

## College Protests Ignite Nationwide

Student-led movements call on their institutions to “Divest From Death.”

Kaia Mann,  
Opinion Editor

Students from some of the most prestigious educational institutions around the country gathered in the thousands over the past few weeks calling for their schools to end their support of Israel and sever ties with the corporations doing business in and profiting from the country. Amidst the growing violence and counter protests in schools like UCLA, the various universities have responded through police involvement, mass arrests, and suspensions.

Student demonstrators from over 70 colleges nationwide including Harvard, Columbia, USC, UCLA vow to maintain their presence, even as efforts escalate to quell these protests in the wake of reports of anti-Semitic behavior. Throughout the UCLA encampments there have been counter protests of pro-Palestine and pro-Israel groups. On Tuesday night, things took a decidedly violent turn when pro-Israel groups ambushed the student encampments, throwing fireworks into the crowds, beating protesters with sticks, using bear mace, and more.

“For all the school’s pretense of student safety, we have experienced an unprecedented amount of violence and hatred while they stood by,” said the UCLA Palestine Solidarity Encampment in a press release following the attacks. “We ask yet again—no, we demand that the university end this sham. The sham of pretending that the school is neutral—it has chosen genocide before and chooses it again.”

The most recent surge of activism in the last weeks has been driven by the protests at Columbia University, starting on April 17. The president of the Ivy league school, Minouche Shafik pledged to balance the free speech rights on the campus with the wishes of those affected by the reportedly anti-semitic views of the gatherings. Shafik responded by sending law enforcement in with riot gear, arresting over 100 participants and suspending any students they were able to identify. A mass arrest such as this in Columbia has not happened since the anti-war protests of the 1970s.

As USC protesters took over the college’s Alumni park, in the “Cut Ties with Genocide: Divest from Death” coalition, school officials announced the cancellation of the 2024 commencement ceremony set for May 8-11. Other schools have moved asynchronous or canceled classes altogether.



(Top) Hundreds of people show up at UCLA to protest the war in Gaza; both from the pro-Palestine side and the pro-Israel side. (Bottom left) A woman from the pro-Israel side gives the middle finger to a man on the pro-Palestine side who responds with double thumbs up. (Bottom right) The two opposing sides clash with the pro-Israel protesters on the left and the pro-Palestine protesters to the right, separated by a line of pro-Palestine individuals making an arm-in-arm barrier. Photos taken at UCLA’s Dickson Plaza on Sunday.

(Victoria Saxxon for The Valley Star)



“Take a look at just how many students turned out to support our families and to demand their tuition dollars go towards the community and not towards war, not towards destruction, not towards dropping bombs on our families,” said Ahmed Hassan a UCLA alum at the protests on April 28.

While many of these demonstrations throughout the country have started out peaceful, some have diverged and become violent. As Columbia enters the third week of protests, there have been claims that outsiders infiltrated

the demonstration, preaching anti-semitic views. “What may have started as a group of Columbia students wanting to express their constitutional right to protest has drawn crowds of outside agitators who are trying to hijack a peaceful protest and turn it into something far more sinister,” said the NYPD Deputy Commissioner Kaz Daughtry on social media. College students have had a long history of activism with campuses historically priding themselves as a center of free speech. In the 1960s, Berkeley students famously protected

their free-speech rights and right to protest, ushering in this era of increased activism. Today the schools affected by the Palestine protests continue to take precautions to put an end to the disturbances while the students themselves stand strong. “The right to protest is fundamental within the United States, and certainly at post-secondary institutions,” said Valley College student Alina Lysak. “I feel like it’s great that UC campuses, most of them, are not using violence to shut them down. There is no need to arrest [student protesters], as long as they are not violent.”

quiet in terms of student protests, but it does have four free speech zones marked on campus maps, near the student Union Plaza, LARC, Student Services plaza and just outside of Monarch Hall. “I think it’s very important that the freedom of speech is present on campuses and I think that students should try to push for the changes,” said Valley College student Alina Lysak. “I feel like it’s great that UC campuses, most of them, are not using violence to shut them down. There is no need to arrest [student protesters], as long as they are not violent.”

## New Tool Available for CSU College Transfers

Star Eisenberg,  
Editor-in-Chief

The California State University system has introduced the CSU Transfer Planner, a new tool intended to simplify the transfer process for community college students.

The portal’s interface aims to streamline the transfer process, offering clarity and guidance to students navigating complex requirements. By consolidating essential information, the CSU Transfer Planner aims to help students to make informed decisions about their academic journey.

“I’m thrilled that CSU is prioritizing making the process to transfer to the Cal States as easy as possible,” said Valley College President Barry Gribbons. “I think information is key; nobody wants any surprises at the last minute.”

The introduction of the planner comes as a response to the challenges faced by students in navigating the transfer process to CSU campuses. This resource is designed to provide a clearer pathway for students, expectedly increasing successful transfers within the CSU system.

Valley facilitates the majority of its students’ transfers to Cal State Northridge. Students also successfully transfer to institutions like UCLA, USC, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara, private universities, including those from out of state, with assistance from Valley’s Transfer Center and Alliance Program.

The online tool allows students to map out coursework, view articulation agreements, and ensure they meet GPA requirements for their desired CSU campus. More than 9,500 students have created Transfer Planner accounts as of February, according to data from the Public Policy Institute of California.

Officials have indicated plans to integrate the CSU Transfer Planner with the CSU application, similar to the connection between the UC planner and its application.

California’s community college system, with 1.8 million students, ranks as the largest in the nation. Approximately 54 percent of the state’s public high school graduates enroll in a community college. However, transfer rates remain relatively low, with only 19 percent of students transferring within four years and 28 percent within six years, according to an August 2023 report from the Public Policy Institute of California.

Valley officials emphasize the importance of early and consistent contact with college counselors for students’ academic success. They highlight the need for ongoing communication to prepare for transferring to specific universities, reducing last-minute uncertainties. Additionally, they recommend visiting four-year universities when possible to understand the campus culture and environment.

“The California community colleges are a primary access point and launching pad for CSU undergraduate students, particularly those who are low-income, first-generation or from historically underrepresented communities,” said Hazel Kelly, a CSU spokesperson. “Historically, more than 40 percent of CSU undergraduate students started their higher education journey at a community college, so the CSU Transfer Planner will help thousands of students to proactively engage in mapping their higher education success.”



Read more at  
thevalleystarnews.com

## LACCD Closes Campuses for Armenian Genocide

For the 109 anniversary of the genocide, LACCD conducts first district closure.



Astrid Cortez for The Valley Star

Armenian Genocide Martyrs Memorial Monument located in Montebello stands as tribute for the 600,000-1.5 million Armenians who lost their lives during the genocide. Photo taken on April 18.

Milan Rafaelov,  
Editor-in-Chief

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously recognized Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day on April 24, which led to the unprecedented closure of all LACCD campuses county-wide for the first time. This year marks the 109th anniversary of a significant chapter in history, during which the Ottoman authorities instigated the mass deportation and slaughter of up to 1.5 million ethnic Armenians in what is now present-day Turkey. The trauma of the Arme-

nian diaspora has reverberated through future generations, compelling many to advocate for nations, including Turkey, to acknowledge the attempted extermination of the Armenian people. “Being born an Armenian is a hard fate,” said Ani Gevorgyan, a theater major and student worker at the Basic Needs Center. “We have seen so many forces and injustices during our history that I think subconsciously, all of us bear some kind of feelings of suffering and insult

that makes our nationality important and special to us.” In 1908, a new government assumed control of the Ottoman Empire, now modern-day Turkey, following the rise of the political movement known as the “Young Turks.” They overthrew Sultan Abdul Hamid and established a more constitutional but nationalistic Muslim-Turkish government. A hostility toward Christian Armenians ensued, and by 1914, Turkey entered World War I on the side of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire against the Allied powers. Fearing that invading enemy troops would sway Armenians to join them, the Ottoman Empire initiated the mass deportation of Armenian intellectuals and eventual massacre on April 24, 1915.

It wasn’t until three years ago, in 2021, that the United States became the 30th country to acknowledge the events as a genocide, marking a significant milestone for the American Armenian community and in American foreign policy.

While Turkey acknowledges its role in the killings, it vehemently denies the intent to exterminate Armenians and refuses to classify the events as genocide. “The Armenians took arms against their own government. Their violent political aims, not their race, ethnicity or religion, rendered them subject to relocation,” cites the official website of the Republic of Foreign Ministry. “Armenians ignore

the dire circumstances that precipitated the enactment of a measure as drastic as mass relocation.”

Relations between the U.S. and Turkey have further deteriorated after President Biden declared the mass killing of Armenians during World War I as genocide, prompting Turkish President Recep Erdogan to demand the retraction of the declaration.

According to USC’s Institute of Armenian Studies, Los Angeles is home to one of the largest Armenian diasporas, with a population estimated between 500,000 and 1,000,000. Traditional remembrance activities on or around April 24 include protests outside the Turkish Consulate in Beverly Hills and a ceremony at the

Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument.

Situated on a grassy knoll in the center of Bicknell Park in Montebello,

the monument serves as a poignant symbol, where many Armenians march to remember those lost in the genocide.

“Recently, with some changes in the state, the district negotiated to recognize Armenian Genocide Day by closing the campuses,” said President Barry Gribbons. “That was an important action that the district took. We have many members of our campus community who are Armenian, including students and employees, and I’m glad that the district took that action as a clear statement that we stand in solidarity with the Armenian community.”

(R-L)\* At Valley College President Barry Gribbons and music major Artur Tarveryan raise the Armenian flag during an event that honors those killed in the Armenian Genocide. Photo taken April 23. (Victoria Saxxon for The Valley Star)

NEWS

## LACCD Seeks Delay on Latest Pinner Lawsuit

The ongoing legal battle surrounding the Valley Academic & Cultural Center continues.

**Star Eisenberg,**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

The Los Angeles Community College District is seeking to delay arbitration until the completion of the Valley Academic and Cultural Center, amidst escalating tensions with Pinner Construction over a multimillion dollar wrongful termination lawsuit.

"Pinner is in the process of putting together additional claims based on delays occurring at the project between December 14, 2023, and our last day of the project which was March 8, so those are in process," said Pinner Construction's Chief Administrative Officer Newt Kellam.

Kellam stated on April 15 that the LACCD has sought to delay arbitration until the completion of building work in the fall of 2025. However, the arbitration company informed LACCD that unless they can get a court to issue a stay order, the \$30 million in claims needs to go forward.

The termination process, as stipulated in the contract, mandates several steps before binding arbitration, including mandatory meetings and mediation. However, LACCD missed the April 8 deadline to respond to Pinner Construction's wrongful termination claim.

According to Kellam, Pinner Construction received a request from LACCD to create a work plan for 3,400 items and offered to provide the plan within a more achievable time frame. However, the contract was terminated.

Kellam also stated that LACCD did not complete the design of five major components over a span of approximately 2700 days: audiovisual hardware and software, a Lula Lift handicap elevator, sound panel attachments, hollow metal door frames, and essential upgrades for water pressure in the central plant. LACCD declined to comment on this information.

Pinner completed 99.12 percent of its contract work as of the termination date, according to Kellam.

"There's no reason that those 3,400 items had to be done before the fall of 2025 because they can't occupy the building," said Kellam. "It was just another act of bad faith trying to, frankly, put Pinner out of business."

Pinner Construction's contract termination is part of an ongoing feud with LACCD. Dating back to 2022, Pinner sued over alleged overspending and racketeering.

The district ended its contract with Pinner on March 8, and Pinner filed a multimillion dollar suit against the LACCD 10 days later.

BuildLACCD is LACCD's \$14.9 billion capital improvement program funded by five voter-approved bond measures. The \$14.9 billion largely comes from four voter-approved bond measures: 2001 (Proposition A: \$1.245 billion), 2003 (Proposition



Milan Rafaelov for The Valley Star

The \$100 million VACC building sits dormant on the north side of campus after construction began in 2016.

AA: \$980 million) 2008 (Measure J: \$3.5 billion), and 2016 (Measure CC: \$5.3 billion), and 2022 (Measure LA: \$5.3 billion). Once funds are secured, LACCD solicits bids from eligible contractors to complete designated projects.

The procurement process ensures fairness by soliciting

bids from eligible contractors and evaluating them based on predetermined criteria, such as qualifications, price, and experience. This is intended to help prevent favoritism or bias and ensure that contracts are awarded fairly to the most qualified bidder.

"The District's priority to

the 250,000 students and the taxpayers is to deliver quality facility and infrastructure projects that are transforming how we teach, learn and impact the overall student experience," according to an email sent Friday by LACCD's Director of Communications and Marketing Juliet Hidalgo.

"LACCD is proud to have delivered almost 800 bond funded projects to date and remains committed to delivering the Valley Academic and Cultural Center for the students at Los Angeles Valley College. Due to the ongoing contractual dispute, claims and litigation, we decline to comment."

## ASU Upgrades Tech and Constitution

Members of the ASU discussed budgets and adopted new rules for their constitution.

**Maia Richaud,**  
*Valley Life Editor*

Two projects dominated ASU finances on April 9, with approvals totaling \$23,250 allocated for new computers and the "Undocu Queer Quinceañera." During the latter part of the meeting, ASU officers, commissioners, and advisors convened for the Executive Council Meeting to update ASU's constitution.

A portion of this week's budget will be allocated to purchasing 13 computers for board members and student ambassadors at a cost of \$20,500, inclusive of delivery and set up through Golden Star Technology, a district-partnered company. These upgraded computers aim to streamline workflow, addressing previous issues with sluggish performance. The remaining \$2,750 of the budget will support the "Undocu Queer Quinceañera," an event organized by the Rainbow Pride Center, on May 2. This event offers Valley's undocumented and or LGBTQ+ students an opportunity to partake in a significant celebration within the Latinx community.

Following the financial



Emilio Godinez for the Valley Star

ASU Council members Jazmine Balbuena, Arely Aguilar, Allan Maldonado, Garnik Arustamyan, Gianella Urtecho, Christopher Robles-Garay, Ammy Duarte, ASU Advisor and Counselor Monica Flores, Sofia Orellana Rivas, Natalie Castillo, and Julian Serrano during their bi-weekly meeting on the second floor of the Student Union Building on March 12.

matters and board member reports, ASU discussed the amendments and bylaws of their constitution. Originally selected for an hour, the meeting required an additional hour for members to finalize proposed changes.

Student ambassadors meticulously reviewed each

amendment and bylaw, ensuring there were no objections to the proposed alterations. At times, debate persisted for over half an hour, with every council member having the opportunity to express their views on the changes.

This was particularly evident in the case of Article VII

- Elections, Section 5 of the amendments, where the original changes stipulated that board members could not hold office in a club to prevent conflicts of interest. Extensive debate ensued over the adoption of this new rule, ultimately resulting in a compromise. It was finally decided that appointed

and elected Executive Council Officers and Commissioners cannot hold club positions of President, Vice President, and ICC Representatives, but could assume roles such as Secretary and Treasurer.

Further modifications were made, including renaming the positions of Parliamen-

tarian to Chief of Justice.

Regarding the bylaws, student ambassadors updated the roles and responsibilities of each council position. For instance, the Commissioner of Campus and Environmental Affairs is now tasked with hosting Earth Day related events during the month of April.

## Red Cross Bus Gets its Fill

Monarchs donate blood faster with RAPIDPASS.

**Sara Lemon,**  
*Staff Writer*

The American Red Cross Mobile Bus arrived at Valley College on April 11 to host what turned out to be a non-stop parade of people donating blood.

The event was such a success that the onsite team discussed when they could return to Valley. Volunteer Jaxon Smith led the check-ins, reminding walk up appointments that they could expedite their donation via the RAPIDPASS® program, and save 15 minutes.

"This one-day event at Valley, has been a success and a popular idea, the odds are very likely we will return soon," said Smith.

Early for their blood donation appointment, were Valley Calworks office staff

Susan Saethong and Alicen Vera. Susan humbly shared that today marked her seventy-sixth blood donation. Alicen shared this was her third donation, but not her last.

"I am inspired by my co-worker Susan's dedication to serving the community and country through her blood donations. Also, I received a life saving blood transfusion, so I want to give back," said Alicen.

Valley graduate to CSUN transfer, Jesse Lopez, received an email from ARC about the blood drive and was happy to return to campus to donate blood.

"The process is easy with RAPIDPASS, I was able to pre-register to speed up the donation process. When my friends ask me why I donate, I say because it is an easy way to be of service to those in need."

Jennie Griggs, RN was in charge of the on-campus blood drive for the AMR, "The blood drive is going fantastic," she said.

"It has been quite busy, Valley College has been a great sponsor for us. Every blood type is always needed, O Positive is the most common blood type so that is always at the top of our list. O Negative is the universal donor, if someone is in the hospital and the blood type needed is not available the doctor can give the patient O Negative. We have a series of health history questions we ask each donor, the Pass is completed the day of donation. Water intake, being hydrated and avoiding caffeine is essential to a successful experience.

The American National Red Cross, is a non-profit humani-

tarian organization that provides emergency assistance, disaster relief, and disaster preparedness education in the United States where a person needs blood every 3 seconds.

"Every donation on average saves up to two lives," said Jennifer Griggs RN, ARC.

**Jacqueline Trejo** donating blood for the second time with the American Red Cross during Valley College's blood drive.

(Astrid Cortez for The Valley Star)



VALLEY LIFE

## Biodiversity Blooms in a Spring Spectacle

The vibrant array of spring blooms adorn the campus as a testament to its sustainability.



Patrick Escobar for The Valley Star  
Sea lavender by the library and Academic Resource Center flourish in the spring semester.

**Katherine OBrien Field,**  
Copy Editor

Sea lavender, birds of paradise, lantana, African daisies, and gazanias on campus glitter in the sunlight like starlet's jewels on a monarch's crown. Spring is a time of renewal – of sky blue robin's eggs, smells of earth, of warm weather and bloom where Valley College welcomes the new season with methodically planted spring flowers. The blooms can be found spread out across campus – including by the classrooms, on Monarch Square, in the bio-soil platform on the Student Union plaza and Hatteras Street in front of the North Gym. Each variety flourishes in the sun and exhibits a colorful glistening when watered. "The designers chose plants with low water maintenance" said Rudy Majano, Acting General Foreman of the campus

grounds. "For example, the gazanias by the North Gym are a good ground cover. The gazanias are low growing, which is good for wide coverage and are watered only twice a week for 20 minutes on a drip line" said Majano. The use of low water planting demonstrates Valley College's attention to the needs of the environment. The biology department decided to establish an Urban Forest Master Plan in 2010 and a year later, Valley won recognition as the 2011 Tree Campus USA, by the Arbor Foundation. Valley won this distinction every year through 2018, which led to more than 1,600 plants and trees being planted on campus. "When choosing plants for a Southern California garden, the designer needs to pick from the varieties that can withstand full sun and are drought tolerant", said Pami Ozaki, a landscape designer and co-owner of Topanga's Sassafras Shoppe. Ozaki identified

a special feature of a campus plant – the purple sea lavender. "This California plant spreads, but only around itself, and is a good match with roses. It is often used as a cut flower because it maintains its color, even when dried." According to the National Garden Bureau, having many different kinds of plants is beneficial to the ecosystem because it promotes different soil microorganisms. Growing a single plant can eventually deplete nutrients in soil, while diverse planting allows different nutrients to benefit each other and draw in pollinators, helping the plants to replicate and the landscape to flourish. While some campus flowers bloom throughout the year, the varieties mentioned dazzle the eye right now and can be enjoyed through the end of summer. Then the cooler weather shall harken the reign of another family of plants, and the life cycle will reveal its majesty once again.



Lluvia Marinero Arevalo for The Valley Star  
The blooming gazanias outside of the ASU building provide seasonal visuals for students.

## Valley Hosts Farmers Market

The local farmers market comes to Valley every Sunday morning.



Ivonne Elias for The Valley Star

(Top) Market goes hang out and eat at the farmers market on April 21. (Middle left) A vendor sells street tacos from food trucks. (Middle right) Adriana Velazquez, owner of Authentic Aguas Frescas, interacts with her customers as she explains her flavour combinations. (Bottom left) Itzul Garcia, owner of Xoneazul, talks to a customer about the variety of artisanal soaps she makes and sells. (Bottom right) Customer browsing through herbal pain relief oil.

Valley unveiled a local farmers market on April 21 in parking lot A. The market provides a convenient way to support small businesses and purchase fresh, locally sourced products. Many families and couples were seen walking around, tasting samples, and chatting with vendors. Attendees are looking forward to coming back every Sunday for more shopping and community support. The market will be held every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. off of Burbank and Fulton. Fresh food, new vendors and products will be available for students, faculty, and community members.

**Ivonne Elias,**  
Social Media Editor

## Films That Score with Sound

The job of a scorer is often overlooked but integral to filmmaking.

**Kaia Mann,**  
Opinion Editor

DUN-dun, DUN-dun, DUN-dun. The iconically terrifying theme of Jaws plays in the head of anyone swimming a little too far from shore, a testament to the importance of a good movie score. Unlike a film's soundtrack, the score is the instrumental music written and produced specifically for the movie. The score weaves throughout the story, enhancing every scene it plays behind. The shark in Spielberg's Jaws would not be nearly as terrifying if not for the distinct doom of the F and F sharp notes playing in the background.

**Jaws (1975) John Williams**

Jaws is one of the most iconic examples of an everlasting music theme. John Williams has a vast discography, writing for ET, Indiana Jones, Star Wars and more. In all of his movies, the music is recognizable even outside its original context. The theme of Jaws can turn an otherwise harmless body of water into a shark-infested horror scene.

**Dune (2021) Hans Zimmer**

Hans Zimmer is one of the most well-known scorers working today and the banshee-like scoring of Dune works in conjunction with the vast visuals

to create an all-encompassing moviegoing experience. In the score, you can hear a grainy quality not unlike the sound of wind and sand blowing by. Duduk, an ancient windpipe, was modified by Zimmer to add an ethereal and airy essence. Unique and perfectly synced to the story, the score of Dune puts the viewers right there in the desert with the characters.

**Lawrence of Arabia (1962) Maurice Jarre**

Lawrence of Arabia is a behemoth of a film, with music to back it up. Telling the tale of T.E. Lawrence leading the Arab forces against the Turks in World War I, Maurice Jarre used a grand orchestral and Arabic drum to signify the adventure and setting of the film and add to its grandiose. The music swells with the tension of the movie and takes the listener on a journey through the Middle East.

**Lord of the Rings (2001-2003) Howard Shore**

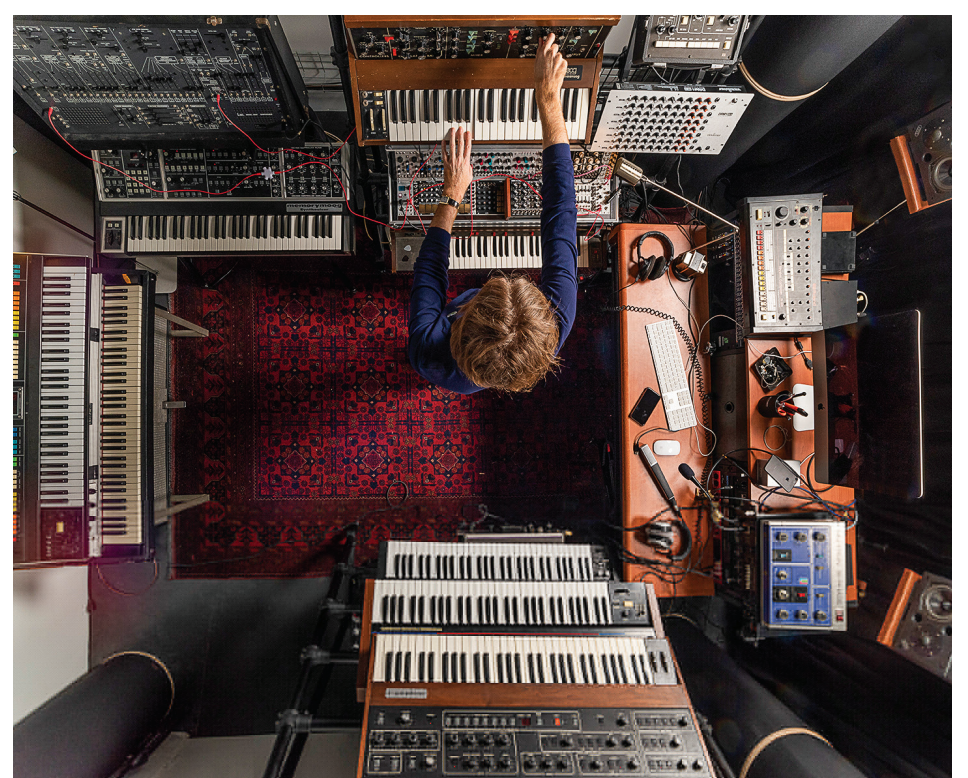
Leitmotifs, a technique used in scoring connecting musical phrases to people or places is practiced by Howard Shore in The Lord of the Rings trilogy. It is considered one of the best adaptations, and its fantastical score plays a big part in that. The music in Lord of the Rings is elegant yet triumphant, guiding the listener

through each chapter of the story utilizing orchestral arrangements mixed with unique vocals. Howard Shore connects the music to each character and setting in Middle Earth cultivating a musical language.

**Fire of Love (2022) Nicolas Godin**

You may think a big adventure is where a score can shine brightest, but documentary scores often have a more important and challenging job. Fire of Love is about a couple dedicating their life to the study of volcanoes. While the subject is intense, the documentary largely focuses on the couple themselves. Nicolas Godin intentionally used more home-made, analog techniques to match what he believed fit the subjects of the film best. The score is fiery and intense but allows the true romantic story to shine through.

On average about 10% of a movie's budget is dedicated to its music. While consumers may not always pay attention to the sound behind a film, a good score can make or break a story. As people line up to see the newest premiere on the biggest, loudest screen they can find, there is a growing emphasis on the technical aspects of these movies. Today more than ever, people are not just watching the movie but listening to it.



David Zagdoun

Music composer Nicolas Godin creating the score for Fire of Love in his home studio.

VALLEY LIFE

## Polyglot Professor Shows a Passion for Language

Jaklin Yermian brings her passion for teaching and learning to Valley College.

Hilary Van Hoose,  
Special to The Star

Valley's Assistant Professor Jaklin Yermian grew up speaking Armenian, Farsi, and French before learning English as a teenager, and has recently started learning Spanish, Hindi, and Chinese in her spare time. "Because I was born into a Persian-Armenian family, those two [languages] have been given to me as a gift," Yermian said. "It helped me expand and have a love for languages and a respect for languages because [many] times it's helped me either get out of a pickle or get what I wanted, or I was able to help someone who needed something desperately, so I see the huge value in learning a language." Moving from Iran to Belgium at 7 and from Belgium to Glendale at 17, the globe-trotting polyglot went on to study business administration at Glendale Community College and then French and francophone studies at UCLA. 16 years after she began teaching French language, history, and literature at Valley. The educator's enthusiasm for teaching and life-long love of language brings a certain je suis qui to her students. "Once the class is comfortable, you will learn," the

paideutic professional said. "If everyone's on pins and needles thinking 'Oh, I'm going to make a mistake,' there's no way. That's why kids learn so well, because they're always taught through fun. So, have patience, and teach through fun." Professor Yermian highlighted some of her favorite words in multiple languages, like "velesh kon" (which means "let it go" in Farsi), "sirem kez" (which means "I love you" in Armenian, but specifically for children), "tartine" (an open-faced sandwich popular in France), and for English "wanna" and "gonna" (because everyone she knew used these contractions, but her English teachers always gave her bad grades for using them). Heading straight from office hours for her French language classes at Valley to pick up her kids from their dual language immersion school where she helps in her spare time, the mother of two's everyday passion for multilingualism is evident. "Language means the world to me," the plurilingual pedagogue said. "I'm so lost if I can't communicate with other than what I know, like, if I only knew English, I would be so lost."



Astrid Cortez for The Valley Star

Assistant Professor of French Jaklin Yermian teaches history and literature at Valley College on April 15.

## Concert Series Comes out Swinging

Valley College hosts live concert series that has been on beat for over 20 years.



Samantha Salazar for The Valley Star

Members of the LAVC Choir and pianist Frank Garvey perform music for spiritual expression in the Recital Hall in April.

Maïa Richaud and Jabes Pascual,  
Staff writers

Groove, chops, and swing captivated the audience when jazz band "L.A. 6" took center stage at Valley's Music Recital Hall for this semester's third edition of the Spring Concert Series. These concerts, happening almost every Wednesday, have been organized every semester at Valley for more than 40 years. Music Professor Christian Nova uses his network as a professional singer to find professional artists, student organizations or faculty members to perform for the concert series. "[The Concert Series] had taken place before I even got here, and so I took it over in 2005," said Professor Christian Nova. "So ever since then, every semester, every Wednesday, we try to do a live concert, and I bring in a whole variety of different styles." On April 12, they hosted a versatile sextet mainly influenced by the soothing

West Cool Jazz scene of the 50's, fused with hard-bop jazz. L.A. 6 displays improvisation and intricate arrangements in their perfor-

mances and introduces the listener to the essences of jazz. The band, made up of Rich Eames, piano; Peter Gemus,

bass; Kye Palmer, trumpet; Joe La Berbera, drums; Ira Nepus, trombone; and Tom Peterson, tenor sax; performed five pieces including an original composition by Tom Peterson called "Shuffle City." "We didn't rehearse at all for this [performance]," said Trombone Player Ira Nepus. "But that's because we've played together for so many years that we already kind of got to the end and we have the arrangements." The performance carried on for half an hour, as L.A. 6 performed five tunes which was followed by a Q&A. The topics in question regarded the musicians solos, and how synchronized the band performed with no monitor speakers. "It's how well you can control your instrument and project the best sound regardless of the acoustics of the stage, and simply accommodate the rest of the band," said La Berbera. Valley's Spring Wednesday Concert Series will host three more shows on May 1st, May 8th, and May 15th at Valley College's Music Recital Hall at 1:30 p.m. "I enjoyed myself so much, I think that's a wonderful idea," said audience member Tãta Vega at the April 17th show, about the music series. "I'm so grateful that I got to come here. What a nice break to sit and enjoy beautiful music."

*"[The Concert Series] had taken place before I even got here, and so I took it over in 2005. So ever since then, every semester, every Wednesday, we try to do a live concert, and I bring in a whole variety of different styles."*

Christian Nova

## Hire L.A. offers low-income students internship opportunities

Valley hosted a job fair as part of their partnership with the Mayor's Office Economic & Workforce Development Department.

Maïa Richaud,  
Valley Life Editor

The Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity in collaboration with Valley hosted Hire L.A. Day, a job fair program that offers low-income students opportunities to find summer or year-round paid internships in fields like public service, climate, and education. College and high school students met with employers to learn about internship opportunities offered to L.A. residents ages 16 to 30 who come from low-income zip codes with a work authorization. The program aims to ensure that the city facilitates opportunities for young people to build their resumes and have an opening for their careers. "We're looking to fill not just jobs but to give youth an opportunity to explore careers that they are interested in," said the CEO of the non-profit company Well-Suited, Janet Lavender. "They have companies that are offering all sorts of opportunities and if the youth feel that it's something that they are interested in, then they're free to apply and if they get selected they can go and work for that company for the summer." At the job fair, students were able to receive help filling out applications on the spot, and meet with the Hire L.A. members to ask questions directly. However, that doesn't mean that if a student wasn't able to attend any of the fairs that they cannot apply online; the application process is available on their

website at "hirelayouth.com." "You never find out that those people exist, and I think that they are really cool," said Alina Lysak, computer science and economics major. "Some of the opportunities are really great. Especially if you look for something more specific. But I know that there are some marketing opportunities here, some social work, and it's really cool. I plan to apply to a bunch of stuff. There are a few things that are actually very interesting for me." The students will have 120 hours worth of work that they can complete over six weeks. It is about 20 hours a week of work, like part-time jobs or accelerated paid internships. "Through our program we are providing stipends, not necessarily wages," said Elder Sanabria. "It is minimum wage in terms of how much they'll make, but we're providing stipends and so if the student, for example, or their family is receiving some sort of social benefit, they don't disqualify even if they're getting an increase in their quote-unquote income because it's a stipend, not wages or salary." Employers present were already contractors with the City of Los Angeles. The program held information sessions in February and in March to invite new organizations to become contractors with the program. Hire L.A. works with more than 50 community-based organizations, and its target is to get a thousand students employed for the summer period. Two other in-person job fairs will be organized, at L.A. Trade-Tech College on April



Ivonne Elias for The Valley Star

Jalen Smith, psychology major talks with Janet Lavender, CEO of "Well-Suited," during the Hire L.A. event on April 11. 23, and at L.A. Southwest College on May 2. The program anticipates a virtual event in May for people who could not make it to the previous fairs. A combination of all those organizations are either tabling all three events or just one depending on where they're recruiting. "We wanted to make sure

that students had somewhere to go to," said Elder Sanabria. "So we were able to make sure that we contacted organizations that were in this area too, so that if kids were interested in a paid summer employment opportunity that it would be at least within reasonable distance to where they live at."



Read more at  
thevalleystarnews.com

OPINION

## Accusations of Anti-Semitism Fuel Misplaced Outrage

Bad faith arguments undermine legitimate perspectives offered by both Jewish and non-Jewish people.

Milan Rafaelov,  
Editor-in-Chief

The rallying cry “Disclose! Divest! We will not stop, we will not rest!” passionately echo throughout educational institutions nationwide. Student-led movements are gaining momentum and calling on their universities to financially divest from Israeli companies and weapons manufacturers profiting from the conflict in Gaza.

Both antisemitism and Islamophobia are undoubtedly increasing as are hate crimes. However, labeling pro-Palestinian demonstrators as inherently anti-Semitic or sympathetic to terrorism, in an exaggerated and provocative manner, is deeply offensive and rooted in bad faith.

Many Jewish individuals stand in solidarity with students and Palestinians alike, and such characterizations undermine legitimate perspectives offered by both Jewish and non-Jewish people.

As university leaders grapple with ongoing protests, certain administrations have enlisted authorities and/or academic punishments to disband protest encampments. This has led to arrests, escalated tensions, and a resurgence of contentious debates surrounding freedom of speech.

Over the past few weeks, pro-Palestinian protests and encampments have erupted across 71 college campuses across the United States. One of the more recent protests took place at UCLA, where Tuesday, tensions rose sharply in the dead of night as pro-Israel counter-protesters made a violent incursion. In the midst of chaos, with eyes stinging from mace and bodies tired from beatings and exhaustion, an unidentified source recounts the harrowing



Victoria Saxxon for The Valley Star

A pro-Palestine protester with a megaphone looks behind her in distress as a man from pro-Israel side yells at the opposing protesters in front of him. Photo taken at UCLA's Dickson Plaza on Sunday, April 28.

events of the encampment's struggle for survival. This shed light on the harsh reality faced by protesters left to fend for themselves as campus security withdrew, and the delayed arrival of the LAPD and their initial actions did not prioritize immediate assistance to students under attack.

Through the lens of social media, we can see what has only before been seen in hindsight, after it's too late, and it's easiest to say “I would have done something if I were there.”

The daily struggle of the Palestinian people unfolds in raw, firsthand narratives, offering poignant perspectives on

the conflict. In an era marked by unprecedented access to information, the realities of war are laid bare for all to see. Confronted with such pervasive human suffering, it becomes increasingly untenable to turn a blind eye. With information at their fingertips, young people find themselves immersed in global issues, whether by choice or circumstance.

While this conflict is just one among many, its significance is magnified by the unwavering support of the United States for Israel, which includes diplomatic and financial backing, to a fault. As students grapple with their role as contributors to this dynamic,

they feel compelled to voice opposition to the violence and atrocities being committed.

The rationale often cited for Israel's brutal bombing campaign of Gaza, purportedly aimed at bringing home hostages and protecting Jewish communities from extremist threats, raises profound questions: How does the loss of over 30,000 lives, of which 75 percent are women and children, and the displacement of 2 million people contribute to the safety of Jewish communities worldwide or facilitate the release of hostages taken on Oct. 7?

Leveraging the Jewish identity as a proxy argument to

shut down reasonable opposition is a duplicitous tactic with ulterior motives to discredit fundamentally valid concerns.

This narrative, along with the conflation of Palestinians with the actions of a terrorist organization, conveniently ignores that Hamas was propped up and empowered to undermine the Palestinian Authority by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who is now inflicting war crimes in its name.

It is valid to question whether Netanyahu's government genuinely seeks to secure the release of hostages or if they are being used as pawns to mask a genocidal re-occupation of Gaza, akin to how paying off Hamas was utilized as a pawn to undermine Palestinian sovereignty. Otherwise, there would be little justification for prolonging the conflict.

Israeli forces benefit from state-of-the-art weaponry and receive elite combat training, often subsidized by American tax dollars and institutional endowments, such as those from Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and USC.

Harvard's operating revenue totaled \$6.1 billion, with a significant portion derived from student tuition fees. Given the substantial financial contributions made by the students and their families, it is imperative for transparency regarding the allocation of these funds and for them as stakeholders to have a voice in their utilization.

Advocating for a voice in determining how one's financial contributions are represented through an institution's investments epitomizes the essence of American civic engagement. “Taxation without representation” is not just mere rhetoric; it embodies a foundational principle of the American democratic tradition.



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## Fed Up and Under-Fed with the Cafeteria Hours

The Monarch Cafeteria closing so early in the day does not foster a healthy learning environment.

Kaia Mann,  
Opinion Editor

Students looking for a bite to eat on campus can get half of a soggy Subway sandwich for almost \$15, a bag of Cheetos full of preservatives, or a freshly made, full meal at the Monarch Cafe, just as long as it is before 1:30 pm when the cafeteria unjustly closes.

When open, the cafeteria is a great option. Those who arrive on campus early enough can choose between a variety of lunch and breakfast options, all-American burgers, deli sandwiches, Mexican food, or pizza. However, if your class falls anytime after 1:30, the small overpriced Lion Cafe or one of the questionable vending machines are the only options left.

The food available later in the day leaves something to be desired in both price point and variety. The Lion Cafe is a glorified walk-in vending machine and acts more as an extension of the bookstore than a credible option for a meal. With approximately 2 out of 5 of the rundown, sun-damaged vending machines on campus out of service, students would be better off taking a five-minute walk down to the local donut shop for their sandwich of choice.

Many students are forced off



Photo illustration by Astrid Cortez

campus if they hope to get a decent cost-effective meal. Other students simply do not eat.

The Monarch Cafeteria closing so early in the day leaves out the entire population of students with afternoon or night classes. Workers say they close so early because there is little to no demand after the fact, but the Monarch Cafe has

reportedly never been open after 1:30. This begs the question, how do they know there is no demand for the cafeteria to be open later if students and faculty were never given the chance to utilize it?

Most studies agree that nutrition and dietary patterns influence cognitive function, playing a critical role in the

mental performance of young adults. Going hungry can severely alter academic performance and cause an increase in aggression. Overall having a balanced and consistent diet improves one's ability to focus and think critically.

Having mostly junk food available leads students down unhealthy paths. It is easier

and cheaper to grab instant noodles and a soda than to go somewhere off campus. The lack of healthy food after 1:30 creates poor eating habits that can be hard to shake.

If the foundation of a successful education starts with diet, Valley needs to offer students and faculty substantial and fresh food all day long.

## VALLEY VIEW | How do you feel about the trend of women's sports surpassing men's in viewership?

Text by Alex Diaz  
Photos by Taylor Cowhey



"I love to see women overpowering men. It's so empowering to see women become bigger. I feel like they were suppressed down to a lower level. Now that it's becoming a bigger thing, it makes me happy."

-Juliana Stein, Child Development major



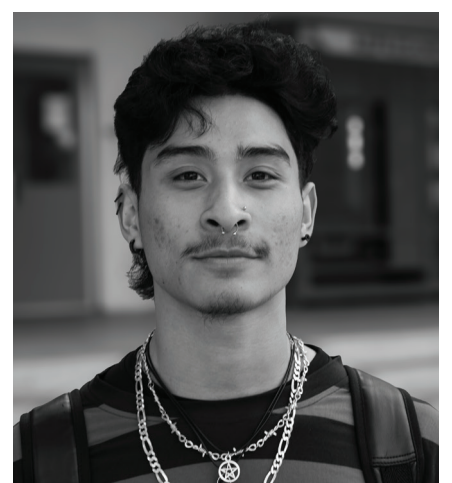
"I'm not very knowledgeable on sports, but here on campus the sports we have for women's and men's there are certain times where I notice there is more viewership for women's sports. It's very inspiring knowing how much work they put in, but also it's about time."

-Sofia Orellana, Business Administration major



"I have to agree it's nice to see more women represented in sports. Of course, men's sports are important but in past years we've seen little to no women's representation in sports. It's great to see women getting noticed for the hard work and potential they have."

-Ammy Duarte, Real Estate major



"It's all based on the audience. I think it's great considering how the NBA and WNBA work, I'm surprised."

-Ignacio Romero, Sustainable Construction Management major

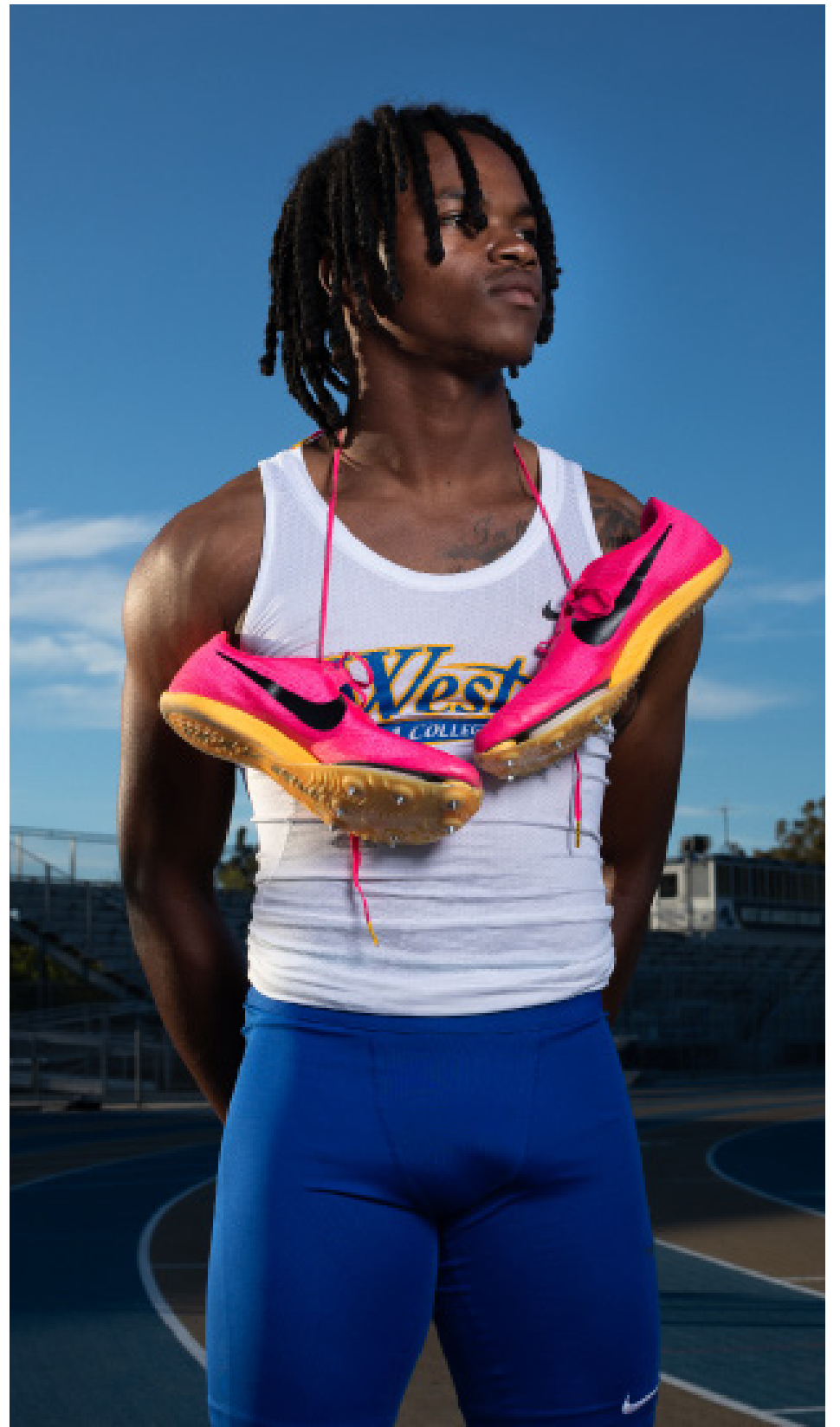
SPORTS

## Speed is the Name of the Game for this Dual-Sport Athlete

Freshman Amari Yolas takes on two different sports at Valley College and West LA College.



Taylor Cowhey for The Valley Star



Taylor Cowhey for The Valley Star

(Top left) Amari Yolas played three sports at Palisades High before devoting his baseball and running skills respectively to Valley College and West LA College. (Top right) Yolas in West L.A. track uniform. Head Coach and Athletic Director Dave Mallas worked with West LA College and the regional commissioner for Yolas to become a dual-sports athlete. (Below) The right-hander pitches against Irvine Valley College on February 27. Yolas pitches, an outfielder, and at times a pinched runner for the Monarchs.

Alex Diaz,  
Sports Editor

On your mark, set, BANG! The sound of a powerful hit echoes through the air as Amari Yolas sprints to first base and later on the track for the 100-yard dash. The 19-year-old college freshman is a dual-sport athlete as a pitcher for Valley College and a sprinter for West LA College. The college freshman who hails from Palisades High School has played multiple sports throughout his life but now commits his passions to baseball and track. Yolas has been playing baseball since he was 5 and discovered his talent for running along the way. "Growing up and being young with my friends we would be on the streets run-

ning all the time," said Yolas. "I've always been the fastest growing up, and everywhere I go, it's always been that way." Yolas is one of the few to play two different sports across two different campuses. To participate in these two sports, Yolas had to gain the approval of a commissioner. "It was the first time in my 22 years as head coach that I ever had to do that," said Valley Baseball Coach Dave Mallas. "We were fortunate that West LA is in our district and that's why we were able to do it, but it was a learning experience for me as a head coach and athletic director." The sprinter holds a record of 10.61 seconds in the 100-yard sprint and has a pitching arm speed of 94 mph. His speed runs through his



Taylor Cowhey for The Valley Star

veins. Yolas is a psychology major, a photographer, a player, and a son. Despite having a busy life, he enjoys it, even if it may seem stressful. "He is just one of those guys, I think he is a Division I

runner as well as a Division I baseball player," said Mallas. "He's a pretty special young man, so hopefully he enjoys his journey. He's working harder than anyone in the spring right now, doing both sports

on two different campuses." Yolas attributes his success to one person who has been a constant influence and motivation throughout his life—his father. "He always gets on me about everything and anything I do," Yolas said. A lot of the stuff I do is just to prove it to him, and I just love the game too." While the two sports are different, the right-hander approaches baseball and track similarly. The sprinter relies on his mental and strategic abilities to excel in both sports and carries an ego within him. "In my head I try to think I'm better than everyone and try to do my best out there," Yolas said. "You have to have a winner's mentality." Mallas admires the young man's exceptional talent and

said he's among the top 1 percent in speed and arm strength. "It doesn't matter what school I go to as long as I can play," said Yolas. Whether in college or the major league, Yolas plans to dominate any field. "I'm trying to make it all the way."



Read more at  
[thevalleystarnews.com](http://thevalleystarnews.com)

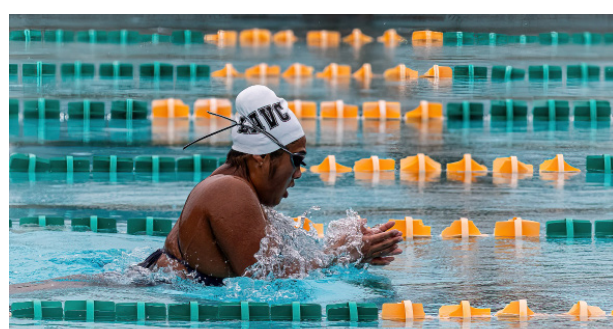
## March Madness Highlights the Need for Equal Compensation in the WNBA

Women's sports sparks rise through NCAA title game between Iowa and South Carolina, and so should their pay.



Valley Staff for The Valley Star

Right-hander Briana Gaskill advances to third base from single by Clarisa Robles. The sophomore aspires to give back to the softball community by becoming a trainer.



Valley Staff for The Valley Star

Mariane Avila breaks through the current at Valley College Aquatic Center.



Valley Staff for The Valley Star

Laila Salazar (left) dribbles towards the opposing basket with Samantha Maldonado (right) following close behind in the South Gym against College of the Canyons.



Alex Diaz,  
Sports Editor

Sports Opinion

As Iowa's Caitlin Clark recently bid farewell to college basketball, 18.7 million viewers watched the confetti fall, moments before South Carolina celebrated its undefeated championship title on April 7th, marking the first time in history that the women's championship game attracted more viewers than the men's title game. In recent years, the women's college basketball championship games have helped women's sports gain

popularity and recognition. The 2024 NCAA title game between Iowa and South Carolina is the second most-viewed non-Olympic women's sporting event on U.S. television following the 2015 Women's World Cup Final. Competitive sports have been male-dominated for many years, with male athletes often receiving more promotions and funding than their female counterparts. Although there has been progress in the success of female athletes, there is still a long way to go. Title IX has been put into action to safeguard against sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive funding from the federal government and provides the essential foundation for ensuring progress toward gender equality in sports.

Although sports were not a primary focus of the legislation, athletics is where we can observe the most significant and lasting effects of the bill. During the NCAA collegiate basketball tournament, there have been some positive changes to ensure that women are given the same treatment as men. For instance, women's games now can use March Madness marketing and have been granted access to better training facilities, as well as benefits such as state-of-the-art lounges, similar to those provided to male players. However, these perks are not enough to address the inequality that exists between the two leagues. Since the 2024 WNBA draft, it is evident that female athletes in similar positions are paid significantly less than

their male counterparts. While the NBA's top 2023 draft pick, Victor Wembanyama, was signed for \$55.2 million over four years, Clark's four-year contract compensates her with \$338,000, which is less than \$100,000 per year. Additionally, basketball holds the biggest pay gap in sports, with female players earning an average of \$113,295 compared to men's average of \$10.7 million. Currently, the WNBA has a \$60 million deal per year with media rights, which is set to expire in 2025. In contrast, the NBA has a massive \$24 billion television deal, and they are looking to increase it to a staggering \$72 billion in the upcoming summer. To increase the pay of women athletes, the WNBA needs to focus on boosting ticket sales and securing

larger television contracts. The impact of television broadcasting is a leading factor for sports. The exceptional performance of star athletes like Clark, Angel Reese, Paige Bueckers, and Kamilla Cardoso has captured the attention and admiration of fans. Clark, in particular, has become a prominent figure in the media with her appearances in commercials like State Farm and TV shows such as Saturday Night Live. Endorsements are one of the main ways for athletes to earn a significant amount of money. Although college athletes receive compensation through partial or full athletic scholarships, student-athletes do not receive a salary. In 2021, the NCAA can no longer prohibit athletes from endorsements. Since the release of many

draftees' contracts, it has been argued that they will earn most of their income from these deals. Clark, for example, has earned \$3.1 million from NIL. Clark's upcoming deal with Nike, reportedly over \$20 million, has resulted in a surge of other endorsements. The incredible skills and passion of these women athletes have made them role models for many people, bringing greater recognition to the sport. Their legacy is undeniably outstanding, but if they are not offered equal pay and recognition, their struggle will never end. These women have the potential to turn the WNBA into a billion-dollar industry, and they should not be ignored.