

# THE VALLEY STAR

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## Valley College provides safe haven for students

Faculty, staff and student community brace for the impact of a new presidential administration set to take office in January.

Angel Silva,  
Managing Editor

Electrical engineering major Santiago Collazos remembers the dread he felt hearing about former president Donald Trump's victory in this year's presidential election. "I don't have documents, so if a person like this becomes the president, what is going to happen with people in my situation, with my mother?" Collazos recalled. "After that day, I was really scared. I couldn't sleep." These fears stem from Trump's comments throughout and after the election. On November 18, he promised to declare a national emergency to mobilize the military for deportations across the country. His presidential transition team has begun drafting executive orders on immigration, and it's expected that a Trump presidency will lead to the end of parole policies for people from Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti. Collazos' response is not unique according to kinesiology major Evelyn Sambrano Pinto. Sambrano Pinto is the president of the Rising Monarchs, a club on campus advocating for undocumented students and their families. "We had some undocumented students reach out because they don't know what's going to happen in the next four years," said Sambrano Pinto. "I saw some students crying because they are not only worried for their future, but also for their family's future, especially their parents."

Valley's undocumented community has voiced concerns about what a second Trump administration could bring for immigrants. "Once we received the [election] results as a nation, the fear amped up and it became more of a palatable feeling



Anita Boli for the Valley Star

Rising Monarchs, Valley's undocumented student support group, provides information about the club and future meetings.

of insecurity and knowledge that the interests of the incoming administration were not in favor of support undocumented individuals," said Javier Carbajal-Ramos, Coordinator of Valley's Dream Resource Center (DRC). Housed in the Mosaic Village at the heart of campus, the DRC serves as a resource hub and community meeting place for undocumented students to receive services and counseling. A week after the election, the Rising Monarchs held a debrief meeting there to talk through

what students were feeling. "At that moment, we were like 'ok, things can happen, bad things can happen, but we are here, and we are together on this, so let's go through this,'" said Collazos. According to Carbajal-Ramos, the most common fears students have are whether they, or their family members, are at risk of deportation, or if naturalization efforts are at risk. "We have an average of about 1,000 undocumented students that we know of at Valley," said Carbajal-Ramos.

"We have anywhere from 700 to 1,000 in a given semester." Opening in Fall 2017, the primary mission of the DRC is to support those students in their educational journeys at Valley, while providing resources to navigate their immigrant status while doing so. "The Dream Resource Center offers financial aid, we offer book grants, we also have counseling, personal and academic counseling," said Sambrano Pinto, who also works as a registration assistant for the center. "We also focus on having a room especially for un-

documented or immigrant students - this is their safe zone." The DRC also partners with outside organizations, like the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), which provides legal services for students or family members. Other external partnerships include Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural and Bookstore and the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. On campus, the DRC also partners with other centers and programs on campus, such as Umoja Black Scholars and the Rainbow Pride Center. "I tell individuals, I have the

power of these two hands, but when I have more hands within my system, we can reach that individual that might not yet have the strength to come to me," said Carbajal-Ramos. Outside of the DRC, the Rising Monarchs strive to create an environment supportive of undocumented students and allies. The club, which meets every first and last Thursday of each month in the Mosaic Village, has been operational for a year and a half, according to Collazos. "When we first created this space, we met more people like us in our situation, and people who were not in our situation but that support this movement," said Collazos. "When we bring new students, the first time that they come here, they are like, 'I didn't know that we had this space for us.' I was like, 'yeah, we are here for you, for everyone.'" Campus administration has reiterated the same sentiment. "Of course Valley College does not participate in any federal immigration enforcement. In fact, if officials came to Valley College we would contact our general counsel and have them interact with any immigration officials," said Valley College President Barry Gribbons. "I also understand that L.A. County Sheriffs and LAPD have similar policies where they do not enforce immigration laws nor work with immigration officials." Despite the uncertainty around the future of immigrant communities in the United States, Sambrano Pinto is hopeful. "We are the future of this country. What would the US say, what would America do without immigrants?" said Sambrano Pinto. "I just want to say that even if we can see the dark right now, we're going to see a light in the future. How? We don't know, we don't know. But we gotta keep positive."



Victoria Saxxon,  
Staff Writer

SoCalGas was called to Valley College after complaints over a gas odor lingering in the air between the Emergency Services and Business/Journalism buildings on Monday night. Company officials said that they have been called to the campus multiple times from concerned students regarding the aroma. SoCalGas workers used a device similar to Tracer Gas Leak Detector, which is sometimes called a gas sniffer. This tool uses another gas, like helium, that is pumped into the gas pipe line, which in turn pushes any gas to the surface and is detected by the instrument. SoCalGas used this gadget to determine their gas line is not the source of the leak. Officials reported it is a line that belongs to the college and said they would report it to campus authorities.

## Program focuses on wellness

Assembly bill pushing more than snacks at vending machines.

Brian Nemorin,  
Staff Writer

Participating California community colleges and Cal State campuses are part of a pilot project to provide students with "wellness vending machines." Assembly Bill 2482 requires participating campuses to submit a report on July 1, 2025 on the progress of the machines. Although Valley College, which is not part of the project, does not feature wellness machines on campus, the college offers free menstrual products on selected campus bathrooms. The Student Health Center also provides Narcan, an opioid reversal medication, and fentanyl testing strips. Valley's vending machines mostly offer food and drinks, but architecture major Jacob Tunchez thinks his campus should consider adopting wellness machines. "That would be a great idea. Having Narcan would definitely save lives, and it's generally an easy process to use something like that," said Tunchez. The text of Assembly Bill 2482 outlines that the vending machines could sell "condoms, dental dams, menstrual cups, lubrication, tampons, menstrual pads, pregnancy tests, and nonprescription drugs, including discounted emergency contraception." On some campuses where similar vending machines exist, they also sell soap, shampoo, deodorant,



Photo Illustration by Astrid Cortez

toothpaste, and eye drops. Valley's Alison Tellez said vending machines that sell health products is "a good idea [because] the campus is trying to care for their students." However, she's not so sure about selling pharmaceuticals in the vending machines. "I don't like that anyone has access to [Narcan]," said Tellez. "The measures for it should be controlled. Anybody that is on campus, even little kids could buy it...It's not a good idea to do it like that."

Some students expressed concern about selling any type of drug on campus because Valley is an open campus. Elementary education major Mariely Moreno said that providing health products to students in vending machines just makes sense. "There's times where you're out of the house and you don't have your stuff with you," Moreno said.

## Fall 2024 Final Schedule

Monday, December 9 to Sunday, December 15

Except for classes of less-than-semester length, the LAST DAY OF REGULAR INSTRUCTION IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8.

Classes meeting less-than-semester length will have the final exams at the last meeting of the class.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS MUST BE HELD ON THE DAY AND TIME SCHEDULED AND IN REGULARLY ASSIGNED CLASSROOMS.

FRIDAY CLASSES will have their final during the regular class meeting on December 13.

SATURDAY CLASSES will have their final during the regular class meeting on December 14.

### DAY CLASSES

Day and Date Of Final Exam	MONDAY DEC 9			TUESDAY DEC 10			
	Time of Exam	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm
Normal Class Schedule	6:30 - 7:55 MW	9:40 - 10:50 MTWTh	1:00 - 2:10 MTWTh	6:30 - 7:55 TTh	9:40 - 11:05 TTh	1:00 - 2:25 TTh	
	6:45 - 7:55 MTWTh	9:40 - 11:05 MW	1:00 - 2:25 MW		9:40 - 10:55 TThF	1:00 - 2:15 TThF	
		9:40 - 10:55 MWF	1:00 - 2:15 MWTh		9:40 - 12:10 TTh	1:00 - 3:30 TTh	
		9:40 - 12:10 MW	1:00 - 3:30 MW				
Day and Date Of Final Exam	WEDNESDAY DEC 11			THURSDAY DEC 12			
	Time of Exam	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm
Normal Class Schedule	8:15 - 9:25 MTWTh	11:20 - 12:30 MTWTh	2:20 - 3:30 MTWTh	8:00 - 9:25 TTh	11:20 - 12:45 TTh	1:45 - 3:10 TTh	
	8:00 - 9:25 MW	11:20 - 12:45 MW	2:40 - 4:05 MW	8:00 - 9:15 TThF	11:20 - 12:35 TThF	1:45 - 3:00 TThF	
	8:00 - 9:15 MWF	11:20 - 12:35 MWF		8:00 - 10:30 TTh	11:20 - 1:50 TTh		
	8:00 - 10:30 MW	11:20 - 1:50 MW					

### EVENING CLASSES

CLASSES MEETING AT 3 PM OR BEFORE 5 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT 5 PM OR BEFORE 6 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT OR AFTER 6 PM		
Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time
M	M Dec 9	4 - 6pm	M	Dec 9	4:30 - 6:30pm	M	M Dec 9	7 - 9pm
T	T Dec 10	4 - 6pm	T	Dec 10	4:30 - 6:30pm	T	T Dec 10	7 - 9pm
W	W Dec 11	4 - 6pm	W	Dec 11	4:30 - 6:30pm	W	W Dec 11	7 - 9pm
Th	Th Dec 12	4 - 6pm	Th	Dec 12	4:30 - 6:30pm	Th	Th Dec 12	7 - 9pm
MW	M Dec 9	4 - 6pm	MW	Dec 9	4:30 - 6:30pm	MW	M Dec 9	7 - 9pm
TTh	T Dec 10	4 - 6pm	TTh	Dec 10	4:30 - 6:30pm	TTh	T Dec 10	7 - 9pm

In the event of a conflict, speak with your instructor to schedule an alternate time to take the final.

To use the schedule:

Locate the day and hour of your class on the grid.

Days of the week are abbreviated M T W Th F for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

## NEWS

### 13-year-old student makes a pit stop at Valley on his journey to Caltech

#### Nathan Sungwoo Koo attends Valley as a dual enrollment student and serves as a math tutor.

**Daimler Koch,**  
Online Editor

While most middle schoolers are learning the basics of algebra, 13-year-old Valley College student Nathan Sungwoo Koo presented his Calculus 3 instructor with a mathematical function proving that functions can have a finite number of countable discontinuities. "He started learning how to speak really early," said Nathan's mother, Yunhee Sungwoo Koo. "I think he was around 12 months old when he started making phonics for actual words. When he was around three, he would spend hours and hours playing with puzzles."

The math and science major takes a variety of classes at Valley including Calc-3, Linear Algebra, Physics 37, and Computer Science, all while still technically considered a middle schooler. Koo, who tutors other Valley students in math, is on track to transfer to the California Institute of Technology, where he wishes to become a math professor.

Koo's mother first noticed that her son was different from his peers when he asked to skip kindergarten and go directly to first grade. From then, the elementary school student began studying calculus, at the same time many of his peers were first learning how to add and subtract. He would later score in the 145 to 154 range on an IQ test from an independent company.

Koo cites his five-year-old sister, Ellie, who attends Valley as well, as his role model, learning whatever math

she was currently learning in school himself. He later went on to tutor her himself.

"I thought it was interesting that he kept talking about math and science at such a young age," said his mother. "No one told him to study or research those topics but he just naturally took interest in them. Neither my husband or I are in the STEM field at all, but he was different."

Nathan's journey to Valley proved to be challenging for both him and his mom. Since fourth grade Koo has attended a variety of schools and programs ranging from public to private. However, for the past year Koo has been homeschooled by his mother, allowing him to take college level courses at Valley.

"I've had lots of unsupportive people and supportive people, but I'm really glad that my parents are part of the supportive group," he said. "They've really been helping me through everything. They help me plan, they help me schedule, they do so much stuff, they feed me, they clothe me, they put me under a roof. You know, I think everybody should love their parents. Parents are the best. And mine in particular helped me through lots of things."

Koo cites his inspiration for tutoring coming from his gratitude for previous teachers in his life. At A Valley. He asked Dr. Fendi, a math liaison at the ARC and one of his current supervisors, for the position and was then led through an interview process which tested his communication and intellectual skills. While he met all the requirements on paper, Koo's extroverted personality got him the job.

"One of my thoughts was definitely 'he is brilliant,'" Fendi said, speaking about the first time they met. "I feel astonished to have someone who's 13 years old willing to learn, willing to communicate, motivated to start his job at 13 years old, working in the real world already at this young age. So I am inspired as a math professor, a math liaison, and as someone in society by someone talented like him. I am impressed."

While not at school, the 13-year-old spends his time visiting the Cal-Tech campus, playing piano, singing some songs, cooking, and gardening. He enjoys talking with his older friends about their shared studies and universal experiences, and his same-aged peers about indie video games, which he enjoys for their free-spirited creative development.

He looks up to notable mathematicians like Albert Einstein; Leonhard Euler, a 18th-century founder of pure mathematics; Erwin Schrodinger, a pioneer in quantum mechanics; and Andrew Wiles, a British mathe-

matician who proved Fermat's Last Theorem, which opened up new doors in mathematics.

Additionally, he finds relatability in Elliot Tanner, a fellow young college student who recently received his Master's Degree in Physics from the University of Minnesota at 15 years old in December 2023, and the titular character of Young Sheldon.

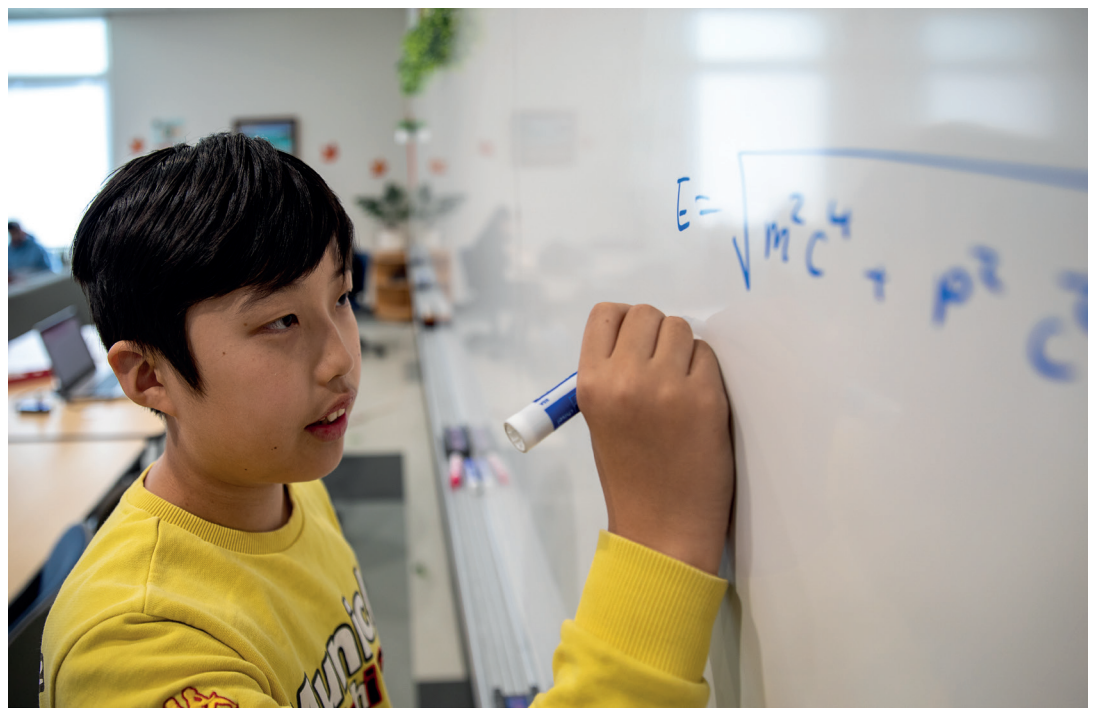
"It's quite silly to say that somebody's age determines how much they know. I

think that from a young age, people should just learn as much as they can," shared Koo. "I really think learning is a beautiful thing," Nathan said. "It symbolizes freedom."

In order to remain competitive, Nathan needs to complete a research paper in two years for his transfer to Caltech, most likely on deeper probability theory. Once he's accepted, he hopes to earn a PhD in theoretical physics, hopefully skipping a master's in pure mathema-

tics. Afterwards, he plans on entering academia, performing research in his field and teaching to the masses, driven by the same forces that power his love for tutoring.

"My life is full of wonderful things, even if they don't include STEM or research," he said. "I take walks a lot, pretty often, and they just let me enjoy the beauty of nature, like the trees above us, the bright blue sky. Maybe it's a little stereotypical, but life is beautiful, and I'd like to have a lot of it."



Daniel Padilla for the Valley Star

Nathan Sungwoo Koo uses the Academic Resource Center whiteboard to have fun with quantum theory.

### Medical professionals provide tips on how to stay healthy during flu season

#### Statistics show the number of flu cases have been on the rise since October and are steadily increasing.

**Hilary Van Hoose,**  
Copy Editor

Although the possibility of catching an illness during the school year is certainly nothing to sneeze at, students armed with accurate information and good habits have the tools needed to stay healthy.

While many students may prefer in-person classes, contagious classmates who claim "it's just allergies" make it impossible for them to completely avoid exposure to such diseases as RSV, influenza, norovirus, COVID-19, and the common cold.

"Everybody was at home learning online, and when everyone came back [to campus], definitely there were a lot more people sick," said Valley College Respiratory Therapy Program Director Gregory Morrison.

This is especially true during fall and winter, as wastewater data shows that infection rates in Los Angeles for all of these illnesses began rising rapidly in October and are still increasing.

As many are now aware, studies and reports have revealed that even asymptomatic COVID-19 infections have contributed to a significant

rise in disabilities, with many individuals developing lasting or emerging post-viral conditions, commonly known as long-COVID. However, recent research published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases shows that similar long-term health effects can

occur with the flu, with symptoms persisting for months or even years in some cases.

Although "long-flu" is not usually as frequent or severe as the impact of Covid-19, the Lancet study showed that it can cause chronic fatigue and health problems invol-

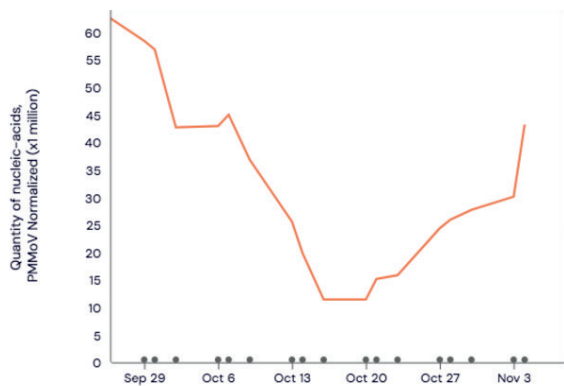
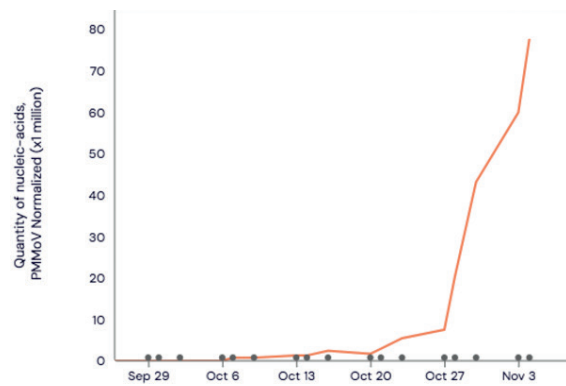
ving the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, and digestive system. "We've seen some horrific outbreaks that don't seem horrific now because we've got Covid, but in 2018 we lost 80,000 people to the flu in the country and a third of those were kids," said Morrison.

Staying physically healthy. Studies show that adults who exercise regularly are about half as likely to die from flu and pneumonia or be hospitalized due to COVID-19. Eating a healthy diet also helps the immune system fight infectious diseases.

and drinking a lot of Emergen-C, those packets of electrolytes with all the other goodies you might need," Valley student Joseph Martinez said. Practicing good personal hygiene helps a lot too. CDC guidelines say: do not kiss, hug, or share the food or drink of someone who is infectious. The CDC also recommends washing your hands before touching food, and before touching your eyes, nose, mouth, or ears.

Finally, it's important to stay up to date with vaccinations, according to studies by the CDC, The BMJ, and The New England Journal of Medicine, because vaccines dramatically reduce the likelihood and severity of both infection and transmission. Health Center officials stated that the campus' health center provides vaccinations for flu, COVID-19, and other currently circulating viruses, as well as offering combined flu/COVID-19 tests for students who have symptoms.

"I stay inside as much as I can and make sure I'm keeping up with myself, being cautious to those around me," said Valley Student Kendrick Davis on staying safe during flu season.



Wastewater data of flu (Left) and Covid (right) infections from Waste Water Scan

Similar to COVID-19, variants of the H1N1 strain that caused the Spanish flu in 1918 still cause occasional pandemics. Every seasonal and pandemic flu in the last century is descended from that 1918 flu, and "direct descendants of the 1918 flu combined with bird flu

masks such as N95s or P100s in indoor or crowded places. The CDC also recommends using a portable HEPA air purifier to filter out harmful viruses, and opening windows to improve ventilation.

Another way to improve resistance to infection is by

Additionally, adults who sleep for seven to nine hours every night are less likely to fall ill and experience better protection from vaccinations, according to a study by the National Institute for Health Research. "I'm wearing more masks

### Trustees retain their seats during recent election

#### LACCD board members Henderson, Iino, Vela, and Hoffman easily win re-election bids by wide margins.

**Kaia Mann,**  
Editor-in-chief

The 2024 election brought stability to the LACCD as all four seats up for election were swept by incumbent trustees, amid a leadership shift from former Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez to Interim Chancellor Alberto J. Román.

The LACCD serves as the largest community college district in the U.S. overseeing nine community colleges in Los Angeles county. The seven-member board of trustees that directs and governs the district is elected by public vote. Every two years, four seats are up for election, followed by the remaining three in the next cycle.

In this election, although there were 12 candidates up for election, Andrea Hoffman (Seat 1), David Vela (Seat 3), Nichelle Henderson (Seat 5) and Kelsey Iino (Seat 7) all maintained their respective seats on the board.

This election is occurring on the heels of the resignation of LACCD Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez, which came into effect early this month. Former president of East Los Angeles College Alberto J. Román has been approved to take over as interim chancellor, effective Nov. 7.

"I have dedicated my career to public education, driven by a commitment to transforming communities and advancing social mobility through equitable educational access," said Román in a press release from the board. "I am honored to take on this role and look forward to working collaboratively to ensure everyone has the support and resources needed to thrive within our campus communities."

As a first-generation graduate and immigrant, Román has a strong connection to those with similar backgrounds within the district. He is coming into this position with 24 years of experience in education and is committed to expanding access to academic programs and targeted student support services.

"I've had the pleasure of working with him (Román) for over 5 years and have a lot of regard for him," said President Barry Gribbons. "He has a lot of experiences that I think are going to immediately help the district including both of his previously held positions as president of ELAC and as the Vice Chancellor of Human Resources."

As for the board members, Hoffman (Seat 1) chairs the Budget and Finance Committee, overseeing the district's \$5.8 billion budget, and currently leads the LACCD's Sexual Harassment/Title IX



Nichelle Henderson

Task Force. In her nine years on the board, the Valley College alumna is advocating for workforce housing, expanded dual enrollment, and increased hiring of academic and mental health counselors.

Vela (Seat 3) is committed to supporting queer students of color by advocating for permanent funding for LGBTQ+ and basic needs centers. He is currently the Chair of the Public Affairs and Legislative Committee and is prioritizing student enrollment, free tuition and the completion of student certificates including A.A degrees and transfers.

"I'm excited to continue fighting for students' basic needs—ensuring they have the resources and support they need to succeed," said Vela when contacted by The



Kelsey Iino

Star. "I am equally committed to preparing them for the future, equipping them with the skills and opportunities to thrive in their careers."

The president of the board, Henderson (Seat 5) cites her re-election goals as increasing funding, expanding workforce opportunities for students, enhancing outreach and recruitment for underserved groups, and promoting diversity among faculty. With the upcoming shift from the Biden to Trump administration, Henderson has emphasized her commitment to preserving funding for existing educational programs.

"I am proud of the overwhelming support from the community and honored to serve another term," said Henderson. "LA Community Col-



David Vela

leges provide another path to success and access to opportunities they otherwise wouldn't have had. Our colleges are designed to provide an atmosphere for our students to feel at home so they have an environment that they can thrive in. I am looking forward to the work ahead, and to continue to serve our most under-represented population."

Finally, Iino (Seat 7), the board's first vice president and chair of both the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee and the APIDA Advisory Committee, focuses her platform on supporting vulnerable students who fall outside traditional roles. She prioritizes addressing these students' basic needs to help them succeed in their educational journeys. "I'm happy that all the



Andrea Hoffman

trustees won re-election," said Gribbons. "Clearly the races were not even close, they won with large margins of support from voters."



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VALLEY LIFE

## Art faculty balance creation and education at Valley

Borja, Nagy, Queen, and Carter show off their art and workspaces through drawings, paintings, sculptures and ceramics.

**Kaia Mann,**  
Editor-in-chief

The soft scrape of charcoal fills the room as students gather in a circle, tracing the contours and shadows of the model before them. Though Amelia Borja isn't the focus of her students' gaze, she stands at the center of it all. "It's a cliché but it's true, students are really inspiring," said the life-drawing and painting instructor. "They have really incredible ideas and they're able to have new ideas and be creative in a way that isn't so burdened." Though teaching wasn't part of Borja's original plan, the impact of her own teachers motivated her to give it

a try. Her path to Valley College began after struggling with math and science, where supportive community college professors helped her succeed. "I thought maybe I could inspire people like these teachers inspired me," said Borja. "I can be a part of somebody feeling like they belong somewhere." Identifying as an abject artist, Borja embraces an affinity for the "gross," using her work to explore the realities of living in a body—particularly a female body. "There is this shared experience of suffering in this body that bleeds and cramps and seizes and gets hot and then cold and then fat and skinny," she says. "Anybody who has an aspect of femininity in them is then subject to the socialization of being female which I think inherently comes

with hating your own body and thinking that it's really gross which I love to explore." Borja got her MFA in multidisciplinary art at the Maryland Institute College of Art with her own practice spanning multiple mediums. Her pieces including sculpture, painting, and photography, incorporating materials such as silicone, plaster, and, most recently, discarded makeup in her paintings. "I think about things that should be private and secret and internal and then bring a more external lens to them, I think that is very interesting to me," said Borja. "Ultimately most of my work ends up existing at least in some way as a self-portrait.

**Angel Silva,**  
Managing Editor

Art has followed Jenene Nagy, Valley College's gallery director, in one way or another—beginning with oil painting classes she took while in Girl Scouts. "I did that for many many years and enjoyed it but didn't necessarily think I'd be 'oh I'm going to be an artist' or anything like that," said Nagy. That would change at the University of Arizona. Nagy entered without a major, and spending time with graduate students there led her to consider art as a long-term path. "It just seemed so amazing to just work in your studio all day long and all night long to get a master's degree, so it was more like that was my next goal to go

to grad school," said Nagy. After earning her MFA at the University of Oregon, Nagy entered the workforce. It was during her time as the artistic director for an arts nonprofit that she realized what she wanted from her career. "That was a very administrative role," said Nagy. "It was very different from teaching, and it was where I realized where I was not a desk job person." That year her husband entered a graduate program at UC Riverside, where she later became an assistant professor. She would land at Valley as gallery director and professor of art. "This job appealed to me because it was half gallery director and half teaching, so it was good for my skillset," said Nagy. Nagy's style has evolved from large-scale temporary installations, from "these big color things, and then like black squares." She feels

els there's a very visible transition point in her art. "It's quiet. It's meditative. There's a lot of repetition in my work," said Nagy. "I use paint in my practice, but I'm more in the combination of drawing and works on paper." As gallery director, she has worked with Guardian Scholars, the Rainbow Pride Center, the Umoja Black Scholars Program, and Veterans Services. "We try to partner with the counselors and design workshops and lectures that are meaningful and impactful to their students specifically," she said. Nagy encourages her students to put in the work to make it as an artist, both at Valley and beyond. "I try to be a model for my students. I take my art seriously," said Nagy. "I hope that students who are thinking about pursuing a career in the arts give it the time and energy and seriousness that it deserves."



Amelia Borja teaches in the life drawing and painting room amidst easels and drawing horses. Daisy Tapia for the Valley Star



Janene Nagy stands among her current curation in the art gallery on campus. Carson Tarabochia-Martin for the Valley Star



Kathryn Queen prepares her clay bowls, pitchers and cups to fire in the ceramics room. Carson Tarabochia-Martin for the Valley Star



Jameson Carter works in the sculpture room amid saws, hoses, and welding equipment. Carson Tarabochia-Martin for the Valley Star

**Kaia Mann,**  
Editor-in-chief

Katie Queen, draped in her signature 'wooby' scarf and pottery apron, centers her clay on the wheel, ensuring the foundation is solid from the start. In the classroom, she does the same, guiding and shaping her students. "If you go into that classroom it's not just a normal lecture, it's so lab based and people from lots of different places that would never talk or have a relationship with each other are coming together in this environment," said Queen. "That's what I love about teaching."

Queen specializes in ceramics, crafting both sculptural pieces and functional vessels, citing her attraction to the medium as its grounding and calming nature. "I was a pretty naughty teenager, and art was a way for me to become focused and find a way out of my dysfunction," she states. Queen received her undergraduate degree from the Kansas City Art Institute and her MFA at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where she grew up. Now an Angeleno, she "always knew" she wanted to teach at the college level. At Valley, the mother of three wears a myriad of hats including professor of two-dimensional design, color theory and ceramics I, II and

III while also serving as the department chair and curator. In her own work, Queen creates in series and focuses largely on process while finding inspiration in her relationships and "family unit." She cites that teaching the fundamentals of art daily seeps into her own endeavors which are rooted in formal elements. Arches, gestures, and non-linear forms are recurring motifs in her pieces. "I love that people can kind of find similarities through art and break barriers that are present in the outside world," said Queen. "Art can be the place that maybe makes us all become a collective unit."

**Angel Silva,**  
Managing Editor

Sculpture professor Jameson Carter strives to create situations where students "have to wrestle with their own creative mind." "It's difficult to teach creativity, but you can find strategies that force a student into being creative in a way they haven't been before," said Carter. "Because ultimately, creativity is unique problem-solving." For Carter, that creativity is at the core of his own work—making the ephemeral tangible in a way that resonates with others through sculpture in many different mediums. "You'd say the words 'a ray of light' or 'a ray of sunshine' but our hands go right through

it, it's not something that we can hold or take with us or look at more than a fleeting moment," said Carter. "I'm trying to make those things a little bit more concrete." Carter's sculptures call forth the connecting experiences that every person has—from joy to grief, his work aims to uplift the baselines that every person experiences. In his last exhibition prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Carter explored the process of mourning in a solo show at the Klowden Mann gallery. "Both of my parents died right before the pandemic—my mom died in August 2019 and my dad died in January 2020, and then we were on lockdown in March," said Carter. "The solo show that I did was about me catharting that situation, but it also gave me time to grieve I think in a way

that was meaningful, effective, and I learned from it." Finding new ways to connect with others and perceive things differently is at the center of Carter's approach to teaching art in his sculpture classes. "As an art teacher trying to teach fine art it's important for me to get them to step outside of their comfort zone and don't make what they think about making, make things that challenge them, things that they've never thought about before," said Carter. Carter hopes that his students will take these lessons to heart, no matter where they go. "Keep making work no matter what," said Carter. "If you love it and that's what you want to be in, that's what you have to do. Our society is not set up to support artists, and you just have to push back."

## OPINION

### Judge makes the right call in handing out punishment in murder case

Vegas area politician Robert Telles will serve a life sentence with enhancements for the murder of journalist Jeffrey German.

**Brian Nemorin,**  
Staff Writer

The reputable Judge Michelle Leavitt satisfyingly sentenced Las Vegas-area Democratic politician Robert Telles to life in prison earlier this year for the brutal first-degree murder of investigative journalist Jeffrey German.

And if life imprisonment was not enough, after a two-week long trial and deliberations, Leavitt added sentencing enhancements of an additional eight years for use of a deadly weapon -- a 12-inch hunting knife and the age of German, who was 70 at the time of his death in 2022. A 12-panel jury found Telles guilty of first-degree murder.

The unpleasant, devastating news that German was found dead outside his house on Sept. 3, a day after he was stabbed with a 12-inch hunting knife, was reported with discontentment and confusion. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department identified politician Telles as a suspect and arrested him during a standoff at his house on Sept. 7. Legal officials documented the defendant Telles' D.N.A. was found on the journalist's clothing along with cut-up, bloodied, sneakers and a bloodstained straw-hat.

The defendant remains held without bail at the Las Vegas, Nevada; Clark County Detention Center: on the charge of first-degree murder. He is next due face-to-face, in-person with the judge on the date of October 26.

Leavitt made the most educated legal decision, and by adding an additional eight years to a life sentence, makes an emphasis that says crime never pays; even if you were

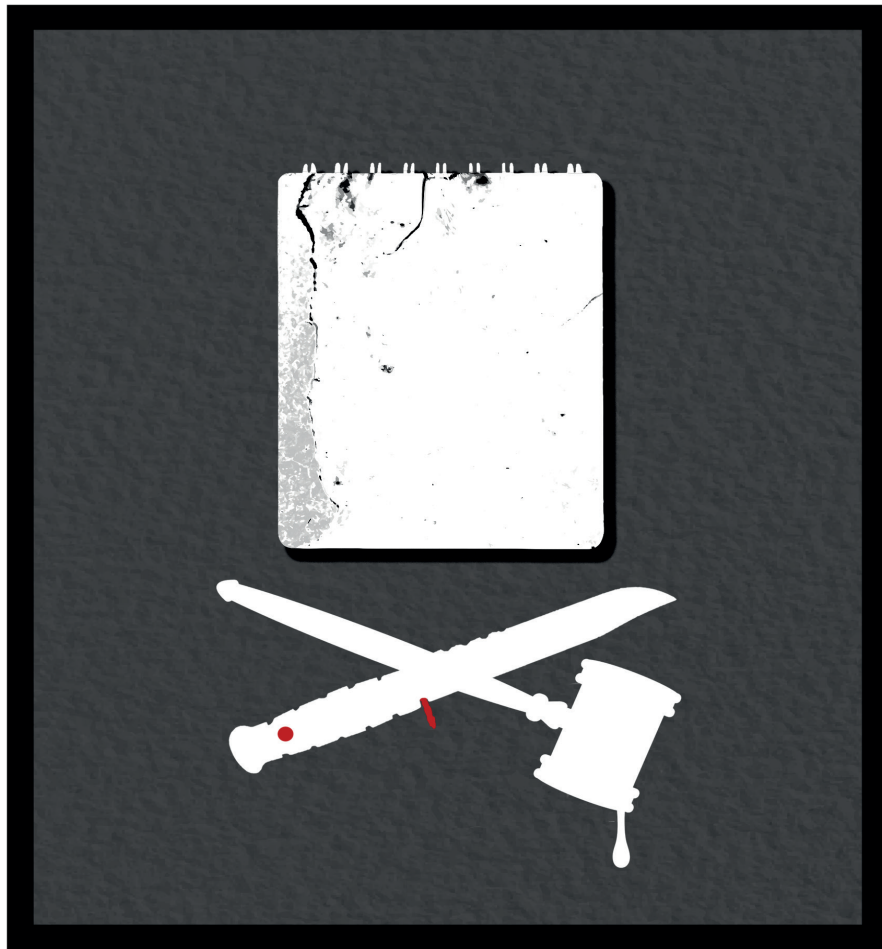


Photo Illustration by Sydne Santiago

a billionaire or a celebrity. As of today, Judge Leavitt is employed in department XII (12) in the Eighth (8th) Judicial District Court Term of Office and has been so since the year 2002. Again, compliments to the judge for her; impressive unwavering steadfast leadership, guidance and authority. She is Su-

per-Woman, Wonder-Woman, She-Hulk and Bat-Woman; all for one and one for all. Moving forward, Judge Leavitt will have a high legal status for years to come. She is an American hero. She held her head up firmly and remained unbiased to favoritism even though the defendant worked in the legal field with the po-

sition of politician, just as she works in the legal field with the position of courtroom judge. To be specific, the defendant Telles worked in Nevada in Public Administration, Public Policy; which refers to the management of public programs. As for German, he was born Milwaukee, Wisconsin. German earned a mas-

ter's degree from Marquette University, and began his career as an intern for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

German was a columnist and investigative reporter at the 'Las Vegas Sun,' for more than two decades, covering organized crime, government, politics, and courts. German also covered local stories like the epic Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Grand Resort fire in Paradise, Nevada on November 21, 1980.

The First Amendment protects both the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. Reporters and Journalists; have a right to access public places to gather and disseminate news.

In truth and in reality, professional reporters and journalists can face violence and intimidation for exercising their fundamental right to freedom of expression. Some of the greatest dangers of being a reporter or journalist include physical violence, intimidation, harassment, threats of violence, imprisonment, legal repercussions for reporting, or exposure to dangerous situations like protests or conflict zones. Other threats can include online harassment, gender-based threats for female journalists and psychological stress or post traumatic stress disorder from witnessing traumatic events after reporting. Reporters and journalists working in war zones or covering organized crime often face the most significant risks. But the story is worth it, and the rights of the writer should be protected.

As NBC Nightly news anchor Lester Holt said, "you have to go where the story is to report on it. As a journalist, you are essentially running to things that other people are running away from."



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### Emotional decision making hurts more in the long run.

Scientists warn against mental shortcuts and suggest taking a broader look at each circumstance.

**Jessica Guo,**  
Special to the star

Reasoning often falls second to emotion as logic comes after decisions to justify the purchase of a Disneyland fastpass, overpriced concert tickets, or a vote for a candidate who will not serve the country's best interests.

Psychologists call these mental shortcuts behind quick decision-making "heuristics." This strategy relies on generalizations which prevent cognitive overload or overthinking. Availability heuristics are a subset of the larger umbrella and take place when individuals make a decision based on the memories or information which comes easiest to mind.

For example, one might assume driving cars are safer than taking a plane because vivid images of a plane crash overpower the images of a car accident. In reality, the Civil Aviation Organization states the chances of dying on a commercial flight is one in 11 million while the chances of dying in a car crash are one in five thousand.

Availability heuristics may have played a role in Trump's success. The republican's use of nostalgia, "Make America Great Again," allowed memories of an idealized past to resurface. Given the choice between the already familiar Trump and a newer Harris, a subconscious bias



Photo Illustration by Sydne Santiago

may form amongst individuals who have already experienced a Trump presidency. Harris on the other hand, who took over after Biden resigned from the race, failed to sway blue-collared voters as the incumbent had in the 2016 election. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, for example, had opted not to endorse a party despite backing Democrats since 2000.

Many workers frustrated with globalization and other policies expressed their discontent through voting Trump. In a sense, they had voted for Trump's constant appeal and memorable catchphrase: "make America great again." Heuristics are often a poor way to weigh statistics and numeric data, and voters may have defaulted to Trump as he spent his time at his rallies

promoting baseless claims on economics and immigration. Those who voted red criticized Joe Biden's economic policies, drawing comparisons to Trump's pre-pandemic economy. Although the Republican candidate did have success, data from Vox suggests Biden has contributed a fair share to the post-COVID recovery. Under his watch, Vox Media reports an increase of 2.7

million jobs in 2021. Additionally, unemployment reached its lowest since 1969. The stock market similarly grew 24 percent from the year before, hitting an all time high in November. In this respect, both Trump and Biden have contributed to a stronger Wall Street, although the Republican candidate has been given more credit for riding the wave of long-term economic recovery following 2008.

Additionally, many Trump supporters insist that his immigration policies were tough and focused on bringing down crime. However, the Washington Post reports Trump's term averaging 500,000 deportations a year while Biden's administration averaged more than 1 million deportations in 2022 alone. Despite the discrepancies within the data, many still attribute tougher immigration policies to Trump due to his fiery, rhetoric-filled speeches which exaggerates the dangers of asylum-seekers and his actions against them. Similarly, he appealed more to the working-class, clocking in at McDonalds to salt some fries.

To combat decisions based on instinct or emotion, a willingness to step back and evaluate different options is necessary. One has to find the middle ground between Dr. Spock's cold logic and Leonard "Bones" McCoy rashness to embody Captain James Kirk's levelheaded decision making.

### VALLEY VIEW | How do you think the election will effect students?

Text by JC Rosa

Photos by Ryan Nordberg



"For me, I dont feel happy at all. I feel really stressed about it. I know that nothing is going to change next month, but I feel that in a year there may be something that can put us in a really hard position."

-Alina Lysak, business major



"Our Fafsa is going to be taken away so anybody who has financial aid will no longer have it."

-Jade Godfrey, theater arts major



"I dont think it will effect students... everything that is beng said is a way to get people to react."

-Johnny Gabriel, accounting major



"My biggest worry for any college sudent who goes to a public school in America now that Trump will be president is that it is going to be harder and ten times more conveluded to know what classes to take."

-Sam Pullen, political science major

## VALLEY LIFE

# The show did not go on for Night of the Living Dead

## Valley theater's fall production suffered an early death after multiple members of the cast contracted Covid-19.



Astrid Cortez for the Valley Star

The cast of Valley's 'Night of the Living Dead' getting ready and putting on zombie makeup before their final dress rehearsal at the Emerson Theater at the Theater 68 Arts Complex.

**Kaia Mann,**  
Editor-in-chief

Valley theater's production of "Night of the Living Dead" flatlined after several cast members contracted Covid.

The play, initially scheduled for nine performances over a two-week run at the department's new home, the Emerson Theater in the Theater68 Arts Complex, ended six shows short. The 50-seat theater potentially left 300 tickets to rest. "Ultimately there was enough illness within the cast that

we felt that it was the safest and most responsible thing to call the show," said the director Mathew Mcray. "We were still able to get in about half of our performances and we were still able to strike the show (remove the show from the theater) as a company and we will do a final debrief day."

The play, an adaptation of the 1968 movie of the same name, came in at just over an hour, featuring blood, guts and action-packed zombie scenes. There are currently no plans for the play to be rescheduled.

Shortly after the cancellation, the department released

a statement on their Instagram sharing they were "saddened" by the news but proud of all the hard work from the cast and crew. They concluded the statement saying, "It was a pleasure to have these students, and the faculty and staff have been honored to have them."

COVID-19 cases in Los Angeles County have been steadily rising, with the current seven-day average at 55 new cases per day, bringing the total for 2024 to 86,783. In the theater industry, COVID-19 safety remains an ongoing and growing concern worldwide, with an increasing

number of productions being canceled due to illness.

"Macbeth" starring David Tennant at the Harold Pinter Theatre met a similar fate to Valley's Night of the Living Dead, with its performances canceled just two hours before the call for "places" leaving eager audiences disappointed.

"Unfortunately it's not the most uncommon thing," said Mcray. "The field of theater and live events are still wrestling with how we do this safely and reasonably, and unfortunately sometimes fate intervenes and throws us a curveball."

Covid safety in theater was

top priority in the beginning of the pandemic, but as years passed most precautions have been pushed to the sideline, with many theaters no longer requiring vaccines or masking. For equity theaters, a rigorous schedule of testing is still mandated according to the Actors' Equity Association guidelines, yet community colleges and theaters, such as the Emerson, are not required to follow these precautions.

The department is positive about the future of Valley theater, excited to utilize everything they learned this year in the spring produc-

tion. While awaiting the new theatrical spaces promised in the Valley Academic and Cultural Center, all classes and performances will still be held at Emerson Theater.

"It was the right call for the safety of everyone involved," said Alana Malcolm, who played Judy. "Of course it breaks my heart. Everyone worked so hard on the show, and we were all so excited to share it with people, but I feel so proud to have been a part of this process with all the wonderful cast and crew mates."



Anita Boli for the Valley Star

Professor Pete Lopez standing proud in his office in the foreign language building.

# Chicano professor sets new course

## Pete Lopez has been teaching at Valley for 28 years and counting.

**Sara Lemon,**  
Staff Writer

A third generation Californian raised in the historic Lincoln Heights neighborhood adjacent to Dodger Stadium and Olvera Street, professor Pete Lopez has taught at Valley College for 28 years. And although there is no timeline for retirement, the Chicano studies professor can't help but look ahead. "I look forward to the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and the time to pursue my other passions and interests, too," said Lopez. "I plan to keep on teaching, researching and traveling and spending a lot more time in Iowa with my family and grandchildren. Who knows, I might end up teaching Chicano studies in Iowa."

The third generation Angelino, who has been happily married to his high-school sweetheart for 43 years, stands tall as a student advocate. His office features a collection of symbols of advocacy that include a Diego Rivera painting, a United Farm Workers of America flag, a sticker that reads "I love East Los," and the 1992 documentary No Grapes that advocates for a ban on the use of pesticides in grape production. Lopez said that the fight continues and in today's political climate, there is a lot to fight for.

"The current political climate we are living through is so unnerving to say the least," he said. "For years, I have been sharing thoughts and concerns with my students about the dangers posed by political reactionary movements that could easily threaten

our democratic institutions." "I have never shied away from vocalizing caveats about the dangers of political extremism with cult-like leaders. And yet, here we are. I hope we prepare our students as they are so deserving because as Bob Dylan once reminded us, 'times they are changing.'"

Lopez has also collected a number of awards at Valley, including an Apple Award, and, most recently, he was presented with an Instructor Appreciation award from EOPS.

Lopez graduated from Loyola Marymount University and earned his master's at Cal State LA in Mexican American studies. His roles at Valley include Chicano studies program director, Student Equity Achievement program and the California Community Colleges Ethnic Studies faculty council member.

Over the years of teaching, he saw multi-generational families come through Valley. Many of his students have been the offspring of his former students. Lopez said he tries to provide students with opportunities to explore and analyze the experiences of Mexican Americans in the United States. He addresses the lack of representation of Chicano history in U.S. literature and seeks to empower students to enter a multi-ethnic workforce and more effectively work toward social justice.

The term Chicano is a self-ascribed term that specifically refers to U.S. citizens of Mexican American heritage and/or lineage. Lopez said, "It's all about our dual heritage. They live and breathe the 'American' experience. In Mexico, Chicanos are seen more as American than Mexican."

He explained that many Chicanos are not fluent in Spanish

and do not fully grasp Mexican culture, history, or popular culture. They are proud of their Mexican roots, customs and traditions and are always looking to learn more about their ancestral lineage.

Lopez also revels in the music of diverse cultures. "I play Latin percussion in a band," the professor said. "My conga drums are beckoning as are [Frank Grillo] Machito, [Antonio Carlos] Jobim, [John] Coltrane and Miles [Davis]." He also shared a unique hobby, "I also enjoy Formula 1 racing."

Martin De Mucha Flores, assistant dean of student equity and Latina Heritage Committee said, "Pete has been a long time advocate of Latino student success. He stepped in to lead and encourage the new vanguard of Latino, Latina and Latinx leaders on campus to chart a new path and vision forward for the community."

Professor Lopez oversees the annual Dia de los Muertos at Valley. "Since 1997, the Day of the Dead event has offered the students and faculty an opportunity to join together in building altars for friends and family who have passed on," said Lopez. "This tradition has its roots dating back four thousand years."

As Lopez shared his future vision of spending more time with his grandchildren, he began to smile and laugh a little at the idea of no longer walking the halls of Valley.

"Taking courses with professor Lopez significantly impacted my career choices," said student Tiffani Castro. "He made me understand the great need of having educators who would guide Chicano/Latino students to their potential. His drive further cemented my commitment in becoming an educator."

# Shining a light on student needs

## Valley's resources offer reprieve for the community.

**Sara Lemon,**  
Staff Writer

Students completed the annual Real College Survey last year that showed 50 percent were experiencing food insecurity, 64 percent were struggling with housing insecurity and 20 percent were battling homelessness. More than 71 percent experienced a combination of these issues.

Valley College's Basic Needs counselor and coordinator, Juan Castellanos, has firsthand experience dealing with challenges during college.

"As someone who personally experienced basic needs when I was in community college, I understand what it means to be a student experiencing homelessness," he shared.

Hired in 2022, Juan expanded the basic needs center and increased outreach to students in need, to provide them with food, lodging, clothing and other necessities. As a first-generation college student who attended public schools, he is a graduate of Rio Hondo Community College. He earned a bachelor's degree in Social Work after transferring to California State University, Los Angeles. At CSU Northridge he earned his master's in College Counseling and Student Services.

Students' need for assistance may come from the weekly open house at the Needs Center located at the Campus Center on Tuesdays between 1 p.m. - 6 p.m. Housed at the same location are the Puente Program, Dream Resource Center and the Rainbow Pride Center. Valley's administration partnered with city, state and

national agencies to secure available resources to help those in need and to inform the community of services offered.

Current campus services include Monarch's Market, a food pantry, a weekly program called Warm Meals Wednesday's where 100 meals are given to students experiencing food insecurity. The Meal Voucher Program (MVP), provides students with 2 vouchers per week at the campus cafeteria for a hot meal. If a student expresses they have not eaten in a few days, food vouchers or food grants are available. Emergency grants are available for housing to prevent students from being evicted. Valley also partners with city and state housing partners to help students find the help they need to maintain housing.

If the student is single, head of household with children under the age of 18, they can apply to CalWorks. Additional help for students may be available based on their zip

code.

Students are able to get clothes through a partnership with The Rainbow Pride Center, as well as hygiene products. If students are in other campus programs that help with academic counseling, they could qualify to receive financial support. Students can apply at the Needs Center for a laptop.

Scholars Thriving for Excellence and Prosperity (STEPS) is a program designed to pay attention to unhoused students age 18-24. If students are 25 or older, adult housing referrals are also available through the Basic Needs Center.

The Center also helps students with suicide ideations, domestic violence and sex trafficking. Students will receive confidential help.

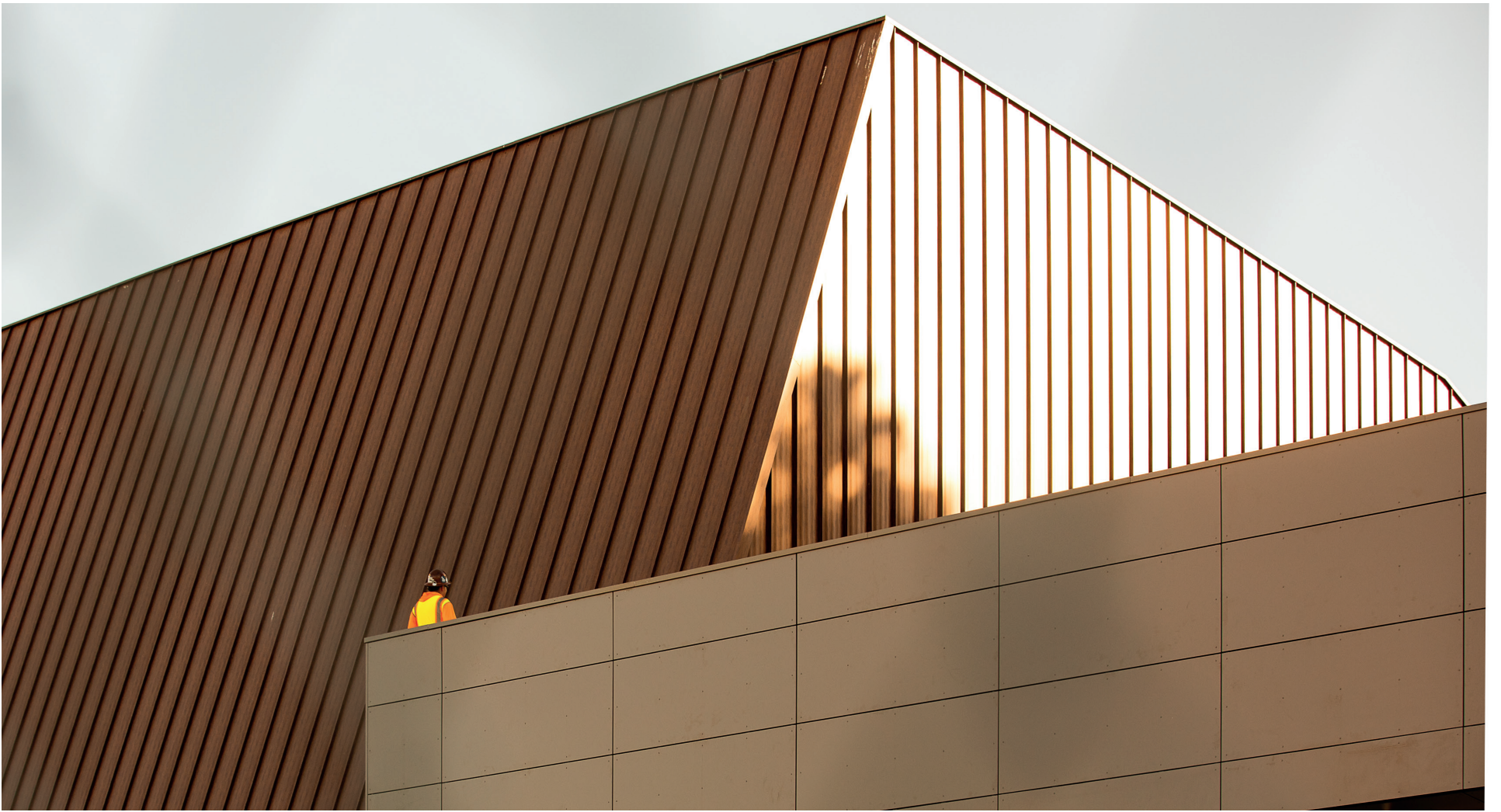
"I received help with academic, transportation and food resources," said student Artur Kobayakov. "They provided me with the support I needed as I was going through difficulties. To everyone who is not familiar with the center, I would say that this is a great program for students who need

financial and academic support." In March of 2022 when Castellanos came on board at the Basic Needs Center, his focus was to connect with over 15,000 students. "We provide a culture of care. This survey represents our invisible population on campus and reflects the great needs of our student body," said Castellanos. "As a team, how do we move to leverage external funds and get students help and get it to them faster? This is my ongoing mission and daily commitment."



Photo illustration by Sydne Santiago

## GALLERY



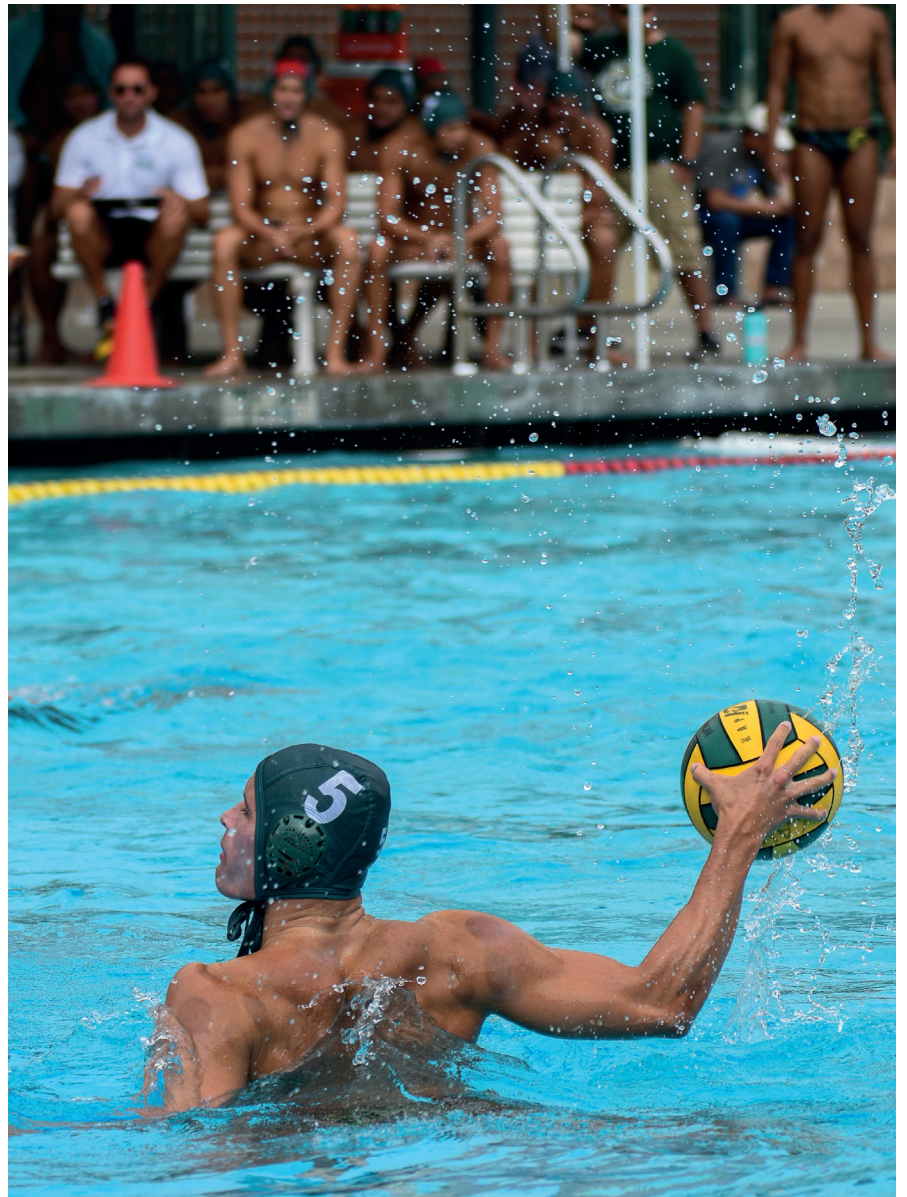
Astrid Cortez for the Valley Star

An Amoroso construction worker on the roof of the more than \$100 million Valley Academic and Cultural Center which is slated for a spring 2026 completion date.



Alejandro Garcia for the Valley Star

The giant White Pampas Grass near Campus Drive, blossoming its natural ivory fluff.



Ryan Ortiz for the Valley Star

Valley attacker Chase Martsof prepares to fire a shot in a recent water polo contest.



Hui Wang for the Valley Star

Defensive back Noah Frenkel charges past Compton College during Valley football's first win of the season.



Hui Wang for the Valley Star

The Valley Cheer club execute a lift at a Monarch football game. Members volunteer to support Valley athletics.