

My friend Mo



LPC Jazz combo



The Vermin Occupying Campus

By Olivia Fitts

@OLIVIAFITTS2

Holiday functions – of the human variety – are an end-of-semester rite for LPC faculty. For the mice, festive leftovers act as trapless bait, ineffectually snaring mice not in black boxes, but in campus walls and ceilings.

Here is a group that does not belong at Las Positas College. A group so foul, to pity their collective meekness would be in poor taste. Diminutive stature and reclusive disposition notwithstanding, their campus presence alone is enough to produce immediate recoil. These social outcasts are being targeted with a poison hell-bent on their extinction.

Vermin. More specifically, mice.

Custodial lore has Las Positas' intermittent mouse emergence at every octennial. The last rodent barrage was 2016's ordeal. Eight years later, the college is reeling from winter break's outsized offensive. In both bombardments, an identical response from the staff and student body: disgust.

In a few words, a Maintenance and Operations (M&O) staff member, slated to remain anonymous, illustrated this infestation's scale.

"I've never seen this many mice. Period."

Then, as is now, M&O personnel retaliate accordingly. Theirs is a thankless crusade.

The black boxes scattered across campus – segregated housing units designated for the banes of LPC – are no longer viable deterrents. This latest mice migration to

Campus Hill Drive has overwhelmed indiscriminately.

Potential musophobia case and Las Positas President Dyrell Foster is well aware of the uninvited incursion.

"If I see a mouse, I'm running. I'm that guy."

This fear is, apparently, a trade-off for being well-stocked in the area of snacks.

"We're good about having food in our offices," Foster said. With staff largely absent during the winter break, hunger-panged mice were free to have "a party."

"Food is the big thing here," the M&O source said. "Faculty members will bring in food, and when (people are) not here for X amount of days, the mice will come."

Food is but one among several reasons for infestation. The recent construction of the 2100 building was a sure-fire mouse uprooter. Construction generally tends to do this. Cold weather invariably leaves mice desperate for warm refuge. The campus being surrounded by rolling, critter-lodging foothills doesn't exactly help the cause, either. Tack on the office provisions, and you've got a full-scale scourge.

"In my building (2500) alone, (I've caught) about 100 mice. And that's being conservative. It's just a wild mess," the source said bluntly.

With M&O's winter break absence, the mice were granted a near complete free-for-all. Something like "Ratatouille" meets "Flushed Away."

For mice, the school's equitable, indiscriminating philosophy doesn't apply. Things get serious when mice droppings come into play. The moment their feces and urine permeate carpet "or any kind of fabric," the source

explained, a scourge turns into a legitimate health issue. Diseases spread indirectly by mouse infestations include, but are not limited to: Hantavirus, Lyme disease, mpox and, um, plague.

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On the bright side, the M&O source is optimistic about their handling of the rodents, saying, "For me, I feel like it's under wraps."

Under wraps, under boxes and the cover of insulation, and perhaps even under children's toys is where one might find a mouse, living or dead. It's quite possible, then, that this assault's not over. Plague persists.

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CC enrollment tops 2 million in state

James Sevilla

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The masks are off. The cafeteria in the 1600 Building is again filled with students nibbling away at sandwiches and pizza, all the while focused on their screens. Outside tables are inhabited by students writing papers and calculating algebra, working peacefully in the fresh air. During peak hours, the quad is again bubbling: people in transit, pop-up events for students, and time-killers enjoying the landscaped scenery.

Four years ago, Las Positas College's idyllic campus was a ghost town, emptied out by COVID-19. But, lately, life is closer to normal than it's been in a while.

While Las Positas enrollment hasn't quite gotten back up to its pre-pandemic levels, it's surging nonetheless. The strategies that have been employed to replenish the classrooms are producing fruit.

According to EdSource, the Chancellor of California Community Colleges, Sonya Christian, announced on Feb. 21 that California Community Colleges experienced an increase of enrollment during the Fall 2023 semester. Across the state, enrollment has reached two million for the first time in half a decade. This statewide swell was felt at Las Positas, where registration has increased at a rate twice the pace of the state.

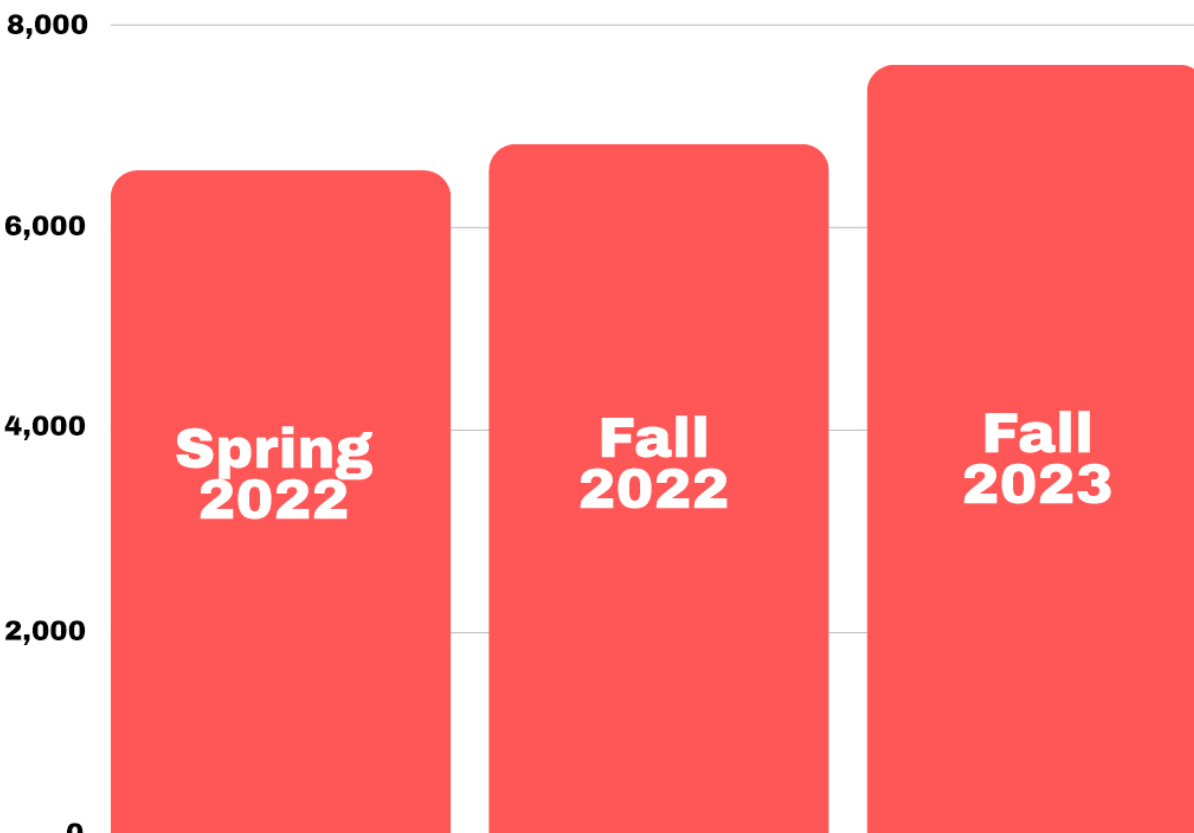
Christian identified the enrollment of traditionally underrepresented communities as a significant factor in last semester's increase.

"Some of our strongest enrollment has been from [historically marginalized] groups – Our Black students, our Latino students, students with disabilities, and students aged 35 and older," Christian said while addressing the state Assembly's budget subcommittee on education finance last month.

Nicole Smith, a Chief Economist and Research Professor at Georgetown's Center on Education and the Workforce said in a report that there's a growing number of mid-level skill jobs and opportunities, particularly relating to infrastructure.

"If the number of people who are enrolled in community college declines again, that's worrisome because we might have less and less people who are available for sub-baccalaureate, post-high school types of jobs in healthcare, food, personal services, truck driving and production," Smith said, addressing the decrease in community college enrollment

Number of enrolled students by semester



Data taken from LPC Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness Infographic by James Sevilla

excluding 2023.

During the 2019-20 academic year, nearly 2.1 million students were enrolled within California's Community College system of 116 schools, per the Chancellor's Office. The pandemic knocked that number closer to 1.8 million for the 2021-22 school year.

Las Positas experienced a similar drop. The Fall of 2019, according to official school data, saw 9,061 students enrolled. The spiral didn't fully bottom out until the Spring of 2022, when records show 6,525 students were enrolled. The last time the school's enrollment was so low was during the Spring 1997 semester, which saw enrollment of 6,114. LPC's peak matriculation was in the Fall of 2009. That school year, enrollment topped 13,000 for the first and only time in the school's history.

Heading into the 2023-24 academic year, a stream of over 100,000 more students enrolled in California Community Colleges. That was a 5.3% increase in one semester. At the same time, LPC's enrollment jumped 11.4% to 7,607 in fall 2023.

Dyrell Foster, LPC's President, explained some of the factors he is attributing to the increase.

"The fact that we were ranked

the number one community college in California, I think, has helped," Foster said. "Because of our experience through COVID-19, we were very intentional about wanting folks to get back on campus. We started to add more in-person classes with the hope that students would show up, and they have. So, I feel really good about that."

Other actions taken by the school included opening counseling services so students have the resources to make sure what classes they need to take to get their degree in a timely manner. There are also new facilities on campus such as the tutorial

center and an expansion of the library. LPC has also been doing a good job marketing itself to the community, according to Foster.

Foster said that while getting new students is great, the school is more focused on student retention.

"By supporting all of you during your experience at LPC," Foster said, "you're gonna tell somebody, they're going to trust you, and then they're going to want to come. That is really what it's about, making sure you all have a great experience so that you can be our best advocates and our ambassadors out in the community."

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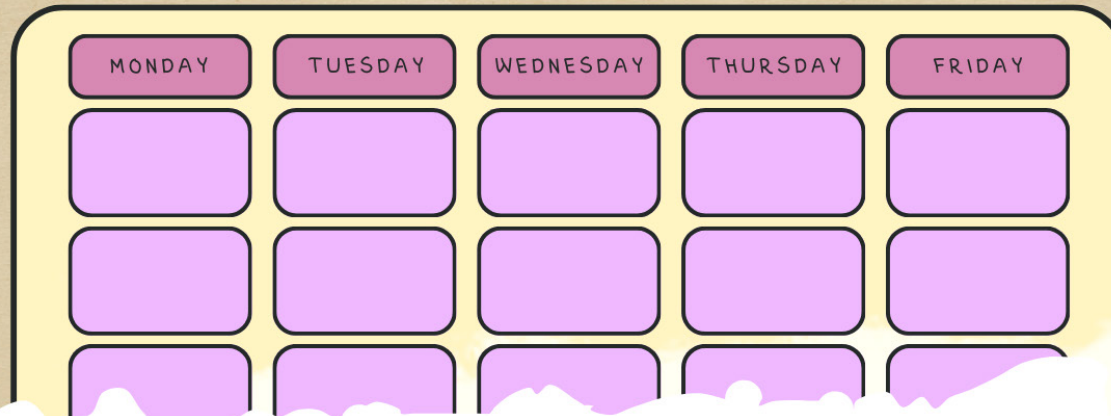
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THE AWARD-WINNING STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER OF LAS POSITAS COLLEGE

College district mulling a shorter semester

MAY



Paul George

@PAULGEORGEPIO

Would you be interested in the same Las Positas degree with two weeks fewer of class each semester?

That's the question being deliberated by the 2023 Chabot-Las Positas Community College District Compress Calendar Exploration Study. The real question, though, concerns the benefits and impacts of reducing the LPC semester from the current 17.5-to-18-week semester to the minimum 16-week semester allowed under the California Education Code.

This shorter semester would have to be balanced by adding an estimated 10 minutes per class session throughout the semester, according to responses shared by the Committee.

The inquiries at hand include those asked by students, staff, and administrators during several public forums hosted between Oct. 30 and Nov. 9, 2023.

The study began in late 2022, though the college district is following suit with a number of other community colleges. Ohlone in Fremont and Evergreen

Valley College in San Jose are two local districts already on this system. Statewide, just over half (65) of the 116 community colleges in California use the 16-week compressed semester calendar, according to several sources.

The Express has contacted members of CLPCCD's Alternative Academic Calendar Committee for additional background on why the district is considering this change now. The committee has responded, but has yet to provide a comment.

The proposal is not universally supported. The Las Positas College Classified Senate and its members voted in their Dec. 7, 2023 meeting to formally oppose the adoption of the Compressed Calendar. The senate's members provide a broad range of services to LPC and its students in the Admissions and Records and the Financial Aid offices, tutoring, library staff, campus safety among other areas.

In its Dec. 7, 2023 resolution, the Senate expressed numerous concerns that the calendar change has not adequately addressed how their ability to support students may be affected. The study committee was formed in December

2022, but the Classified Senate was not a part of the committee. The senate seats were added to the committee in response to concerns raised during the CLPCCD Chancellors Council meeting on Mar. 14, 2023.

"Classified professionals are primarily concerned with the impacts to services, which would likely create additional barriers for students due to staffing issues, negative bandwidth territory, and facilities scheduling," says Aubie Ross, LPC Classified Senate President.

"These aspects have not been studied and therefore might hinder the colleges' ability to implement proactive solutions to effectively mitigate these impacts. Solutions would likely require additional resources and personnel, which would add to long-term costs associated with this change," Ross said.

Students are focusing on the positives of a compressed calendar.

"I think it would be beneficial to have slightly shorter semesters. The extra five to 10 minutes each class I don't think will be noticeable," Jeff Hughell says. Hughell, a Fire Service Technology major,

explains that "having an extra week and a half at the beginning or end of the semester can be advantageous to achieving other goals."

Some felt the calendar may come at the risk of inhibiting other parts of students' school/work-life balance.

"For me, this would mean more time spent out of the semester cycle, allowing me to dedicate longer stretches of time to work or athletics," Riley Pearson says.

Pearson also recognizes that the shorter semester may come at the expense of homework time.

"The one thing I have considered is that the homework load may be slightly increased per week, and when considering...this may be intended to help students work to support themselves, they may find it more challenging during the active semester," Pearson says.

Programs and faculty would also need to adjust their lesson plans for a longer class each day with fewer instruction weeks to teach if the plan is adopted.

When asked how this may affect training programs like the emergency medical services, EMS Programs Educator / Coordinator

Mike Frith was not overly concerned.

"I take an adapt, adopt, and improvise approach," says Frith. He has considered potential changes to how classes are presented, using the planned return of the paramedic cohorts to LPC as an example. Frith suggested a compressed calendar could prompt changes that could maintain skills instruction in person and remote learning for lectures for paramedic students due to the number of instructional hours medic students must attend each semester.

The study's findings were released last December and can be found online here. The anticipated final recommendation date, initially slotted for December 2023, has not yet come to fruition. As of the time of writing, the study is ongoing and does not yet have an estimated date of completion. Any recommendations need to be approved by the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District before applying to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for approval to adopt a compressed academic calendar for the 2026-27 academic year.

Vermin

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the cover of insulation, and perhaps even under children's toys is where one might find a mouse, living or dead. It's quite possible, then, that this assault's not over. Plague persists.

M&O, our last line of defense.

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A glimpse into the hustle of an Express photographer



Gabriel Carver

@CUP1DCO

The quick click of the shutter goes right as the moment passes in front of me. Couples surround the room, sharing love with each other as the upbeat music plays in the background. Colors of love decorated the dance room consisting of soft pinks, Valentine's red and white. So much is going on at once, I live for moments like this even through all the chaos my mind is given clarity as the camera shoots away. As does the ball into the basket. Suddenly I am running back to the newsroom, one foot in front of the other as I begin my jog up past the cafeteria all the way up to the 2400 building.

Changing my lenses felt like I was throwing on my swagger, some type of confidence that comes with a bigger lens. Now I find myself in a similar area, a building filled with crazy energy but for different reasons. Sophomore night for the men's basketball team, the emotions rose high even as a spectator you could feel it. Some players are playing their last game maybe ever. So many different events unfold before my camera, so many pictures I could take.

In some cases, you could find yourself tasked with more than one event in a day. I found myself in this predicament

on Feb. 23 when I was sent to take pictures for the ball and the men's basketball sophomore night. Both events overlapped each other so my timing had to be important, I would spend two hours at the ball and the rest of my time at the basketball game.

Las Positas is filled with a variety of clubs, ethnic groups and ideas that allow the campus offering on an array of events on campus at any given time. The music program put on the Music for All Ball mentioned earlier, the Lunar New Year festival, sporting events and a long list of other activities. The major job for a school newspaper is to make sure campus life is documented and covered so the need for photos is high, a task that can be done by many but is only accepted by a select few.

No job could be more perfect for me. This medium has been in my life for a long time and it has brought me to my biggest highs as well to my lowest lows. Even with all the trials, it has stood the test of time in my life and still presents itself as the reason I keep moving forward. So I can get the shot, whether that is the shot I want or the shot somebody needs. That is why I am here, that's why we photographers on the express do what we do.



(Top Left) Gabriel Carver/The Express

(Top Right) Gabriel Carver/The Express

(Middle Left) Justin Gomes/The Express

(Middle Right) Gabriel Carver/The Express

(Bottom Left) Paul George/The Express

(Bottom Right) Gabriel Carver/The Express

Star players set to return

Women's basketball works on applying this season's lessons to the future

Francis Kennedy

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The Hawks needed a spark. They needed talent. They needed an infusion of youth. In order to improve the program, they needed freshmen players that would be able to fill a star role this season and give the Hawks an even better future outlook. They needed guard Kyshanti King and forward Joyce Mulumba.

This season was about learning the reins. The do's and don'ts. They both had award winning sophomore mentors to help them with that process. King had guard Kierstin Constantino, while Mulumba had forward Monique Cavness. With those two leaving, this next season is about taking over the program.

As Coach Caleb Theodore looked to continue to rebuild the program he began last season, he needed more athleticism and seize. He had the shooting from Constantino, and he had the heart and rebounding in Cavness. But to really turn the program around, he needed more. And he found it in these two recruits.

King brings speed and athleticism. Her fast pace and aggressive offensive mindset led to her immediately becoming the second best scorer on the team. Mulumba brings the seize. At 6'1 she towers over most players. That combined with her long reach and effort led to her dominating the boards. The two have had a year to get used to the pace of college play. To see what it's going to take to succeed. Now they must do just that, while leading the next set of stars.

King will have the responsibility to lead the team with her scoring. She will be the

star, the one with the ball attracting the attention of the defense. Mulumba will be the anchor defensively and the soul offensively. Her work on the glass will continue to be needed to get the Hawks as many second or third chances at points as possible.

The two still have a ways to go to prepare for what next season holds. This offseason King will need to work on her shooting, while Mulumba will look to heavily improve her post offense. Theodore will also need to find more star power to surround the two. A large majority of the team will be back for next season, including freshman guard Rayna Manu, who averaged 17.6 points in her 12 games this season. However, the majority of the players returning played small roles this season and will need to step up, following the example of King and Mulumba.

After two seasons under Theodore, the Hawks have a combined record of 9-43. It's time for the Hawks to start winning. With the majority of the team returning for next season, they believe they are in position to continue their growth. With the core of King and Mulumba, the Hawks will like their odds. The new era has already begun.

The Hawks won three games in Theodore's first season with the team, failing to score 70 or more points in any game. But in year two, they doubled their win tally while scoring 70 or more 16 times. Two of their wins came in Coast Conference North play after finishing 0-10 the previous year. The team was more committed to becoming successful.

"We recruited good," Theodore said. "The players that are here are committed to what we're trying to do and change the way people view this place."

First-year Assistant Coach Tracy Walker noticed improvements came slow for the team, but eventually, things started to click.

"I think they finally built trust within each other," Walker said. "They are finally vulnerable, and they finally were able to believe in themselves."

King's inside scoring helped the Hawks offense finish 7th in the state in offensive rating. She finished 2nd in the Conference and 12th in the state in points per game with 20.0. Her offensive style is similar to Russel Westbrook, as she plays the game at 100 miles an hour, always looking to attack the basket while constantly keeping defenders on their heels.

Her guard partner Constantino led the team in points with a different style, more similar to Steph Curry or Damian Lillard. Her three point heavy barrage, as she led the state in threes made with 146, led to her scoring 27.6 points a game. She was named to the 1st Team All-Coast Conference. Without her next year, it would seem the scoring responsibility falls on the shoulders of King. King believes that her teammates will help carry that burden.

"If I do end up taking this role, I feel like I can have a team that will back that up as well," King said. "If I get my points I'll be able to pass the ball around to them, and they'll add on to scoring as well."

Even though the Hawks improved, a



JUSTIN GOMES/THE EXPRESS

Joyce Mulumba eyeing the basket while being guarded by Taft forward, Yareli Gomez, ending the game with 25 rebounds. She finished the year second in the nation in total rebounds with 490.

6-19 record wasn't up to the standard of King. "I always like to win," King said. "So it was very upsetting for me, but I don't really dwell on the past or, you know, like, move forward. I just continue to grow and still have a name for myself."

King certainly earned a name for herself, being named to the 2nd team All-Coast Conference.

"The most important thing is not focusing on it, but focusing on what it took to get it," King said when speaking of her accomplishment. "Never underestimate your greatness but always remember there's incredible strength within you."

King was great at attacking the rim, but her perimeter shooting left much to be desired. She finished the year shooting 28.6% from three point range. Without Constantino making it rain, she will need to improve her jumper's consistency for next season.

Mulumba's impact came from a different source, as she dominated the glass. Her towering stature made rebounding easy, as she finished the year 2nd in the nation in total rebounds at 490. 262 of them were offensive rebounds, as her hustle consistently gave her team second chance opportunities. She added 7.3 points and was named as a Coast Conference Honorable Mention.

"It's a privilege to have this type of title," Mulumba said. "I wasn't even planning it. I didn't even know I could get these types of titles so when I was introduced to it, it was pretty cool."

Her mentor, Cavness, also led the state

in rebounding her freshman year. This year she finished second only behind Mulumba, with 19.6 rebounds a game and 12.3 points, being named to the 2nd Team All-Coast Conference.

For Mulumba's sophomore season, she will need to continue dominating the boards without Cavness helping reel in misses. More importantly, she will need to strengthen her interior offense to help fill the hole Cavness will leave. 7.3 points simply won't get the job done if the Hawks are going to continue improving like they did this past season.

With nine of their 14 players returning next season, the Hawks are in a prime position to continue their growth. Theodore is confident in the group, but knows they still have a ways to go to compete with the truly elite teams.

"Next year, we're going to have to really pay better attention to detail," Theodore said. "The teams that beat us, they deserved it, because they were more attentive than we were to the little things."

As sophomores, King and Mulumba will have to step up as leaders. There will be no Constantino or Cavness to catch them when they falter. Instead, it will be their responsibility to direct the next set of freshmen stars. All while looking to continue to take the Hawks to even further heights. A 6-19 record is better than 3-24, but it's not the end goal for Theodore and the Hawks. They want to reach the peaks of women's hoops. To do that, they will need King and Mulumba to be even better in their sophomore seasons.



JUSTIN GOMES/THE EXPRESS

Kyshanti King going for a field goal attempt against Taft defender No. 12, Siera Bradford, scoring 17 total points. Her scoring ability led to her to being named 2nd Team All-Coast Conference.

Monique Cavness: My teammate, friend and more

By Sydney Breckenridge

@SYDBRECKENRIDGE

The first time I interacted with Monique Cavness was the third week of practice. I was a new recruit. It was our first practice, my first time playing in The Nest. Mo yelled at me for repeatedly messing up a play during practice. She sounded like a father yelling at his disobedient child. I was baffled.

I do not like getting yelled at, especially by a person I barely know. Normally, I'd respond with an eye roll or argue but, in that moment, I just took it in. I didn't get defensive or even feel attacked. That's when I knew we would be friends – because if I didn't have a negative reaction to her yelling at me, that meant I respected her. I respected the fact that she didn't sugar coat anything and got straight to the point. I respected that she was a leader – not a conceited one who thought she was better than all of us, but one who wanted us to do better than her.

"I thought I was going to kill all the freshmen coming in," Mo said.

Eventually, we became close friends. Our coach hilariously describes us as a panda bear who adopted a koala. Mo is an intimidating 5-foot-11 bruiser-forward with broad shoulders, a big ol' head and a soft heart from Richmond, California. I'm an adorable 5-foot-3 guard with an unforgettable face who lives on quickness, with an attitude on 10 and mouth on 100 from the valley. As a result, everytime words came out of my mouth Mo had to interject to make sure I didn't say anything uncalled for. So, I get the picture the coach is painting.

Our bond didn't grow on the court, though. It happened in class. We took Intro to Mass Media together and always went out after. I knew she was gonna keep me on track with all I needed to get done. And there was a lot. Five classes. Basketball. On top of it all, I tore my ACL: rehab was a factor too. Mo was my anchor. She was the same for women's basketball at Las Positas.

From her freshman year, Mo was the foundation on which this program was built. She received an All-American honorable mention. She led all of California junior college women in rebounding. This year, she finished second in the state in rebounding and was named second-team All-Coast Conference.

She wasn't the lone star this season. Kierstin Constantino was like our Steph Curry, setting records for threes while leading us in scoring. Kyshanti King is a baller, too, and Joyce Mulumba grabbed even more rebounds than Mo.

But Mo's significance goes well beyond stats and records and into intangible areas. When Coach Caleb Theodore took over, he was rejuvenating a dead program that endured years of losing before being taken out by the pandemic. Coach restarted everything with Mo's back.

At some point, the Hawks women's hoops will accomplish more and continue to create history. It will post winning records and even get back to the play-



IMAGE COURTESY OF ALAN LEWIS

Monique Cavness, No. 22 and Sydney Breckenridge final handshake of the season. Mo ended the season with 12.3 points and 19.6 rebounds per game, being named to the 2nd All-Coast Conference team.

offs. When that day comes, people should remember Mo. She was our rock.

"Mo showed a level of maturity into the program," Theodore said, "at a very necessary time of getting our program established."

As a freshman, the transition to a new school and a new team was nerve-racking. I came from a team that lacked connection and communication. I've always been more of a defensive player because plays have always been a difficult thing for me to comprehend. I've played basketball since I was nine but never thought seriously of playing in college – it was more or less a hobby. It was an impulsive decision to join the team. Luckily for me Coach Caleb developed players, so despite my lack of film and the lack of confidence in my game, I still made the team.

I had no clue what I was getting myself into. Usually, when you don't know what you're getting into, struggle follows. Many of the freshmen, including myself, had a rough start to the season. But I had Mo. The sophomore who saved me.

The way she was yelling at me that day, I would have never guessed she would be the person I went to for advice. The person who always seemed to know what I needed at the moment. The person who could calm me down and lift me up. The person who got me to focus and reminded me to do better. She has taught me to not just listen to people but to hear and understand them. Like she understood me.

Most of all, she was the person who kept me going through the biggest injury of my career.

Sep. 7, 2023, was a practice to remember. We were doing a drill and I put all my weight on my right leg and felt my knee shift. It felt as if my knee popped in, and then out. As I collapsed to the ground, I dropped the F bomb and hopped off court so my team could get back to the drill. I immediately started limping on it thinking it was just a sprained knee, but I couldn't straighten it for the life of me. It took several weeks for me to bend it at a right angle. Once this was possible, I was able to jump and jog with no problem. Friends and teammates couldn't believe I was hurt because of how physically active I was. In that way, I didn't want to believe it either.

When my MRI results came back revealing a torn ACL, the first person I called was Mo. I was ugly crying, too. "I don't know what to do! My season's over!" She talked me through it until I was ready to accept the fact that I was injured. Then I had to tell the results to our coach.

When I needed her most, she was there for me.

But that's Mo. She is always there when you need her. If you are among those within her chosen inner-circle, you can count on Mo to take care of you. She takes pride in it.

The Hawks went 6-20 in the 2019-20 season. The pandemic hit, shutting down basketball the following season. Then in 2021-22, the Hawks simply didn't field a team. The school hired Coach Theodore in April 2022.

His tenure started as rough as you'd expect for a program that hadn't been active in two years. The Hawks lost their

first 19 games, four by forfeit because they didn't have enough players and another five games by 40 or more points.

Their worst loss was against San Francisco on Jan. 27, 2023. The Hawks were down 69-17 at half time on the road. They ended up losing by 76 points. It was their 15th straight game taking the court and losing. Mo had enough.

The next game, she had 20 points and 22 rebounds against Gavilan, leading the Hawks to their first win under Theodore. It was that kind of mindset that leaves this program in a better place. Mo didn't quit. Instead, she fought harder. The Hawks didn't have many players who could make shots at a high rate. So Mo decided she would dominate the boards.

"She manifested that she wanted to lead the state in rebounds," Theodore said, "and she did that."

Mo didn't get down. Despite all the losses, she was never defeated. Each time, she got back out there and kept going. That spirit is why the program is in such a better place now.

We finished 6-19 this season. That doesn't look great on paper, but it's leagues better than 3-24. Last season, we had eight losses by 30 more. This season, just six times. We even won two games by more than 40 points. Our three wins last season totaled a combined 24 points. Our future looks brighter because Mo anchored the program.

She brought an exceptional work ethic to the team — once she actually got to practice, because, even Mo wasn't above showing up five or 10 minutes late. Or 20. I witnessed just how hard she works. She spent time individually with our teammates to teach them how to score from and defend the post. She took Mulumba under her wing, giving her the tricks of the craft and passing her the crown as the state's leading rebounder.

As a sophomore, Theodore expected Mo to step up as a leader. She thrived in that role. She made a connection with all of us newcomers. Every time one of us had a bad practice, Mo was usually the first to come talk to us. She always knows what to say and how to say it.

She became less a teammate and more like a mom who took care of me and the 10 other "children" she was forced to take care of. She never complained. For me, she's long since stopped being just a teammate. She will forever be more. Forever be my friend. Forever a part of my family.

We were blood, if not that, then stronger. So much so, as the season came to an end, I found myself low-key panicking. What am I going to do without Mo next year? Like, actually.

I know she's moving on to bigger and better things. As she moves on from the Hawks, she leaves behind a legacy of leadership and growth. It should never be forgotten how she paved the way to the future. Whatever happens next, she is a pillar.

"To achieve greatness you must cut a piece of yourself off to grow," Mo said. "I've planted that piece of me in this program and have watched everyone bloom from it."

Aspiring musicians take the stage

LPC hosts the second annual jazz combo concert

Camille Leduc

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Take a step away from the homework assignment you're dreading. The video you have yet to take notes on. The essay you've been putting off. Recharge with music. Relax with harmonies. Refocus with rhythm.

Breathe in the sweet jazz.

This is the time of year when the Las Positas Music Department, which is ranked in the top 85 percent in the country by Music Colleges, puts its best foot forward. It's a showcasing of the program's vocal talent, instrumental skills and powers of composition.

The second annual Jazz Combo Concert is the students' big performance into the spring semester. Hopeful musicians take the stage for the experience and exposure of a major production, and perhaps exposure that leads to future opportunities in the music world.

Both groups in this jazz combo feature a combination of vocalists, drummers, trumpeters, bass guitarists and even a recorder.

It is made up of music majors who have dedicated themselves to the craft of classical and jazz music. The program has so much to show off, this year's event will feature two groups of nearly 10 musicians — instead of the usual one with the five best. — So they all get a chance to shine under the bright lights of the department's big night. The other is of the beginners, giving them an opportunity to grow in the action of live performance.

The set list was crafted to highlight their charisma, their range of ages and experience, and their abilities.

"They have been learning so many songs so they are very well adjusted," said Cindy Rosenfield, director of this LPC showcase. "Our performing classes are so special because some of them have never played jazz before and now they're soloing and doing improv."

The first group of experienced musicians, which is seven deep, includes a bass guitarist, drummer, guitarist, saxophonist, trumpeter, a single vocalist and recorder. Chemistry is one of the strengths of this group since they've all played together before in some form or variation.

The second group, composed of nine beginners, features two guitarists, one drummer, a bass player, a trombonist, saxophonist, trumpeter and two vocalists.

"I'm looking forward to it," said Amelia Nelson, bass guitarist for the experienced group. "We've been playing together for a semester already and have become a really great unit together."

The concert is set up to give the audience five to six songs from each



CAMILLE LEDUC/THE EXPRESS

Lyle Elster, main drummer, and Amelia Nelson, bass guitarist, practice with the rest of the experienced performers for the Jazz Combo. Elster sets up the start of the song with heavy drums, followed by the rest of the group.

"These students learn tunes a week and sometimes even tunes a day,"

- CINDY ROSENFELD

group. All featuring a different style performance. Rosenfield explains that she is grateful to have Carl Haulers as our sound person here on campus. Mike Rinaldi is a lighting guy on campus.

She gathers them together with students in preparation for the final show making sure it's just right with a cozy and soft-uplifting feel.

The audience should prepare to see "all aspiring stars," Rosenfield says when touching on her student's upcoming performances. "These students learn tunes a week and sometimes even tunes a day," Rosenfield said.

The audition process for these two groups was constructed by the students. The musicians in both groups, eager to make this combo, chose music from a comprehensive song list hoping to demonstrate their skills. The songs were then presented by Rosenfield at the beginning of semester as a model and the musicians were given time to perfect their recorded audition.

The aspiring students each did solo improvisation to show off their skill in the second part of their in-person audition.

They get a taste of a musician's lifestyle in that way.

They even had the luxury of picking their own songs to perform at this jazz combo. They were free to select any

figuration of styles that show a variation of swing, latin, modern or jazz fusion, and vocalist features. It was all up to them.

Any healthy competition between the two groups? Rosenfeld said it's not necessary.

"It's never competitive within the group," she said. "If it was, then it would be arrogant. In one group, they

are all very good. There are no stars."

Moments like these on March 28th are what students like these have been working toward since they were able to play a key or sing a note. It's a chance. A chance to be recognized as something bigger. A door to possibilities they dreamed of when they were young.

"Excited to play some music with these fine musicians," said Lyle Elster, the main drummer in the experienced group. "Our set is fun but also hard to play, so it keeps it interesting for sure."

The Jazz Combo Concert is on March 28 at 7 p.m. on the Mertes Main Stage in the 4000 building.



CAMILLE LEDUC/THE EXPRESS

The beginner group goes over their selected songs in preparation for the jazz combo later in March on the 28th. Both guitarists, along with solo vocalist in beginner group gather together to practice for the upcoming combo.



The EV ain't yet for me

Paul George

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I'm hardly a technology prude. I had rooftop solar long before door-to-door salespeople were hocking panels. I had a laptop with wireless internet ages before hotspots existed and mobile phones were flipped open (it was a thing in 1996, look it up).

I'm also a creature of familiar comforts. Living on the edge of technology is one thing, but I still want to be assured the lights will illuminate when I turn the switch on. I suspect I'm like many others who likely prefer modestly priced services when I need to avail myself of them.

I found myself in need of a rental car the other day. I've found that such options can be more cost-effective than BART, and given my bride's angst about ride-hailing services there are few other options beyond a taxi when the family bluntly says they're not waiting up at 5 a.m. to give us a ride to the airport.

The rental company offers a 'mystery car' option, often at a significant discount. Being price-aware and not afraid of driving anything under 20 tons, I figured, what's the worst that they can dish out? I've survived the Kia Soul, the cherry red Dodge Charger and the assorted minivans. The idea of an electric vehicle (EV) intrigued me.

Hertz didn't disappoint: my 'mystery car' was a Kia Niro. It still had the new car smell and an odometer with 244 miles on it. I reckon the roundtrip from Oakland Airport to Livermore and back was 70 miles tops, so I wouldn't need to fuss about

charging it.

Good thing, too. The car had a basic charger cord, but no adapter in the event I found myself at a charging station that wasn't compatible. This is where my hesitation begins about EVs.

Charging options are not (yet?) universal. From what little I can glean, there are two different plug types in the United States in addition to the Tesla plug. Charging stations are not all created equal, and if you need to charge a rental at home, it doesn't really matter. While they can plug into ordinary home outlets, the charging speed is dramatically less than if you had a dedicated 220-volt power outlet for your EV.

Thankfully, this wasn't my worry. 70 miles roundtrip and the gauge suggested I had roughly 200 miles until I needed to panic. 200 miles until I'd find myself on the side of the road waiting for the AAA-equivalent of the Energizer bunny waiting for rescue to charge up a dead battery.

That said, I found it stressful. If I accelerated too quickly, I could see the battery being drained faster. As soon as my bride fired up the seat heater and defroster I would have sworn I heard the battery sigh aloud at this transgression. The car seemed to be whispering, "Do you want range or

comfort? Choose wisely." It's reminiscent of "The Matrix" and choosing between taking the red pill or the blue pill. Much as Morpheus says, you can't take both.

If I took my foot off the accelerator (don't you dare call it a gas pedal), the regenerative brakes applied itself to slow the car's speed. This has the effect of helping charge the battery by converting the resistance to electricity. It also has the effect of slowing me down WAY faster than I'd expected until I got the hang of it.

I may not be alone. In Jan. 2024, Hertz made the business decision to sell off a third of its electrical vehicle fleet, or about 20,000 vehicles. Hertz cited reasons for the high cost of maintenance and 'customer demand' for internal combustion engine vehicles.

Given the casual drivers like myself not being onboard with the added commitment to hiring an EV, Hertz's doesn't come as a surprise. I'd be equally surprised if they're alone in re-evaluating the mix of vehicles in a company's fleet.

All told, I'm a fan of EVs and what they promise. At least for me, I'm not yet ready to give up my combustion engine vehicle until I can get the range and universal ability to charge up quick.

EDITORIAL

Gaza needs your help

Express Editorial Staff

According to the Human Rights Watch, more than 96% of the water supply in Gaza is unable to be consumed by humans. People are sick, without healthcare and other basic needs. Palestinians and others in Gaza need your help.

A ceasefire is needed. This requires both Israel and Hamas to put down their weapons and reinstate some semblance of peace to the Gaza Strip.

Individuals must put aside their differences and understand that lives will continue to be damaged or lost entirely without intervention. This action is required not only by people in the Gaza Strip, but also by activists and diplomats internationally.

Since October of 2023, the Palestinians in Gaza have been suffering. Basic necessities like toilets, electricity, and clean water have been rendered inoperable or inac-

cessible, according to the Palestinian Water Authority.

Both Israel and Hamas are engaging in violence to meet their ends – both hold hostages.

A ceasefire must mean that both the Israeli and Hamas forces leave Israeli-occupied Palestinian land. It must also mean that the occupiers restore resources back to the land's initial inhabitants on leaving.

"Hamas has refused to release all of the estimated 100 hostages it holds, and the remains of about 30 more, unless Israel ends its offensive, withdraws from Gaza and releases a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including fighters serving life sentences" an article from Al Jazeera said.

It is time for students of Las Positas College to fight for the people of Gaza. After months of constant back and forth, the sickness and death must end.

"At least 1,139 people were killed and about 250 cap-

tives were taken in Hamas-led attacks on southern Israel on Oct. 7. Israel's retaliatory offensive on Gaza has killed more than 30,000 people, mostly women and children" Al Jazeera said.

There's a plethora of actions one can take to help the people of Gaza. According to an article by AFSC, the top choice is to "contact your member of Congress and call for an immediate cease fire." In addition, the United Nations are accepting monetary donations to help the people in the Gaza Strip.

It is time to end the suffering of the people in Gaza. Las Positas students must act to protect Palestinian lives before they are lost forever.

The Arab Resource and Organizing Center, also known as AROC, will host an upcoming protest in support of a ceasefire. The protest is planned to occur on March 11, 2024 in Redwood City, CA.

EXPRESS YOURSELF

How do you plan on celebrating your spring break this semester?



“I plan on spending a whole lot of time studying. I'm still in middle college so i want to be prepared for next semester.”

– Diego Ruiz,
Kinesiology



“I'm going on vacation to Alaska, my mom wants to see the Northern lights.”

– Abigail Chui,
Chemistry



“I'm going to try and focus on myself. I'm doing a lot of things that dont really help my self care- so I'm hoping for lots of rest.”

– Chanelle Keo,
Biology



“ Since spring break is during Easter this year I'm going to be spending lots of time with family.”

– Khoi Cao,
Bio Medical Engineering



“I plan on touring colleges this spring break. Mostly the UC schools, in particular for me UC Davis and UC Berkley.”

– Gia Keiper,
Areospace Engineering