

THE VALLEY STAR

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Campus clubs rally for fun and funds

Text by: Kaia Mann
Photo by: Taylor Cowhey

Dozens of campus clubs gathered Tuesday for Club Day in order to raise funds and awareness for their organizations.

This recurring event allows student-run clubs to sell food, drinks, and merchandise while recruiting new members. Among the clubs in attendance were chess, cinema, pride, business and others.

Booths lined the Monarch Square walkway as club leaders, Associated Student Union members, and enthusiastic participants took pies to the face, including ASU President Georgi Almazyan pictured to the left. Elected in May, Almazyan promises to increase student engagement through improving campus resources and services and creating more inclusive cultural events.

New tariffs in town

Milan Rafaelov,
Staff Writer

The Trump Administration's global trade war has escalated into a tit-for-tat wave of retaliatory tariffs, most notably from Canada, China and the European Union. The on-again-off-again levies continue to fuel uncertainty and leave businesses and consumers to brace for higher costs.

According to The White House, tariffs are necessary to pressure other nations into compliance with U.S. demands, help protect domestic industries, curb illegal immigration and fentanyl trafficking. These measures align with Trump's "America First" policies and resonate with his supporters, but some experts are concerned that they come at a steep cost to key U.S. industries and erode market confidence.

"I still have to have quality because my customers won't come back if I don't have quality—so I can only cut back so much to get the price down," business owner and Professor Sonja Jones said. "And at some point, consumers have to pay the difference because otherwise, I can't make a profit, and I can't stay in business."

The Trump administration invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act on Feb. 4 to impose a 25 percent tax on imports from Canada and Mexico and a 20 percent tax on all imports from China. Beyond these country-specific tariffs, a broad 25 percent tariff on all steel and aluminum imports took effect on Mar. 12.

"President Trump is keeping his promise to stop the flood of illegal aliens and drugs," Post-Ed The Trump administration to the White House Website regarding tariffs. "When voters overwhelmingly elected Donald J. Trump as President, they gave him a mandate to seal the border. That is exactly what he is doing."

Since then, Canada struck back with nearly \$60 billion in retaliatory tariffs on U.S. steel, aluminum, electronics, and consumer goods. The European Union has imposed \$28 billion in tariffs on luxury and agricultural goods. Meanwhile, China has added \$27 billion, primarily targeting American farm exports.

Trump said that "reciprocal tariffs," planned to take effect on April 2, will counteract what his administration considers as unfair trade practices.

With retaliatory measures exceeding \$110 billion, the fluctuating tariffs shook financial markets. Goldman Sachs reported that it could cut S&P 500 index earnings 2-3 percent per share. Though negotiations are underway, the circumstances are still evolving. Which tariffs will go into effect are to be determined.

"I understand why the government is looking at doing this because they want more stuff to be made in the United States. In reality, is that really something that can happen?" said Jones. "I don't know, it depends on the materials, the technology, on the things that need to happen, and now we're hurting relationships with other countries that we didn't have issues with before."



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College community stands to protect undocumented students

Members of the district, state officials and immigration experts gathered at the districtwide Dream Resource Forum.

Kaia Mann,
Editor-in-chief

As anti-immigration policies and rhetoric intensify under Donald Trump's presidency, the Los Angeles Community College District and Dream Resource Centers across the city gathered at the second annual Dream Resource Forum to discuss ongoing and future measures to protect undocumented students.

The districtwide forum was held at Mission College, featured a "Know your Rights" panel and a call for action from elected officials.

Speakers from campus centers, the board of trustees and third party organizations spoke about how to best support the undocumented population on campuses and how to prepare for the future.

"We stand firm in support of our undocumented students," said Interim Chancellor Alberto J. Roman during the welcome address. "We're a nation of immigrants, a place where everyone is welcome, and we will continue to believe in that premise until the last day that we are on this earth."

District trustee David Vela discussed the measures taken within the LACCD for the protection of the student population. Multiple board members, including Vela and Roman, recently traveled to Washington D.C. to advocate for students' rights.

"We hit the ground running," said Vela. "We said, hey, you can stand up to the administration. These are our needs. We're preparing. We need you guys to stand up for our undocumented students at LACCD."

The board member added that the LACCD is the only district in America to meet directly with an undersecretary in the Trump administration. The focus of that conversation was to let them know "there would be war" if they pulled the \$259 million

Pell Grant that allows thousands of students access to free and low-cost education.

Vela also highlighted the efforts of former trustee Mike Fong, now a California Assembly member representing District 49. Fong is working on introducing an assembly bill that would prohibit federal agents from detaining undocumented individuals on community college campuses and will function similarly to Assembly Bill 49 and Senate Bill 48, introduced in December, which provide the same protections for K-12 schools.

Without a warrant, ICE agents are restricted to entering spaces open to the public. While Valley and other LACCD colleges feature open campuses, Dream Resource Center counselor Javier Carbajal emphasized that anyone con-

ducting business on campus, including law enforcement, must follow the same procedures as other vendors. This means ICE agents must first report to the college president's office before detaining or questioning anyone.

In the event that ICE arrives on campus, with or without warrants, faculty members are prohibited from intervening with federal agents to avoid obstructing justice. However, there are steps staff can take to protect students. According to district policy, if ICE agents enter a classroom, professors have the right to inform them that they are violating the classroom policy, which allows only enrolled students in the room. Professors can then escort the agents to the president's office and dismiss their class.

Another measure schools can implement is restricting public access to campus facilities by requiring a staff badge or student ID for entry.

California is home to 10.5 million immigrants and accounts for 25 percent of the nation's foreign-born population. Since his inauguration, Trump has intensified deportation efforts, with the Senate currently debating a stop-gap spending bill that would allocate an additional \$500 million to ICE. Students, regardless of citizenship, are urged to know their 4th, 5th and 6th Amendment rights, remain calm and silent in the presence of ICE officers, and carry a red "Know Your Rights" card for guidance.

"Even though the current administration is in place, the one thing they cannot take from you is your edu-

cation, your learning, your skill set, your advocacy efforts, the relationships that you build on these campuses," said Alfonso Garcia, the senior program manager for the foundation for California community colleges. "I want students to think through that because your education is something that is yours."

There is currently a Dream Resource Center on all nine LACCD campuses that provide safe spaces for students to receive information and help they need regarding their citizenship status or the status of a family member.

"We do not want our students to feel that they can't come and enroll and come to class," said Trustee Vela. "That is unacceptable. That is un-American. You talk about what is patriotic. Education is patriotic for immigrants."



Alejandro Rafael for the Valley Star
(L-R) Assemblywoman Celeste Rodriguez, LACCD trustee David Vela and L.A. County Supervisor Lindsay Horvath speak to the attendees of the Dream Resource Forum Friday during the call to action from elected officials.

Programs reach out to scholars, veterans and former inmates

New center offers a chance for community building and collaboration for underrepresented groups.



Aaron Goldsmith for the Valley Star

Dean Martin speaks at the opening of the new shared space.

Sara Lemon,
Staff Writer

Formerly incarcerated and veteran students now share a space in the Student Services Center, joining the Rising Scholars and Veterans programs to discover their similarities and

to support one another. "Now we have a common community area for our students to meet, get a snack or chill before their next class," said coordinator Alex Ojeda. "We invite students to stop by and say hello to our team and discuss how we can support them in achieving their educational goals."

Rising Scholars supports students with experience in incarceration, probation or juvenile detention. In addition to those affected by a family member's involvement in the criminal justice system, offering assistance in both academics and career development.

Ojeda noted that formerly incarcerated individuals often face barriers such as being turned down for home loans, employment or vehicle loans. Rising Scholars aims to destigmatize the negative perceptions of formerly incarcerated individuals in the community while helping them earn degrees that will provide economic and social mobility.

Folks who attend college after being released from prison are 70 percent more likely to stay out of prison. Formerly incarcerated students state that community college has provided social and economic mobility.

"We wanted to prove essentially that although you have incarceration experience you still have the potential and the capacity to be successful academically and still live fruitful lives in terms of careers, long term success,

being homeowners and having families," said Ojeda.

The Rising Scholars Grant, led by Ojeda, secured funding for the joint expansion of both programs. This grant was part of a statewide initiative aimed at expanding educational resources for individuals with experience in the criminal justice system who are seeking to enroll in community colleges. As part of their reentry journey, the Rising Scholars program provides dedicated academic counseling, a space for community building and collaboration, and resources for mental health, peer mentorship and transferring.

In partnership with Scott Weigand, director of the Academic Resource Center, and Brandon Hildreth, dean of Adult Education, Workforce Development and Dual Enrollment, the ongoing goal of the grant is to expand outreach and encourage more formerly incarcerated students and veterans to join campus programs.

The Veterans Resource Center supports veterans and military-affiliated students, including active duty, reservists and dependents, by helping them access

their GI Bill benefits, register for classes and address other needs they may have.

"The center is seeking for all student veterans to become involved with our services and join us at our events," said student worker Ryan Green. "Sharing locations with the Rising Scholars will help us reach that goal. We have a lot of similarities including general life hardships and similar upbringings including troubled homes in their youth, not fitting in and trying to find a place to belong in life. Many seek solace in the military."

Approximately 4.8 percent of community college students are veterans, while 1.6 percent are on active duty or serving in the reserves or National Guard.

"Being here at this grand opening made me so proud," said Rising Scholar participant Tania Guzman. "I was once a liability and now I am here enjoying life and being accepted by the community and giving back. The counselors helped me a lot. I can talk to them about my courses and now I am also taking real estate classes." Her current goal is to transfer to CSUN and become an immigration attorney.

VALLEY LIFE

Art exhibition brings artists back to campus to display their work

Six art alumni return to Valley to show off their achievements in ceramics, sculptures, photographs and more.



Melvin Garcia and Zuhri Taylor for The Valley Star

Valley graduate Brian Ramirez's ceramic piece "Impregnation of Coatlicue" stands tall in the Art Gallery.

Kaia Mann,
Editor-in-chief

Six former Valley art students returned to their roots and showcased their artistic evolution in the LAVC Art Gallery's Art Department Alumni Exhibition, which highlights both their work and journey as artists. Dozens of alumni, stu-

dents and faculty filled the gallery housed within the Art building, viewing pieces by Brianna Aguilera, Wanda Bryant, Jillian Frederick, Laura Molano (Filosa Bariolé), Brian Ramirez and Jessica Till. The exhibition, which runs through April 18, features an array of sculptural works, collages, ceramics and immersive projector installations.

"Being here is really nostalgic," said Jillian Frederick, who graduated from Valley as an art major over 10 years ago. "It's so wonderful to see all of the other alumni's work and see that they are still creating as well. I spent a lot of time here in this department and this gallery itself." Jenene Nagy, drawing and painting professor and gallery

director, curates multiple exhibitions each semester. She described the selection process for this current show as an "open call," allowing Valley alumni to submit work for consideration. In addition to open submissions, Nagy sought specific recommendations from her colleagues to identify notable past students. "What I was looking for was

people who had a compelling trajectory or an interesting story about how Valley fit into their career path," said Nagy. "So, people who have come back to school after a different career or who came to Valley for personal interest and then became invested in art in a different way." The gallery was adorned with the ceramic and installation work of Brian Ramirez, a Valley alumnus who has since returned as an adjunct ceramics professor. His pieces draw inspiration from his Mexican and Salvadoran heritage, interwoven with the rich imagery and symbolism of Aztec and Mayan cultures. Near the front of the gallery, Ramirez's altar to the Virgin of Guadalupe and Coatlicue, the Aztec mother goddess, stood polished and tall. "The Two Virgins," along with all of Ramirez's ceramic works, explores the lasting effects of colonialism while blending both traditional and contemporary techniques. "I always, even early on when I would make ceramic pieces in Katie [Queen]'s class here, I always embody them with some sort of meaning whether it would be subtle, subliminal or completely up in front and really showing it," Ramirez said. Across the gallery, Wanda Bryant's sculptural series "Rattlin' Bog" bursts with vibrant and organic energy. Inspired by the Irish folk song of the same name, her work juxtaposes the synthetic brightness

of commercial fabrics with the raw textures of wood and bark. Bryant attended Valley after retiring as an ethnomusicology professor. She credits Valley's faculty for giving her a start in the art world and allowing her to explore a side of herself she had never ventured into before. "Valley didn't just shape my career, it started my career," said Bryant. Jillian Frederick, whose collage work blends watercolor, acrylic and paper cutouts, took a different path. A Valley student from 2011 to 2014, she later became an applied behavioral analyst but never abandoned her artistic practice. The series she displayed was created during the pandemic and focuses on constructing a distinct frame that then breaks beyond its boundaries. "I'm not sure why I cut out what I cut out sometimes," she said. "It's just creating these shapes and cutting out what interests me the most. I usually make the piece and then find out what it means afterward." On March 20, a panel discussion will bring together all the artists from the alumni show to reflect on their work and artistic journeys. Later in the semester, the gallery will host its final exhibition, the Annual Art Student Invitational, running from May 19-30. This showcase will highlight works by current students that are handpicked by their professors. All exhibitions at the Art Gallery are free and open to the public.

Playing with Paine

The Life of Thomas Paine returns to Valley.

Davrin Abrego,
Staff Writer

The ASU recently approved a \$1,500 budget to bring the one-man play, To Begin the World Over Again: The Life of Thomas Paine, depicting an in-depth look into the life of the forgotten founding father, to Valley College. This play is part of a decade-long tradition that hasn't been seen on campus in almost three years. The play, written and starring Ian Ruskin, has been performed at Valley once or twice every year

United States in 1985. In Los Angeles, he found work on both television and other media. The 55-year-old performer has played Harry Bridges, Nikola Tesla, and Thomas Paine. These historical figures have influenced his lifelong interest in social justice and his focus on misunderstood or forgotten historical figures. "I find it much more satisfying to do these history plays. They seem to be becoming more relevant all the time," Ian Ruskin Paine is often regarded by historians to be the least documented founding fa-



since 2013 until COVID hit in 2020. The play is set for April 29, from 11:20 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Monarch Hall. "Ian's focus on the play is making history come to life," said philosophy professor and sponsor of the philosophy club Zachary Knorr. The play is free to students, staff and the public. To Begin the World Over Again: The Life of Thomas Paine has been performed all over the United States in addition to England, Ireland, and France. Ruskin is an actor, writer, social activist, and a graduate of The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. He performed in England for over a decade before coming to the

ther, despite his important role in both the American and French revolution. Paine's best known works are Common Sense, Rights of Man, as well as The Age of Reasoning. His 1776 political pamphlet Common Sense played a huge part in rallying support for American independence from Great Britain. "Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something absurd, in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island," from Paine's Common Sense.

Art workshop helps programs take shape

Students and faculty create slab cups as part of Women's History Month.

Bruna de Mello,
Staff Writer

The Veterans Resource Center and Rainbow Pride Center worked together to host a hands-on ceramics workshop in honor of Women's History Month, bringing students from different backgrounds together to foster a sense of community. Led by ceramics professor Katie Queen, 25 attendees crafted ceramic slab cups, attaching a rectangular form to a circular base before adding handles. The process concluded with painting and decorating the vessels. "Ceramics can create a space where people can get out of their heads and into their bodies," said professor Queen. "Because it is so community-driven, we're all working together to achieve creative kinds of making and practices." The Pride and Veteran centers offered a chance for students from different groups to gather and create art. Participants were told to see this as a fun, carefree project where they could be creative and enjoy themselves. "This is our entryway into building something together, something that's functional, that they can use later on to remember this moment in time of creating that sense of community within Valley College, within the Art Department and through the Veterans Center and the Pride Club," said professor Queen. The Rainbow Pride Center has established an inclusive, safe and affirming space that works toward empowering, educating and supporting students who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. They offer academic and personal counseling, computer lab access, and referrals to on and off-campus programs and services. "I think it's important because there's a really big community out here for people who are queer and people who are women," said attendee Iris Amos, an aerospace engineering major. "It's really important that we get to see other people who are like us. I think



Sofiya Vinogradova and Emely Taracena for The Valley Star (Top) Adjunct Professor Brian Ramirez helps a student make their slab cups. (Bottom) Students from the Veteran and Rainbow Pride centers work to complete their pieces.

it's just nice to have a community of people that understand what it's like to go through what women and queer people go through. It's really nice to support the arts at Valley." The Veterans Resource Center at Valley offers staff and faculty to assist veterans and military-affiliated students (active duty, reservists, and dependents) with resources and referrals to support

academic and career goals. Krixa Alejo, counselor and coordinator for the Veterans and Rising Scholars centers, emphasized that the significance of events like this is "to make sure marginalized communities are celebrated here...this is your home now." According to Brian Ramirez, instructor for the ceramics department and Valley College alumnus, the cups made at the

event typically take a couple of days to complete due to drying time. Once fully dried, the pieces will be kiln-fired and glazed, with attendees welcomed to stop by the centers' offices to pick up their work. "Our doors are always open and we are very, very supportive to all of our demographics and community here," said Queen.

I'm Still Here presents a true story of an oppressive system

The lasting effects of dictatorship and the importance of truth in art remain relevant in the Oscar winning film.

Bruna de Mello,
Staff Writer

"I'm Still Here" is a cinematic reflection that challenges viewers to never forget the past. It unveils trauma, resilience and the ongoing fight for truth caused by the Brazilian Military Dictatorship period. The movie takes place within the Military Dictatorship era throughout 1964-1985, following the story of Eunice Paiva (Fernanda Torres) as she reinvents herself as the head of the family, fighting to keep her loved ones safe while navigating the emotional scars left behind after her family was torn apart. Winning best international feature at the Oscars, the film was directed by Walter Salles and adapted from Marcelo Paiva's book of the same

name. Based on Paiva's real life childhood, "I'm Still Here" presents his mother's story and its powerful significance. Fernanda Torres delivers a stellar performance, conveying her character's pain through defiant silence and restraint rather than loud cries or explosive reactions. She portrays Eunice's emotions with melancholic tension representing the fear and lonely suffering endured by her. This measured approach is especially evident in her interactions with her children, two of whom she deems too young to fully grasp the situation. This is not an outdated story; it is a critical work that stimulates thought about the consequences of dictatorships to the population. It contrasts with contemporary issues, indicating that the system still continues to act against

many. Director Salles has said that part of the importance of the movie is to help people remember the past and not forget crucial facts in history, but that the picture also resonates with what is lived in the present by different nations. The Brazilian military dictatorship started with a coup that overthrew a democratically elected president as part of an American Cold War strategy to prevent the spread of communism in Latin America. The regime imposed authoritarian rule, censored expression and used torture and repression in the name of politics. After much resistance and pressure, it was dismantled in 1985. The real-life Eunice Paiva became an important figure in the country. While building her life away from the memories of the past, she went back to school where she ob-

tained her law degree. She is a very important symbol not only as an activist against the dictatorship but also in the fight for the protection of indigenous people's rights, especially to their land. The film takes viewers on a journey through Eunice's mind, unfolding like a quiet rollercoaster. As her emotions simmer beneath the surface, the audience is left anticipating the moment she finally erupts. Leaving audiences unsettled, "I'm Still Here" contributes to the defense of democratic values by telling stories of the past. However the story is ever-present in the current day in a world where democracies are increasingly fragile and attempts on limiting freedom of expression come from the most unexpected places in veiled ways.



Sofia Paciullo, Sony Pictures Classics Walter Salles directs Fernanda Torres on the set of "I'm Still Here," which made over \$34 million in the global box office.

OPINION

Campus shouldn't lose students in translation

The silent struggles that get lost in translation and the case for a peer translation program.

Milan Rafaelov,
Opinion & layout Editor

A cluster of students patiently watch me as I approach the front desk of the Unity Center— It's 9 a.m., and I can finally open the doors.

As they shuffle in, some know where to go while others hesitate to approach me. A woman who reminds me of my mom waits for the moment I can devote my full attention. I recognize the shaky English, and as she pauses to search for the right words, I interrupt: "Do you prefer to speak Russian?" A look of relief washes over her face and she begins to explain.

Although bi-lingual student workers like myself are not certified translators and are therefore limited in our ability to provide official translation services, we are frequently called on to bridge the language gap for the growing number of foreign national students. We make outreach calls, help students navigate resources and forms, schedule appointments, and step in when counselors struggle to communicate. Without us, many of these students might not find the resources they need to stay enrolled and succeed.

Most of the students I assist at the Unity Center now require translation support. Whether they speak Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Farsi, or Spanish, many are still in

the early stages of learning English and struggle to navigate the bureaucracy of higher education— just like my mother when she attended Valley 20 years before me.

Immigrant-origin students are not only the fastest-growing demographic of students in higher education but have also driven over 90 percent of the nationwide enrollment growth at colleges and universities since 2002.

Starting over in a foreign country comes with unique challenges. Without adequate support, Valley risks a downward-sloping student completion rate.

"As a person who is an immigrant, first generation, and also has a parent here on campus who is learning English as a second language, I think that a lack of translation services can be an obstacle for students," ASU Commissioner of Political Affairs, Sofia Orellana Rivas said.

Rivas told me that her mom had to retake an ESL class because she did not feel confident enough in her English proficiency to move on. She believes the lack of support available played a role.

After witnessing these struggles firsthand, I brought my concerns to ASU and asked them to support the creation of a student peer mentorship program for ESL and immigrant-origin students. We are now working on an initiative

that would provide participating bilingual students and staff with a stipend at the end of each semester to help ESL students access resources, communicate with faculty, and advocate for their needs.

Our student union exists to represent students. As Valley opens its doors to everyone

seeking a better life through education, ESL students deserve not only representation but also real, tangible support. A peer mentorship program offers a direct, student-led solution while also putting money back into the pockets of bilingual student workers who currently provide this

help without compensation. This is an opportunity to create a practical solution to an undeniable need, and it's up to students to push for meaningful, lasting change.

This story is a first-person perspective from a student worker.



Illustration by Milan Rafaelov



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Letters to the editor can be submitted online at www.valleystarnews.com. Letters must be limited to 300 words and may be edited for content. Full name and contact information must be supplied in order for letters to be printed.

All that glitters is not gold

Trump's administration looks to cash in with wealthy immigrants and leave the poor behind.

Elmira Muradkhanyan,
News Editor

President Donald Trump proposes a foolish \$5 million citizenship "gold card" to foreigners as a potential pathway for U.S. residency.

"It is mocking society in the way that Lady Liberty and what she stands for has been forgotten, the concept of the building blocks of the American industrial system," said Dream Resource Center Coordinator and counselor Javier Carabajal.

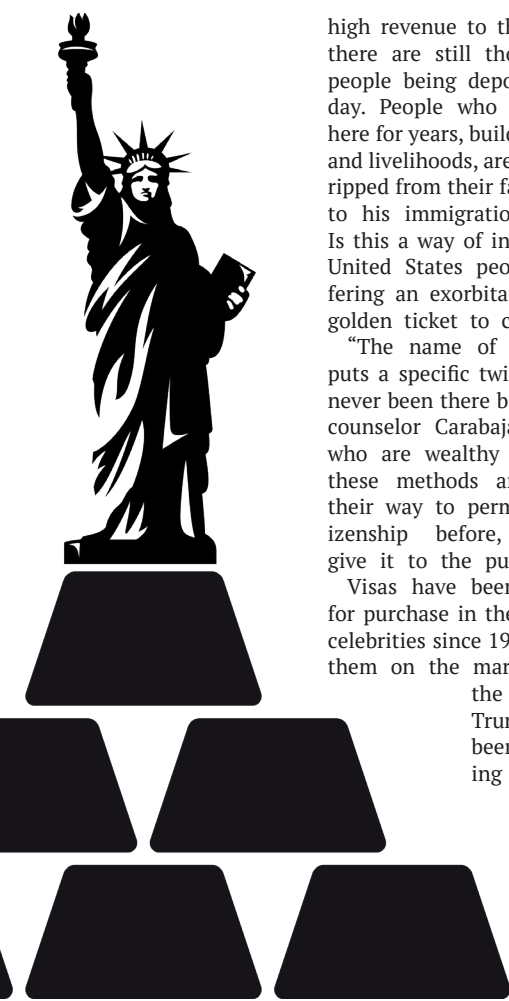
Trump and his administration have persistently attacked immigrants since the start of his presidency. He has signed over 75 executive orders primarily targeting increased border security while simultaneously deporting 12,000 people every month since making a return to the Oval Office. In addition, he recently created a deportation conflict with the judicial branch of government as a result of his decision to deport over 250 Venezuelans back to Venezuela.

Consequently, the Venezuelan president stated that the act is illegal and sent an im-

mediate order for the planes to return to America. Trump continues his reign of torment by attacking the most needy of immigrants. It is quite a contrast, as the man who penned "Trump: The Art of the Deal" is now suggesting the concept of selling American access for \$5 million.

"We're going to be selling a gold card," Trump said from the Oval Office. "You have a green card. This is a gold card. We're going to be putting a price on that card of about \$5 million and that's going to give you green-card privileges. Plus it's going to be a route to citizenship. And wealthy people will be coming into our country by buying this card."

Trump believes the gold card will attract wealthy foreigners looking to build permanent residency in America. While this may bring



high revenue to the country, there are still thousands of people being deported every day. People who have lived here for years, building homes and livelihoods, are now being ripped from their families due to his immigration policies. Is this a way of insulting the United States people by offering an exorbitantly priced golden ticket to citizenship?

"The name of 'gold visa' puts a specific twist that has never been there before," said counselor Carabajal. "People who are wealthy have used these methods and bought their way to permanent citizenship before, so why give it to the public now?"

Visas have been available for purchase in the states for celebrities since 1990. Putting them on the market during the time that Trump has been deporting thousands

of immigrants a day seems particularly cruel and shows a disregard for those suffering.

Celebrities, athletes and entertainers continue to buy visas in order to work in the United States. O-1 visas, specifically designed for individuals with extraordinary ability or achievements, have been used by a number of well-known people to work in the United States, including Justin Bieber, Trevor Noah, Hugh Jackman and Lionel Messi.

On average, the yearly income of immigrants in the United States sits around \$75,500. Only the top 1 percent can afford a \$5 million gold card.

The gold cards and the mass deportations stand in contrast to the Statue of Liberty and what it represents. The gift from France in 1884 serves as a beacon of freedom, democracy and hope, but now Trump is transforming it into a symbol of wealth, arrogance and cruelty.

The president's actions are an embarrassment to the American people and our country's foundations.

VALLEY VIEW | What are your biggest concerns regarding the transfer process?

Text by Holdenn Graff

Photos by Melvin Garcia and Zuhri Taylor



"Just knowing the right paperwork that needs to be filled out is one of my main concerns. Luckily, they have workshops that I can attend to make sure that I'm following the correct procedures in order to avoid missing out on something that will cause a delay."

Sandra Garcia, Business Administration



"I think my biggest concern is not having the necessary grades to transfer. I want to become a veterinarian, and I'm afraid that I don't have the best grades to transfer because I work too."

Paula Rubio, Biology



"It's definitely money-related because right now I don't have a job."

Andy Barrero, Undecided



"My biggest concern with transferring is all the paperwork. Doing all the paperwork, getting all the paperwork lost, or something going wrong with it in general."

Estefani Herrera, Media Arts

SPORTS



Taylor Cowhey for the Valley Star

Head coach Will Skett stands with his son Casey before a recent home game.

Valley sees double Sketts

The father-son duo making their mark on campus.

Alex Diaz,
Sports Editor

Valley's baseball stadium, with its well-worn turf, has familiar footing on its field. Head coach Will Skett and son Casey Skett share a bond as they traverse the same bases that shaped their family's history. Skett, a former Monarch athlete, brings a wealth of experience and a deep passion for the game. He began at Valley and then transferred to Cal State Long Beach as an outfielder. In 1996, he was drafted by the Toronto Blue Jays and later served as a hitting coach for the Chicago Cubs. In 2021, Skett returned to Valley to become an assistant coach.

"It's a new adjustment getting used to head coach, but the game doesn't change," said Skett. "Whether it's coaching high school or pro ball level, it's all the same to me." The father and son entered Valley at the same time in 2021. Fast forward to the conclusion of the 2024-2025 Monarch baseball season, where former head coach Dave Mallas, after two decades, announced his decision to step down. With this transition, Will Skett rose to the occasion and took on head coach.

Sophomore Casey Skett follows behind his father's footsteps. Casey, an outfielder, appreciates how his father navigates the dual

role of coach and parent. He emphasizes that his dad's nurturing approach not only fosters his love for the game but also encourages him to develop his skills without the fear of burnout. One of Casey's most cherished memories with his dad happened when he was five years old and hit his first home run in tee ball. For his father, the favorite memory is witnessing Casey's first college home run, creating a full-circle moment for both of them. Throughout his baseball journey, his father has always been by his

side, acting as both a coach and a mentor, guiding him through every challenge and celebrating every victory on the field. Casey shared that his dad's recent transition into the head coach role is a new experience for both of them. Despite the challenges that come with such change, he has been adapting and doing a good job leading the team. "I've always just turned the switch on and off," said the right fielder. "He's a dad at home and coach on the field."

A father-son duo on a team is more challenging than many realize. Throughout his

life, Casey's dad has coached him the entire way but became more hands-on once Casey entered high school. Coach Skett mentioned that watching his son grow into a great ballplayer and contribute to the team has been rewarding. The head coach discussed the importance of treating his son like the other players, distinguishing his roles as a coach and a dad early on in their journey. Initially, he and his son faced challenges; during games, Skett struggled to express emotion toward his son.

"He's never had any special treatment and I've probably been harder on him than anybody else," said coach. "It's something I had to do, to take a step back and let him be his own guy."

Establishing the team's identity and building trust are ongoing challenges for this group. Skett emphasized the importance of building a strong group mentally and physically. Whether maintaining good health or just coping with the disappointment of not achieving a win, it's important to look ahead to the next 30 games. "I get to wear a lot of hats, which means I get to be a coach, mentor and even give advice," he said Skett. "It's all about teaching these guys accountability and responsibility."

"I've always just turned the switch on and off," said Casey. "He's a dad at home and coach on the field."

Outfielder Casey Skett

Women swim and dive hang on to second place in WSC

The Monarchs swim and dive team gets a sneak peek of what to look ahead for championships.



Taylor Cowhey for the Valley Star

Swimmer Greg Carillo placed third out of eleven competitors in the 400-meter individual medley.

Alex Diaz,
Sports Editor

As swim season reached its midway point, the Monarchs competed in the second Western State Conference at Santa Monica College this past Saturday. The women's team held steady in second place overall, accumulating 272.8 points. The men's team experienced a setback, dropping two positions to finish in fourth place with 336.9 points.

At this event, Valley competed against nine colleges: Santa Barbara, Ventura, Cuesta, Santa Monica, Bakersfield,

Citrus, Pierce, Allan Hancock and College of the Canyons. This year marked a change in the conference format; unlike previous years, when Valley would not compete against these schools until the championships, they faced them earlier in the season. "You have all these teams coming together for this meet," said swimmer Nicole Tovar. "But we don't see them again until conference championships."

The meet held a total of 32 events, with the women's competing in 15. Starting strong in the first event, freshman diver Ciera Center stood

tall on the diving board, securing first place in the one-meter and three-meter dives. She achieved a perfect score of 20 in each event, establishing herself as a promising newcomer to the diving team.

In the ninth event, sophomore Alina Biryuchkova recorded a season-best time in the 100-meter freestyle. With a time of 1:09.16, she sprinted her way to a fifth-place finish.

Sophomore Mariane Avila clinched first place for the Monarchs in the 100-meter breaststroke, finishing with a time of 1:14.94. It was her second consecutive victory in this event.



Taylor Cowhey for the Valley Star

Swimmer Alina Biryuchkova placed sixth out of fifteen competitors in the 200-meter backstroke.

"There is a perception that swimming is an individual sport, but I try to push the team aspect," said women's head coach Pete Lorchio. "My job is to make sure they're in the best spot to make themselves the most successful they can be."

In the concluding event for the women, the 400-meter freestyle relay, the Monarchs, composed of swimmers Alissa Wiggins, Gianna Double, Brisa Chajan, and Ann Donohoe, earned a fourth-place finish with a time of 4:13.79. Their performance contributed 30 points to the women's team's final score, bringing

their total to 331 points.

The men's team participated in 14 of the 32 events at the conference. In the 400-meter individual medley, sophomore Greg Carillo had a close competition for second place but ultimately finished third, clocking a time of 4:41.36.

"It was unfortunate," said Carillo. "There was a lot of pressure in my chest, which ended up slowing me down at the last 50."

Freshman Chase Martsof carried an impressive performance, finishing in the top five of three events during the conference. His standout moment came in the 200-meter fre-

estyle, where he secured first place with a time of 1:52.94.

In the final event, the men's 400-meter relay swimmers, Chase Martsof, Ryan Nevsky, Greg Carrillo, and Alex Kobalvan, placed fourth with a time of 3:36.86, adding 28 points to their total score of 285.5.

"The boys have been training hard, so their times have come down a bit," said men's head coach Jim McMillan. "Those who train hard, drop time."

The Monarchs head to Bakersfield College for the final Western State Conference of the season on March 28. At 11 a.m.

Monarch baseball swept by Glendale as early struggles continue to linger

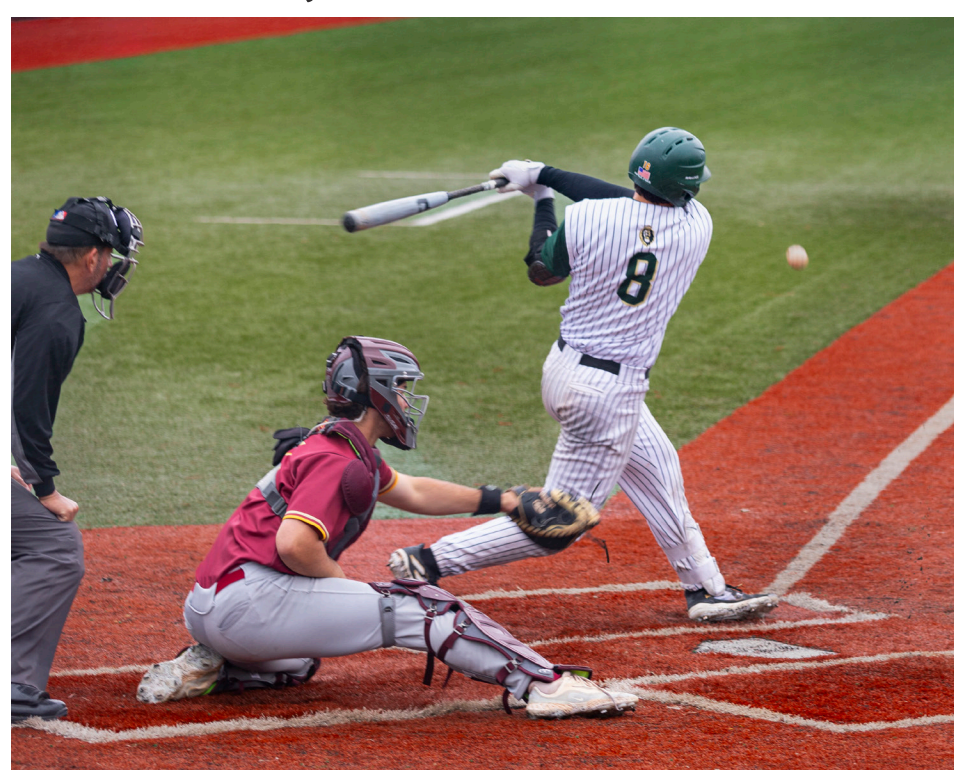
In a three-game set against the Vaqueros, Valley was outscored 35-14.

Holdenn Graff,
Sports Editor

The downward trend of Valley baseball continued as the squad was swept away by Glendale in their second series of conference play. In the three-game set on March 11, 13 and 14, the Monarchs failed to secure a win. They were defeated 10-4 in the opener before dropping the next two 10-9 and 15-1. Starting pitching proved the biggest difference, with Monarch starters allowing 21 earned runs while Glendale's surrendered just three. Valley extended its losing streak to four games and has won only once in its last eight. The squad now sits at 1-5 in conference play and 5-15 overall. "I think early they just commanded the [strike] zone better," said first-year Valley head coach Will Skett. "The first game I think we went five innings of no-hit baseball with our starter, and then it was the sixth inning he got into a bit of trouble...Games two and three, it was the inability

to consistently throw strikes. That's just what it came down to." Freshman right-hander Joseph Steventon did manage to hold the Vaqueros hitless through the first five innings of the series opener before they erupted for nine runs in the sixth. Three hit-by-pitches, a walk, and a wild pitch all helped Glendale extend the frame as they continued to add on. Valley responded with three late runs but couldn't close the gap in the end. Game two was the most competitive of the series. The Monarchs fell behind 9-1 early as starter Spencer Kratt lasted just 1 2/3 innings, allowing three home runs. However, the bullpen conceded just one run over the final 6 1/3 innings, allowing the lineup to chip away. Third baseman Colin Taylor, who finished 2-5 with three RBI, hit a key two-run double in the eighth to cap a 6-0 run and make it 10-9. In the ninth, they failed to score with their last chance as Glendale reliever Luis Fernandez shut the door. To finish off the sweep in game three, the Vaqueros quickly jumped out to a sizeable lead. They

picked up six early runs off Monarch's starter Salomon Margolis, who allowed five hits and six runs in just 2/3 of an inning. On the other side of things, Glendale starter Matt Cuccias dealt six innings of shutout baseball to keep Valley from providing the answer. The Vaqueros piled on a series-high 14 hits as they held the Monarchs to a series-low four hits. Following the game, sophomore Kevin Vazquez credited Glendale's pitching for keeping the Monarchs off balance. He noted that the team needs to do a better job battling back and thinks that they'll get a good boost as the schedule eases up over the next couple of series. Regarding any keys to turning the season around, coach Skett believes that his squad just needs to continue to play hard and compete each time they step onto the field. "It doesn't matter if your first in conference or last in conference," he said. "Everyday if you go out there and compete you give yourself a chance, and that's all we can do from this point."



Holdenn Graff for the Valley Star

Infielder Lucas Gabay fouls off a pitch during game three of the series against the Vaqueros.