2023. She is ranked nationally in 100-yard and 200-yard breaststroke, and she has won first place multiple times at this event.

Sand has built herself quite the resume over this 2023 season. She obtained meet records at the Hawk Invitational and has a total of 12 top-three finishes this year, and the season is not over.

Last season, Craighead had Sand focus more on team placement, making her race in relays. This year he has a different approach, "I'm trying to allow them to really enjoy her second year at states and be able to showcase and highlight themselves," he said.

"This year I'm hoping to place even higher. Right now I'm ranked 2nd for 100 and 200 breaststroke. I'm hoping to keep

that," Sand said.

Her eyes are set on better placements than last year and her work so far this season is setting, her up each meet to do better and better. The season is coming to a close in the next month, and Sand wants to make her name well-known at Las Positas.

"My goal was to just set records. I have three, so I'm hoping I can beat my two from last year," Sand said.

Ashley Sand has already written her name into the school's history and looks to compete against the best soon at the state meet. At Las Positas, Sand is only beginning her legacy.

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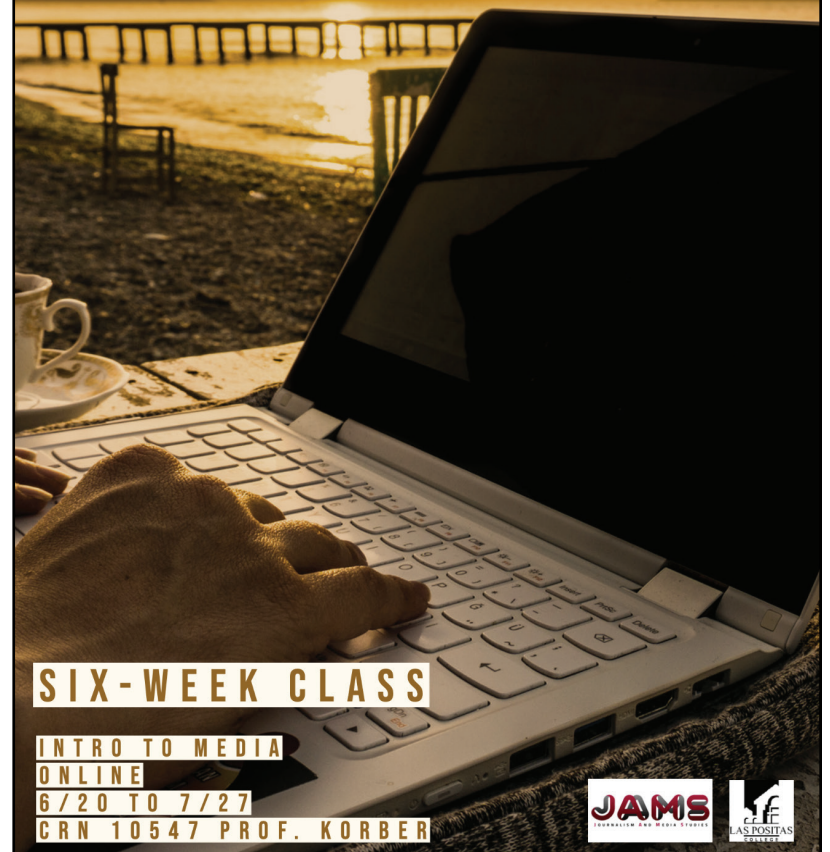
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GO HAWKS!



## STUDY MEDIA THIS SUMMER



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# Pursuing dreams from Nigeria to Livermore

## A student travels 8,000 miles to study at LPC as one stop on her journey

By Georgia Whiting

@GWHITING\_

Securely strapped into the window seat of a United Airlines flight, Fatimah Mohammad wiped the remnants of tears left on her cheeks. It wasn't her first flight to the States. But it was much different from all her other visits. This time, in October of 2021, she'd make the 8,000 mile journey across the Atlantic Ocean alone.

"I cried in the airport with my mom," she said. "But that was it, like, missing my family. I was OK. I was ready to let go."

Excitement blended with sadness as she flew 36,000 feet in the air, headed toward a new life but not quite a new home. Fatimah gazed out the window and was comforted by the sea of clouds in her view. They were soft and fluffy, as they would be in a dream.

But she wasn't dreaming. She was doing this. Changing her stars. Off to forge the life she imagined.

Like most young adults, Fatimah carries the weight of her parents' expectations. But unlike so many her age, she isn't governed by them. Instead, her steps are dictated by the intentions she has for herself and how she wants her own story to unfold. Completing her bachelor's degree online. Not even bothering to earn a master's degree. Becoming a flight attendant.

Leaving home was always expected of Fatimah. In Nigeria, such is the norm. In what is known as a brain drain, successful children maximize their potential in colleges outside their home nation, most commonly in Europe or America. Fatimah took her talents to the East Bay.

On the surface, Fatimah may not seem to have much in common with the students here. This Naija girl with mocha skin, wide eyes and short curly hair doesn't fit neatly into this template of suburbia. But what's inside of her, driving her, is similar to many students. The pressure of parental approval. The yearning for autonomy. The ambition to take risks.

"I just want something different," she said. "Something exciting, because I don't want the adventurous person in me to just die."

Fatimah was born in Pleasanton. But she'd lived her entire life in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. Her family is of the Hausa tribe, one of the three main tribes in Nigeria, and they practice Islam. She is the youngest of three children born to her mother, Bilkisu, and her father, Nuru — and a momma's girl, through and through. Her personality is different from her brother, Akram, and sister, Khadeejah.

"She's very focused," her mother said. "And I feel she knows what she wants ... She's more sensitive than her siblings. And they're similar in the sense that they are all very nice and quite easy to live with."

With an ever-changing mind, Fatimah set her sights on journalism. Yet, that is but a stop on her journey, an interest to pursue while she works toward her passion. She isn't sure what exactly she will do. She has ideas, but new ones come. One thing she was sure about was moving to the United



GEORGIA WHITING/THE EXPRESS

Fatimah Mohammad prepares for work on April 17, 2023 in her apartment in Livermore, CA. The Las Positas student works at a Starbucks close to the campus.

States. Her siblings went to college in England, but Fatimah knew early on that college for her was never going to be about following in her siblings' footsteps. She was creating her own.

"I was so sick of Nigeria," she said. "I wanted to get out of there as fast as possible. So once we were done with our final exams, I was like, book me a flight."

Bilkisu and Nuru Mohammad expected what most parents do — that their child graduates from high school and pursues higher education. What's unique about her situation, though, is the higher education part of this parenting equation is expected to happen outside of Nigeria.

After rejections from four-year universities, Las Positas became her top option. She was informed of this esteemed community college, ranked No.1 in California this year, by her mother's best friend.

Her first few months at LPC, last fall, were spent with her mom's best friend, Rahanat Abubakar, who lives in Dublin and has known Fatimah her whole life. Her mom then joined her in January. Together they tackled her second semester in col-

lege.

It wasn't the easiest of beginnings.

"She had to struggle," her mother said. "But after a year, I notice she's gotten to understand the system now. In Nigeria, they're not so used to deadlines, where they give you things to do on your own."

She doesn't have her community of support and comfort here. It can be difficult to find your place. Fatimah's mother only had a year to spend in the East Bay. She returned to Nigeria in December.

"I miss her a lot," Bilkisu said. "But, I mean, she has to go. I have to leave her to herself. I have to live my own life as well."

Fatimah moved into her one-room apartment in the heart of Livermore. December of 2022, over a year after she booked the flight to a new life, she was finally on her own. She isn't throwing parties or trying to find them. A good time within her hollow halls only exists over the phone. This loneliness is choreographed.

"I could talk to people, you know. I feel like everyone already has friends. So it's like we can never reach that level, past class. It's not real friendship," Fatimah

said. "I'd rather just be at home, you know?"

Fatimah believes she is more suited for the online college route. The ASU online program offered through Starbucks is exactly what she desires. It will provide her the opportunity to get a degree from anywhere in the United States. It will give her independence, freedom and autonomy over her life. Fatimah has a loose idea of what she wants her future to look like. It may change and flux over the years, but the concept is key.

"I don't want this again. Like, I don't want to be in a place. Just go to work. Come do school online. I want to move somewhere, do school totally online and just be going to work and living my life," Fatimah said.

Suburban life is not made for Fatimah. She yearns for a life filled with adventure and travel. She doesn't want to be held down by one place. Instead, she pictures herself creating her life from 30,000 feet in the air.

For Fatimah, Nigeria wasn't home. Las Positas isn't home. Home isn't a place or a destination. It's with her family and those she loves. Her goal of flying all around the world stems from a sense of adventure. An added bonus would be building a life of many homes. Wherever she settles, maybe New York City or San Diego, Fatimah will have homes around the world.

It's hard not to feel any pressure in life, especially from your parents. Whether it's the simple things in life like cleaning your room or the bigger decisions you make, like where to go to college, there is always something or someone pushing you one way or another. Expectations are dictators ruling your steps and decisions. For Fatimah, the expectation to go abroad was not a light one.

"That's how every Nigerian child does it. If you're in Nigeria for university, then it's like, either your parents don't trust you, or they just can't afford to send you there. When you even go to university in Nigeria, they look at you weirdly, like you have to go abroad," she said.

With a year left to go at LPC, Fatimah is holding strong. She is independent, self-assured and working towards her dreams every day. And she has all the support in the world to do so.

"I just want her to follow her brain," Bilkisu said. "(My kids) have a lot of dreams. I always tell her, 'Don't give yourself limitations. Everything is attainable in life. It's all about your mindset. There is nothing you can't do.' When I tell her brother, 'The sky's the limit,' he says, 'No, the sky is no longer the limit. It's the beginning.' And that's what I tell her, too."

Fatimah is not following her siblings to the U.K. She isn't pursuing more than a bachelor's degree. She is doing what she wants. Her path is no longer dictated by the expectations of her parents — it is encouraged.

The sky is not the limit for Fatimah. It is only the beginning.

# 'Xanadu' was priciest LPC musical yet



LONDON JANSEN/THE EXPRESS

The actors perform an impressive line movement, March 16, 2023, Las Positas, Livermore, CA. Movements in unison or mirror give a similar look to a butterfly.



LONDON JANSEN/THE EXPRESS

Sonny finds Clio's roller skate, March 16, 2023, Las Positas, Livermore, CA. Similarly to "Cinderella," the shoe leads Sonny back to Clio.

## By Landon Jansen

@LANDONJENSEEN

"Xanadu" featured the largest crew and production cost of recent Las Positas productions.

Las Positas' latest musical was everything to be desired from "Xanadu": roller skating, Greek and '80s thematic crossovers and whimsical humor. These aspects were all interpreted very closely to the original intention with small adjustments or alterations.

The cast consisted of 16 actors, and the crew was similarly sized at around 16. The cast were all selected through a careful audition process conducted by director Dyan McBride. Professors Titian Lish and John Kelly were the producer and stage-crafter respectively, making the musical possible.

They were responsible for creating a successful musical all contained within the Black Box Theater, all within the small window of Jan. 17 to March 17.

The musical was so successful with this cast and crew that it quickly sold out all its shows.

The small stage was used to its very limit in stage and audience.

"I know we broke even, and for a theater I know that's pretty good. We may have even made a little money. Theater for the most part is about 40% of the show is from ticket sales. Grants and more are necessary to keep shows alive," McBride said.

Although the show was extremely successful, theater productions do not typically break even.

"Our biggest single expense is our live band, and we also have our professional set and costume designers, choreographer, costume and lighting rentals, and material for the set and costumes," Kelly said.

The theater program declined to comment on the exact cost of production.

McBride was tasked with interpreting the extensive, flamboyant and moving parody that was soon to become what Las Positas' knew as "Xanadu."

"You have to be able to articulate how you want the show to feel and look. You need to be able to articulate that to your cast, choreographer, (and more)," McBride said.

"I wanted this to look like my 12-year-olds bedroom just threw up, bright, fun and playful. The most important thing was to have fun, but we had to work on style because it was a parody."

McBride and the team at Las Positas achieved just that with a rainbow across the stage and retro arcade carpet wall paint, among the many intricacies across the stage.

The cast was set up to quickly learn from rehearsal and their practice tracks at home.

Miles Vetrovec was the male lead, playing Sonny Malone, and he spent hours at home on musical choreography, memorizing his lines and more.

"It's one of those things with a show. You learn everything when you are there, and then you go home and memorize it," Vetrovec said.

The cast, and the leads especially, spent around 15 hours a week in the theater

doing rehearsals, and spent additional time at home.

Roller skating, on the other hand, was learned on-campus.

"We stumbled and fell a few times during learning, but they made extra, double sure we had knee-pads, elbow-pads, wrist pads and helmets," Vetrovec said.

Las Positas' Black Box Theater is very tight, so the staff decided to limit the roller skaters to four people.

"Even then, with just those four, it was a lot. It was just a lot of people in the cast in that small space. There was even a bike at some point," Vetrovec said.

Despite this setback, the cast overcame the difficulties of skating in close-quarters, and used the stairs and second floor effectively for extra space.

"I cast all the people at the top singing the backup stuff. I expanded the chorus, which is not typically in the musical. We decided to build the sirens out a little bit. We did research and pulled all of the real sirens. We wanted to use them all as singers. Their costumes were all adorned with feathers (to better fit)," McBride said.

The sirens, in parallel to the cast's close companionship, became a bigger family of multiple sisters.

Despite the challenge of seeking a way to make the chorus stronger, McBride added new characters to the story to fit with the established themes and principles.

Kale Yunker played Hermes and Ligeia in "Xanadu," and he noticed a few setbacks as well.

"There was actually supposed to be a lot more fabric going on in the background, but a lot of the budget was put into it, and they didn't get enough, so they had to remake what they thought they wanted it to look like," Yunker said.

Another setback was utilizing a lighting trick to make characters on a wall "come alive."

"We had originally planned on using projection effects when the Muses were appearing and disappearing into the mural, and we realized midway through that it just wasn't going to work with the projectors we had available and where the set designer located the murals under the main platform. So we pivoted and used scrim fabric for the mural walls. Scrim can be either opaque or translucent depending on the angle of the light hitting it, so actors were able to appear and disappear," Kelly said.

"Xanadu" created a unique stage for the unique constraints of the small stage and nature of the mural.

Despite these setbacks in production, the Las Positas Theater deserves a lot of praise for their innovative, passionate and beautifully mastered musical performance.

"This is a great theater department. I love this place! This is the most fun I have had doing theater," Vetrovec said.

It's the people you are doing it with that really make it a repeatable and enjoyable experience."

## Could LPC be a fit for cannabis?



By Alan Lewis

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The rolling hills surrounding Las Positas campus aren't the only green students want to roll in.

As marijuana use continues to rise and dispensaries pop up in California, it seems that the commercialization of the drug is inevitable. As other Bay Area schools take initiative to introduce cannabis studies programs, Las Positas College should take suit. The college already hosts courses on horticulture, viticulture and business entrepreneurship. These courses could be adapted to the cannabis industry.

It's not like there's no market for jobs, either. In 2019, there were an estimated 500,000 jobs in the cannabis industry as more states legalize cannabis.

Operating a cannabis business, whether a grower or a distributor, is different from most other businesses. Most banks, credit cards and debit card providers are reluc-

tant to do business with cannabis businesses due to the federal law making cannabis illegal. This results in most cannabis businesses being cash only. Growers cannot get loans to purchase land or crops, dispensaries cannot get small business loans to start or expand the business.

As cannabis has been an underground industry until the law changed, there still is a stigma and fear about cannabis. Stigma like this can fuel policy that invites over taxation, lack of access, questionable laws and misinformation. Education can help.

Since cannabis is a unique business, education can be important to the grower or distributor. Las Positas College considered a cannabis program a few years ago. According to LPC horticulture Professor Tom Fuller LPC "did talk about this a couple of years ago."

"One of the Deans and myself even took a cannabis tour of various grow facilities in Sonoma County... I think such a course would be popular," Fuller said.

"However, I have concerns about security.

It seems that every month there is reported a crime regarding cannabis dispensaries or grow operations. The facilities that we toured are much more secure than ours."

LPC Dean Nan Ho said that LPC has no plans to start a cannabis program, but the horticulture program could develop related knowledge and skills.

Growing cannabis is similar to growing most other crops and plants that are cultivated. There are optimum soils for growing, the plants need large amounts of sunlight, proper temperatures to grow and water just as other plants.

Locally, Merritt College in Oakland, Oaksterdam University in Oakland and the City College of San Francisco teach classes on cannabis.

"Students have been very receptive to our classes, we actually doubled enrollment this semester from the first time we

ran our intro to cannabis production class and home cultivation class in the spring of 2022," Matthew Witemyre, professor of Horticulture at Merritt College said.

Witemyre said Merritt College doesn't have much concern over security with its program since they are growing hemp, which has a low concentration of THC and can't "get anyone high." The plants are still in a locked area, though.

There is a demand for more cannabis education based on other college experiences with increased enrollment in cannabis programs. With decreased enrollment since COVID-19, a cannabis program may help increase enrollment. Las Positas should again explore starting a cannabis program.

### EDITORIAL

## College's waste practices need major overhaul

Senate Bill 1383 beginning in 2022, requires homes, businesses and schools to compost food waste. It appears LPC ignores this California law with no apparent composting program on campus.

Per the LPC website, the reason that Las Positas does not recycle or compost is that it costs money. There are no details provided on how much money it would cost, yet the Chabot-Las Positas College District expects a \$2.7 million surplus in the 2022-23 budget. Some of the surplus funds could be used for recycling and composting.

In 2022, a Zero Waste Campus Assessment was conducted of the cam-

pus by the Post-Landfill Action Network to assess its waste management system. LPC scored 41.2% overall for zero waste. The report stated, "campus recycling is too contaminated with non-recyclable materials to be sent to a recycling facility and therefore almost all collected recycling on campus is sent to the landfill."

Recycling not only saves energy and water but also helps reduce global warming by reducing energy needed to make new material. However, in the US only 32% of recyclable material is recycled. We can do better.

The advantages of recycling are many: in savings of energy, water and reduction

of landfill space. One ton of recycling aluminum reduces energy use by 95% compared to making new aluminum. Per Stanford University, one ton of recycled aluminum saves 14,000 kilowatt hours (Kwh) of energy and 40 barrels of oil. This energy could power 7000 average homes. Recycling one ton of aluminum reduces landfill by 10 cubic yards.

Each ton of recycled paper saves 7000 gallons of water and 4,000 kilowatts. This is enough energy to power an average home for six months.

Recycling also reduces pollution and greenhouse gasses as less energy requires less fossil fuels to generate the energy.

About 60% of the electricity produced in the US is still generated by fossil fuels. A typical landfill uses about 600 acres of land, destroying natural habitats for wildlife.

Composting also helps reduce global warming as landfills emit methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Organic waste in landfills accounts for 20% of California's methane emissions which is a climate super pollutant 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Las Positas should recycle and compost in an effort to reduce its impact to the environment.

## EXPRESS YOURSELF

“What are some ways you limit your impact on the environment?”



“I'd say recycling water bottles and any drinks that I have. Also, I'm not littering. I use reusable dishes and commute, I try to carpool with my friends, so we don't have to waste that much gas.”

— Jonathan Santana  
Engineering



“I take an electric-hybrid vehicle to school and back. I tend to try my best to use as little electricity as possible. Once I actually have a chance to vote, I'll be trying to vote for environmentally friendly acts. I think that's probably the most I could do.”

— Marcu Holunga  
Biology



“I always separate my trash and my recycled waste. Every time I have a can or glass bottle, I put it in the can and glass bottle bin. I have an electric car, or I take public transportation when I can. For food, I try to use leftovers as much as I can.”

— Bella Marcotte  
Business



“My family always reuses old packaging from products like ice cream containers or salsa jars. We reuse everything that we can. I sometimes take the bus to school, and I prefer walking whenever I can. Whenever I'm hanging out with friends, I try to carpool.”

— Sonya Mengel  
Chemistry



“The biggest thing I do is I have my own water bottle that I use. I also pack my own lunches rather than trying to buy stuff on campus. Sometimes I ride my motorcycle to campus. It's a lot more fuel-friendly than a car.”

— Aaron Lim  
Fire Service Technology