



VALLEY LIFE: UNITY ON CAMPUS
A RIBBON CUTTING WAS HELD IN HONOR OF THE MOSAIC VILLAGE: UNITY CENTER.



GALLERY: LARAMIE PROJECT
CAMPUS CENTER IS TRANSFORMED INTO LARAMIE, WYOMING FOR FIVE NIGHTS.

Valley keeps ringing victory bell



ANTICIPATION- Valley College sophomore defensive back Dennis Wallace rings the victory bell before a game against the Pierce College Brahmas where they played for possession of the bell. The Monarchs beat the Brahmas 36-8, keeping the Victory Bell for an eighth consecutive year.

GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

SEE VICTORY BELL ON PAGE 5

Moreno loses seat

CASSANDRA NAVA
MANAGING EDITOR

Sole Measure LA opponent voted out of the Los Angeles Community College District board of trustees as all other incumbents remain seated.

In last week's midterm election, incumbent board of trustee member Eric Moreno lost seat four to Sara Hernandez, who took 53.94 percent of the votes. The newly elected trustee teaches constitutional law at Valley College for a non-credit paralegal program and is a land-use and environmental attorney. Her main clients are affordable housing developers, and she plans to utilize that knowledge at the board level. All of the board members publicly endorsed Hernandez.

Despite Moreno's 50 year career with the LACCD, his tendency to swim against the tide could have factored into his recent loss. In a board meeting earlier this summer, he was the sole vote against sending Measure LA to the ballot, despite other members' enthusiasm.

"Moreno lost," said Valley political science professor Anthony O'Reagan. "You know, he's a Republican... though these are not ostensibly partisan races. I mean, the Board of Trustees in Los Angeles is a very blue city. And I think that was always going to be hard for him. And plus, he was somewhat of a controversial figure."

Moreno openly aired his grievances with the district, stating that Measure LA's \$5.3 billion price tag was an irresponsible amount to ask of taxpayers. He also feared that renovating campuses despite low enrollments would create "ghost towns."

"But [enrollment] shouldn't be used as a reason to not invest in education," said Hernandez in response to Moreno's statements, in an interview with the Star. "If we don't have proper wifi, updates to our buildings — the types of improvements we need to offer world class education — it doesn't necessarily hurt the district per se, it hurts our communities. So I would challenge anyone who points to enrollment as to why we shouldn't invest in students."

Although the national turnout for last week's midterm election was uncharacteristically high, a little less than two million Angelenos cast ballots, of the total five million eligible voters.

Seat two saw the incumbent Steven Veres running against Jason R. Aula and Glenn Trujillo Bailey. Veres won with 66.09 percent of the votes.

In seat six, incumbent Gabriel Buelna defeated Robert L. Payne with a voter percentage of 72.62.

Seat seven was a special election; it ran for an abnormal two years despite the board's typical four year term, due to a vacancy in the seat earlier this year. Kelsey Iino, the incumbent that has held the position for seven months, defeated Nancy Pearlman and Mark Dutton with 61.24 percent.

Angelenos approved the LACCD's fourth and largest bond measure with 61.43 percent saying "yes" on the ballot. The district will start taxing property owners following the certification of the measure from the LA County Registrar next month.

These features and more can be found in full @ www.thevalleystarnews.com

Voters pass \$5.3 billion for district

Over 55 percent of voters approved the LACCD's fifth and largest bond to date.

GRIFFIN O'ROURKE,
ANDRES SANCHEZ AND
NICHOLAS OROZCO

Los Angeles voters approved Measure LA on election night, authorizing a \$5.3 billion bond for LACCD campus renovations.

As of Wednesday morning, voters approved the measure with 60.36 percent of the vote for the biggest bond in LACCD history. The bond will tax property owners between \$25 and \$157 annually, with an expected \$345 million in funds raised per year. The tax hike will stretch over the course of 40 years.

Measure LA will bring repairs, renovations and funding to aging buildings throughout the district. It will also boost communal economic development by partnering with local unions. According to athletic director Dave Mallas, the campus is currently about 75 percent completely renovated. With the funds from the measure, it would put the campus at 95-100 percent complete in assessed renovations.

"I voted for it," said nursing professor Hermel Nuyda. "It needs to be used for all colleges. The money should be divided equally."

The bond's funds will be distributed across all nine LACCD campuses, with \$1.3 billion in renovations towards pre-1970's buildings, \$734 million to infrastructure, \$300 million for technology, \$687 million for sustainability and \$163 million for athletic facilities.

Of the \$5.3 billion, Valley College will see \$496.01 million being allocated towards the campus. The buildings which could see renovations will be Music, Art, South Gym, Campus Center, Planetarium and the Motion Picture Studio. Valley is expected to re-

ceive \$199.2 million for renovations in pre-1970's buildings. Along with general renovations, the college plans to modernize wiring and data lines to accommodate Hybrid-Flexible courses. HyFlex technology allows instructors to record their lectures for in-person and virtual students to view at any time.

Infrastructure, technology, sustainability and general college needs will see \$85.5 million, \$33.5 million, \$94.3 million and \$62.32 million, respectively. This will include upgrading exterior campus lighting, sidewalks, sewer systems, roadways and parking lots.

Valley's athletic fields will receive \$21.19 million. The football field will see renovations to football home stand bleachers and a new scoreboard and sound system. Baseball and softball fields will see upgrades to the storage rooms and changing areas.

Both 60-year-old gyms will also be renovated with modifications, upgrades or possible complete remodeling.

"There are many old buildings that need to be serviced, upgraded and cleaned," said Valley custodian Rockne Brown. "We are also understaffed."

Current active projects at Valley were funded by earlier bond measures; the Valley Academic and Cultural Center, Allied Health & Science Center are nearly complete with 3 other projects slated to be designed next. The district has acquired over \$9.6 billion in bond measures over the course of twenty years. Within 60 days of the mea-



JOSEPH ACUNA | VALLEY STAR

Cinema Department Professor Jon Stout and Media Arts Professor Jason Williams roll their green-screen tarp to reveal the cracks in the flooring. In addition of covering the flooring cracks, the foundation between the ground and green-screen wall is separating. The Motion Picture building is one of the six pre-1970 buildings.

sure passing, an independent Citizens' Oversight Committee will be appointed by the board. The goal of the committee is to assess the account in which the money is deposited into.

This committee will also review and report taxpayer money for school construction according to Education Code section 15278.

"I think it's worth it in the long run for students

and the community," said Baldomero Estada, computer science major.

— With contributions from
Cassandra Nava

Trump announces third presidential bid

After his endorsed candidates' failures in the midterm election, Trump made his announcement.

ISAAC DEKTOR
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Former President Donald J. Trump announced his 2024 presidential campaign on Tuesday evening following an unexpectedly strong performance by democrats around the country.

Trump's announcement comes on the heels of a mixed-bag of results for republicans. While some candidates endorsed by the former president did well, such as J.D. Vance in Ohio, others did poorly in red-leaning states, notably Mehmet Oz in Pennsylvania and Hershel Walker in Georgia. Prominent conservative media figures such as Candace Owens, formerly friendly to Trump, distanced themselves as hopes for a red wave began to fizzle. The 45th president of the U.S. made his announcement at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida.

"In order to make America great and glorious again I am tonight announcing my candidacy for president of the United States," said Trump.

As Trump-backed candidates fall to democrats in red-leaning

states, analysts have speculated that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis might challenge the former president in the GOP primary, which is just over a year away.

"In the aftermath of this, you've had a lot of what I would call the Republican classic; the old school Republican voices, turning around and saying let's turn the corner here away from this Trump period," said Anthony O'Reagan, professor of political science at Valley College. "I think the question there for the Republican Party is, where do they go? Clearly Desantis is one of the big winners of the night last Tuesday. Clearly, he's got his eyes on, minimally, the nomination."

The culturally combative Florida governor won Miami-Dade county, a democratic bastion within the state that has turned definitively red, with over 55 percent of the vote. Desantis lost the same county to then-democratic hopeful Andrew Gillum by 20 points in 2018.

Having been elected by an overwhelming margin, the 44-year-old governor has wind in his sails to potentially launch a 2024 presidential campaign.

On the other hand, he might be hesitant to jump into the ring with Trump, who has already dubbed the young politician "Ron De-sanctimonious."

"Typically you get one bite at the apple," said O'Reagan. "Desantis could get hurt."

Despite the risks associated with mounting a challenge against the man who, while standing next to Jeb Bush on live tv, said the former governor of Florida "needed his mommy to help him," the GOP leadership roles are ripe for the picking. Many in the party, including Texas Senators Ted Cruz and John Cornyn, have stated that they are open to new candidates.

"A lot of the people who I think enabled him, they're gonna have to question if it was a very transactional relationship," said O'Reagan. "The question now is, whenever you have a transactional relationship, what happens if that bargain is not so beneficial anymore."



PHOTO COURTESY OF GAGE SKIDMORE/FICKR

Karen Bass elected as first female mayor of LA

Angelenos' anticipation ends as the final call for mayor was announced a week after election.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

MIDTERM- Voters line up outside Valley College's voting center on election night. Of the five million eligible Los Angeles voters, 1,997,887 turned out to cast their ballots. In person voting was not a popular option, as 23.91 percent of Angelenos showed up to the booths.

NATALIE METCALF
AND CASSANDRA NAVA
STAFF WRITERS

Karen Bass and Rick Caruso's week-long tango for mayor ends, as Bass takes the win and becomes Los Angeles's first female mayor.

According to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder,

Bass took the lead with 53.06 percent, with Caruso trailing behind at 46.94 percent. Last Wednesday, Caruso was inching over Bass by 2.4 percent, when about half of the votes were counted.

"I voted for Karen Bass because Rick Caruso was such a bad option," said Clara Osgood, a third-year political science major at Valley College. "He spent

a lot of money on anti-abortion."

As of election night, many Angelenos expected results on the weekend. However, due to mail-in ballots and same-day voter registrations, the final call is expected on Nov. 15. About 46 million Angelenos voted early and submitted a ballot prior to election day. To verify the validity of these votes, election

officials must carefully cross reference the signature on each ballot to the voter's driver's license or identification card.

In May, Planned Parenthood called out the businessman turned candidate for funding Proposition 1 anti-abortion campaign committee for \$100,000 after Roe v. Wade was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the primary elections, Bass campaigned to protect women's rights. Earlier this year, she showed her support for women's reproductive rights at an annual Women's March event at City Hall, which hosted thousands of Angelenos.

"We are in a fight for the soul of our city," said Bass, according to the Associated Press. "We will win because we are going to build a new Los Angeles."

Bass has been a congresswoman and US representative of California in the 33rd district since 2011. In the past, Caruso was a real estate lawyer and businessman. He was widely known for his contributions to the Grove in Los Angeles.

According to KCET, Caruso spent \$57.6 million on his general election campaign, while Bass spent \$3.4 million. Overall the combined candidate's campaigns range around \$61 million in the general election. The two candidates faced off in the primary election as well, with Caruso spending \$41.5 million and Bass spending \$3.6 million.

"Caruso is spending so much money in a race — that's pretty amazing," said Valley College professor of political science, Anthony O'Reagan. "Bass certainly didn't have the same kind of financial resources. But what she did have was the political resources. And I think that's probably going to be just about enough for her to kind of hold on. I always felt that Bass was the more likely to win, but it's been a very competitive race."

The U.S. Respective was given \$5.1 million from outside supporters, whereas Caruso received \$4.28 million from individual contributors wanting him to stop his campaign. Bass has seen \$14, 227 in donations from her supporters during her campaign. Caruso has seen much less, only receiving \$3,101 in donations.

"In terms of the socio-economic-political spectrum and the temperatures rising, in terms of which direction each party is going, Bass vs. Caruso is creating a divide that tends to solve issues and also create problems," said Ali Abin, a second-year accounting student at Valley.

THE FACTS

Directly following the election, Rick Caruso was in the lead over Karen Bass. As of Wednesday, Bass became Los Angeles' 43rd and first Black female mayor.

Villanueva voted out as Angelenos seek reform

The incumbent sheriff conceded to former Long Beach chief of police Robert Luna.

KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

Sheriff Alex Villanueva conceded to running mate Robert Luna, who took 60.29 percent of the votes for sheriff of Los Angeles County.

Villanueva's controversial tenure in the position led to the passage of Measure A, which gives the County Board of Supervisors the ability to impeach a sitting sheriff.

Luna led by more than 150,000, the day following the election. Villanueva's odds of re-election were low in the lead up to Nov. 8, as data from a Berkeley IGS poll from August showed the former Long Beach police chief's overwhelming support from democrats and undecided voters. Measure A, which gives the County Board of Supervisors the ability to impeach an incumbent sheriff, passed by an overwhelming margin.

Donald George, first year psychology major at Valley College, voted doubly for Villanueva's referendum by supporting Luna and Measure A.

"If Alex Villanueva was at the top of the tree, then we impeach him, we cut off the top of the tree, it's going to grow back," said George. "He is just the culmination of a problem that's probably been happening for a very long time. So if that's the truth, then we have to, first off, pat ourselves on the back for what we did on election day. But the work doesn't stop there. That's literally just the beginning. So we still have to do the work."

Villanueva, whose incumbency as sheriff has been plagued with controversy, has been criticized for ignoring the issue of deputy gangs and excessive force within the department. Public outcry boiled over after he launched an investigation into a whistleblower who released a video showing a deputy kneeling on an inmate's neck in a county courthouse.

The 59-year-old sheriff came into the position four years ago after the rare feat of ousting an incumbent sheriff, Jim McDonnell. While Villanueva initially enjoyed strong backing from reform-minded community groups, his dithering responses to excessive force and repeated clashes with the County Board of

Supervisors has built a large opposition movement against him.

Luna, the former Long Beach chief of police, ended his tenure with the department after 36 years and is now seeking to head up the largest sheriff department in the nation. Long Beach is the second largest municipal police force in the county. The retired sheriff argued during the campaign that Villanueva's department is being "mismanaged" and said that he will work to restore trust in the agency.

The 55-year-old plans to ask the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate and bring more transparency to the department.

"We need accountability," said Luna to the Press Telegram. Luna consistently used his strong relationship with the board as a positive factor and stated his intentions to make a difference in LA County.

"[Villanueva's recusal] shows that the system can be better, and the younger generation can clean it up," said James Avitia, a student in the Police Orientation Preparedness Program.

With contributions from Isaac Dektor



FILE PHOTO BY SOLOMON O. SMITH | VALLEY STAR

PATROL- An L.A. County Sheriff waits in a car on Main St. a block away from the Los Angeles Hall of Justice where protesters gathered. (Photo from Nov. 15, 2020)

New Unity Center makes its debut after delays

Valley Colleges' new Mosaic Village: Unity Center opened its doors Tuesday, with many in attendance.

NATALIE METCALF
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

A crowd of Monarchs gathered in front of Campus Center to welcome the Mosaic Village: Unity Center, while both Vice President of Student Services Florentino Manzano and Acting Associate Dean of Equity Cecilia Cruz cut a bright green Valley-certified ribbon.

Four student-oriented programs now call Valley's Campus Center home, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to make it all the more official. Delayed by COVID-19, asbestos and flooding, the Mosaic Village: Unity Center made its debut on Tuesday. The collective of resources will now have a permanent residence within Campus Center, including the Dream Resource Center, Rainbow Pride Center, Puente Program and Basic Needs Center. Umoja Black Scholars and the Veterans Resource Center already hold a spot in the Mosaic Village, as the Unity Center is an add-on to the mosaic.

ful message by joining us this morning -- that everyone is welcome at Valley, that everyone has a place to feel safe," said Gribbons. "This is not always true for students who are dreamers, LGBTQIA+ or experiencing basic needs insecurities."

The ribbon-cutting was met with around 100 students, faculty and staff. Under Secretary of Education, James Kvaal was in attendance. LACCD trustee board members Andra Hoffman and Nichelle Henderson joined in the historic event, along with district Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez and Assembly member Adrin Nazarian. Hoffman spoke about her time at Valley as a student and her excitement in the new Unity Center.

Natalie Gurrero is in charge of running the Rainbow Pride Center. In her first few months at Valley, the counselor sponsored an LGBTQIA+ club named Pride+ and was responsible for the first pride flag raising at an LACCD campus in history.

In the 29 years of Puente's existence, this is the first time the program will have its own space.

Ruth Vasquez will be Puente's counselor in the Unity Center, working alongside Puente Program advisor Holly Batty.

"The idea of it [the Mosaic Center] is supposed to be about bringing pieces of different things together into something beautiful," said Batty.

Juan Castellanos is heading up the Basic Needs Center as a coordinator and counselor. This week the center hosted a resource fair for National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week.

The Associated Student Union members President Ani Ramazyan, Treasurer Diego Enriquez, Commissioner of Fine Arts Mia Sanchez and Commissioner of Ethnic and Cultural Affairs Erick Portillo attended. Enriquez made an unplanned speech at the podium, as a Puente student representative. Before the treasurer spoke, Ramazyan showed her support by speaking briefly about community and student interest on campus.

"I remember during one of our events Dr. Gribbons mentioned that on this campus we care



JEREMY RUIZ | VALLEY STAR

MOSAIC - (L - R) Vice President of Student Services Florentino Manzano and Acting Associate Dean of Equity Cecilia Cruz cut the ribbon at the official opening of Valley College's Mosaic Village: Unity Center.

about each other, which is absolutely true because it's what we do -- we care about each other," said the student union president.

The Mosaic Village: Unity Center sits where Valley's book-

store used to be, turning an empty space into a safe place for first-generation Monarchs, student veterans, LGBTQIA+ members and students in need of food and housing.

"Now we just have one more thing to do this morning -- we have to cut a ribbon," said President Gribbons, followed by a round of applause.

Valley Veterans find camaraderie on campus

Student Veterans share a common bond: the sacrifices they made for their country.

AVA ROSATE
STAFF WRITER

If a student walked into the Student Services building on any Wednesday afternoon, they would instantly hear the laughter and feel the warmth emitting from the room. The comfort is a result of the community that was built by veterans.

With 190 identifying members including spouses and 100 service members, the veteran population is becoming dense on campus. The resource center is open to all students, families of former servicemen and Monarchs wishing to enlist in the military. The program connects veterans with an array of services such as mental health help, counseling and financial aid assistance.

One of the VRC's outcrops, the Veterans Club, hosts a community of student veterans who harbor camaraderie and kinship.



AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR

MARINES - Marine veteran and nursing major Roberto Zea has attended Valley College since 2021. Zea began training at 15 years old with First City Rifle Corps, a youth program that teaches military disciplines.

"I miss the clowns, not the circus," said Roberto Zea, a current nursing student and marine.

"When you come out of the military you miss the community and connections you made. Here

on campus we can get that." President of the Veteran's Club, Lloarid Flores, a 36-year-

old veteran in the U.S. Marine Corps and current Valley student has completed two deployments in Iraq and is currently pursuing a double major in fire technology and social work. Flores hopes to transfer to California State University Northridge in the fall and attributes most of his academic success to the community he found at Valley.

"Growing up I wanted to be two things, a firefighter and a marine. I already finished one goal so it is on to the other," said the two combat tour Marine veteran. "I kind of regret not starting school earlier, but if I did begin earlier, I wouldn't have the community I do today that pushes me forward."

Flores, also a student worker at the resource center, lives in South Los Angeles. Because of the brotherhood he found on campus, the full time student commutes almost fifty miles round trip Monday through Friday.

"The biggest fault vets face is the transition back to civilian life. The club not only helps us with our educational goals but helps us transition into society again. We don't know what's going on in a vet's mind and having a support system makes us more successful as a student and more successful as a civilian," said Jirata Rottinawa, a 26 year old U.S. Marine Logistics Embarkation specialist in the Marine Corps and a double major in business and counseling at Valley.

The resource center is actively working towards reaching out and appealing to more students on campus by hosting events open to all students and collaborating with clubs on campus. The Veteran's Club meets on Wednesday at 1p.m. in the Mosaic Center.

Shareen Sayid's transcendent journey

Through a long journey from Kuwait City to Los Angeles, the music major finds an audience.

SAYEH SAADAT
STAFF WRITER

Shareen Sayid's journey from Kuwait to the music department's stage at Valley College has not been easy. The first year music major and only child of an Indian Muslim father and a Filipino Christian mother overcame many obstacles, cultural and religious, to get to where she is today and do what she loves to do -- sing high soprano.

As a little girl born and raised in a beautiful house in Kuwait City, Kuwait Sayid's life was very much controlled by her strict father.

"My father controlled what I watched on TV," Shareen said. "There were not a lot of shows I was allowed to watch, so we watched pretty much what he liked. We watched a lot of sitcoms and musicals. He loved ABBA."

Destiny appeared one night when she was watching one of her father's favorite shows: Donnie and Marie. Sayid remembers that night vividly.

"I saw Donnie on TV and told my dad 'I want to be with him. I want to be there,'" said Sayid.

At that moment her life changed forever. She had found



AVA ROSATE | VALLEY STAR

PIANO - Shareen Sayid is a music major and Applied Music Program student at Valley College. Previously, she has performed in Valley's free weekly concerts, hosted by music Professor Christian Nova.

her passion. She knew what she wanted to do for the rest of her life.

Her love of singing created a lot of friction between her and

her father, a prominent orthodontist in Kuwait. He did not like the idea of his daughter becoming a professional sing-

er. Instead, he wanted her to become a medical doctor. By providing his daughter with a good education, he hoped that she would never have to rely on a man to provide for her. From his perspective, a medical profession would guarantee her financial independence and a respected place in society he had benefited from himself.

"During the Gulf war when Iraq invaded Kuwait, I was nearly kidnapped twice by Iraqi soldiers," recalled. "But both times my father saved me by telling Iraqi soldiers he was a doctor and bribing them with pain killers that he always carried with him."

The father-daughter battle continued for many years. Her father spent a fortune on her education to become a doctor. But Sayid did not give up. She began to take singing lessons in secret when she became a teenager, until she got her first performing job when she was thirteen years old. The performer does not remember the name of the play or the character she played, but does remember the tiny paycheck she earned.

"I have made so much money all these years," her father said to her, "but I have never been as

happy as you are with this small check. I want you to be happy."

"I understand him now and appreciate the values he instilled in me, like discipline and hard work. He really wanted the best for me."

- Shareen Sayid, music major

When her father passed away, Shareen decided to leave Kuwait and come to America to pursue her dream.

"Every time an airplane flew over me, I'd close my eyes and hear Frank Sinatra's 'Come Fly With Me' in my head. I had a recurring dream about flying over a busy street with lots of lights. I didn't know what the name of the street was until I came to America. It was Hollywood Boulevard."

It was in America that her dreams started to come through.

She appeared on stage with her childhood idol Donnie Osmond, where she got to do a comedy act and sing and dance with him. But the best thing America gave her was her freedom.

"I felt free when I came to America," Shareen said. "I had never felt so free in my life. To me America means freedom."

Although pursuing an acting career in America proved to be challenging, she never gave up. The music major remembers being discriminated against because of her Arabic last name or because she did not look caucasian.

"Things were tough, I was told to go back to where I came from," said Sayid. "They asked me if I was carrying a bomb in my purse."

Looking back at her life in Kuwait and growing up under the watchful eyes of her father, Shareen does not hold any resentment or anger.

"I understand him now and appreciate the values he instilled in me, like discipline and hard work," said Sayid. "He really wanted the best for me."

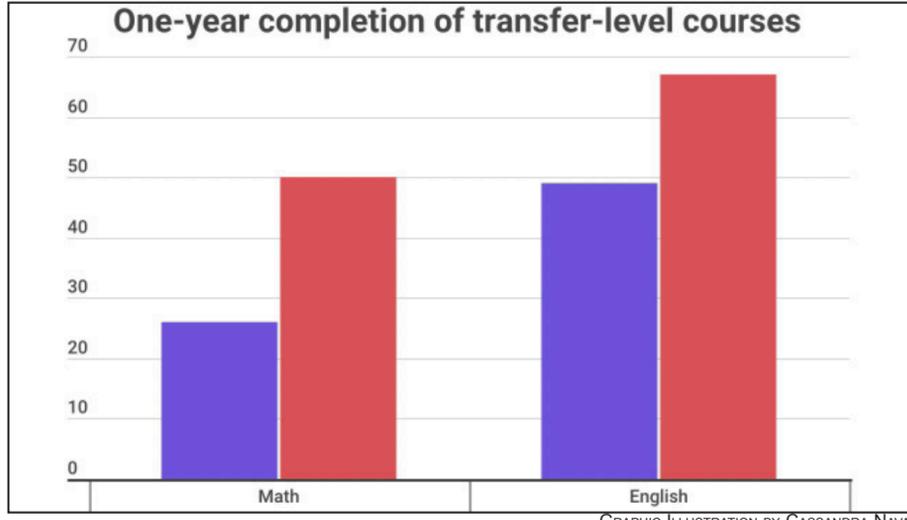
AB 1705 is a disservice for students

The ban of remedial courses holds students back from achieving their potential.

KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

Community colleges are designed for students from all walks of life, whether they are returning to school, trying to boost their GPA before transferring to a four-year university or just hoping to save money. If a student in need of pre-transfer-level courses is forced to enroll in transfer-level courses, they could feel forced to drop out due to the lack of preparation. This will cause students to waste time and money. Remedial courses are designed to prepare students for transfer-level courses and ensure their success in future academics. Assembly Bill 1705 severely restricts the ability of community colleges to offer remedial math and English courses for pre-transfer level courses. This is because the bill requires community college students to expand their efforts to enroll and support students in transfer-level math and English courses. This will deter students from fulfilling their academic goals by forcing students into classes above their level. While graduating in the shortest amount of time possible is ideal, adequately preparing students for the next level of coursework is more important. Statewide data makes clear just how bad this policy is: in fall 2019, just 14 percent of students who took remedial math courses

completed a transferable course within a year, compared to 60 percent of students who started directly in transfer-level courses. "AB 1705 virtually destroyed second chance opportunities for students," said Rosemarie Bezerra Nader, professor of mathematics at Fresno City College, to campus reform about the effects of AB 1705. "Students who made poor choices in high school, those who were not proficient in the English Language, will all be affected by this bill." Remedial courses give students a second chance at fulfilling their academic goals. Taking remedial classes away would take away those opportunities from students who are already disenfranchised. Accelerating unprepared students through these classes will only result in a generation of untrained graduates receiving meaningless diplomas. When AB 1705 prohibited colleges from forcing students into remedial classes, one-year completion of transfer-level courses increased from 49 percent to 67 percent in English and from 26 percent to 50 percent in math statewide. On the other hand, when full-time students were seeking to get their bachelors degree, 74 percent were more likely to drop out of college if they took remedial courses in their first year. The lack of preparation for students in these courses is a big reason why test scores have been dropping in recent years. According to the New York Times, math scores



REMEDIAL- According to Assembly Bill 1705, one-year completion of transfer-level courses increased from fall 2015 to fall 2019 in English and math. However, the rates of success do not take unique student cases into account.

dropped by 41 percent in nearly every state and English scores dropped by 31 percent. A downward trend in student success is clearly a result of the new policy. It is clear that remedial classes cost students time and money and do not move them closer to their goals. Students tend to take longer to transfer because they are essentially taking classes that don't matter and are useless toward a diploma. More than 50 percent of students have wasted more than

three years of their college education to complete their remedial classes starting with math and English classes that are three tiers below the level students ultimately need to take to transfer. Even though remedial classes can be stressful and tough for students, it is still needed to give them better chances on test scores. The classes will give students time to prepare and feel confident about their chance of success. Remedial programs are helping to expand

in many places because so many kids faced learning challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. "None of these programs or bills are going to accomplish what we need in order to turn this mess around," said John Almyprofessor of English at Yuba Community College, to Campus Reform. "You do not need to accelerate people who do not know the basics. You slow down and teach them what they desperately need to know."

Billion dollar plummet in the name of free speech

The free speech abolitionist is struggling to keep the social media platform profitable.



ASHER MILES
STAFF WRITER

Normal Twitter users must evaluate the structural integrity of the platform as Elon Musk sits loftily in his board office, quietly whispering to himself "this is fine" as the smoke from increasing racial epithets slowly engulfs him. According to figures from the Center for Countering Digital Hate, researchers have found a soaring increase in slurs after Musk absorbed the platform into his ever-growing portfolio. The most visible online public institution on the planet was acquired by the self-serving opportunist with hopes to fill a deep-seated nihilistic cavity that grows with every failed business adventure. Musk's business decisions include "The Hyperloop," which cost an exorbitant \$100 million per mile — over \$95 million more expensive. The ideologically driven Musk's incompetence will bring down the multi-billion dollar platform in the name of increasing free speech. If he truly sought to democratize free speech in the social media sector, then the mogul would have touted nationalizing it. Twitter should be a public utility, but because the platform is a private entity, it is subject to the profit motive. Only through nationalization could the first amendment reign on the virtual chalkboard-wall. Musk's initial reasons to

overtake the social media giant were ostensibly to increase free speech rights for users after multiple members were banned for violating the terms of service. If the engines of capitalism are nothing else, they are consistent. But Musk fails to realize that free speech, on its own, is as meaningful as lawlessness in a society where some people have guns and the others are unarmed. Instead of leading with a drafted terms of service to implement upon finalizing the acquisition, Musk abruptly locked 7,500 employee's work accounts, before hastily firing them. With no communications department, users are unable to appropriately discuss issues of harassment, forcing users to go to Instagram and Facebook to share their thoughts. Ironically, Musk does not believe that nullifying the feature that allows brands to authenticate themselves is an attack on free speech. He does, however, believe that banning white supremacists such as Nick Fuentes, Richard Spencer and David Duke is an infringement on the first amendment. What is amoral about a social media company deciding that they do not want their bandwidth hosting content that they view as destructive? If Twitter privately-owned a wall in a neighborhood and any community member could pontificate their thoughts on it, then Twitter would take ownership and have complete regulation.

If the wall was nationalized, or collectively-owned, then democratic votes could be held on what is and is not against our American first amendment right to free speech. Conversely, if the billionaire down the street buys the wall, then the only difference is that the individual may decide the terms and conditions of the wall. Sounds pretty "un-American" to me. Many are not shocked that the man who proclaimed that his cyber truck would float on water is unable to manage a billion dollar social media platform, but his sycophants continue to vie for him under the guise of promoting "free speech." While the first amendment's core principle is to support freedom of individuals to articulate their opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, many Americans forget that there are notable restrictions. Yet, we must ask again, what is amoral about a social media company deciding that they don't want their bandwidth hosting content that they view as destructive?

EDITORS NOTE

The views expressed on this page are solely those of the writer and do not reflect those of the Valley Star or those of Los Angeles Valley College.

VALLEY VIEW | HOW HAS ELON MUSK'S ACQUISITION OF TWITTER AFFECTED YOUR EXPERIENCE ON THE PLATFORM?

TEXT BY JEREMY RUIZ
PHOTOS BY JEREMY RUIZ



"Honestly it hasn't affected me that much. I feel bad for all the employees that are getting fired that have been working there for years on end."

-CHRISTOPHER ROBLES-GARAY, HISTORY MAJOR



"Political discussions are really brought to the forefront. But people discuss Elon Musk acquiring Twitter as if it is a political move. I don't think it is a political move as much as it is a poor financial move."

-GENEVA WRIGHT, UNDECLARED



"Overall, it hasn't affected me personally. It's kind of been changed in the way he's formatting everything, especially with him adding blue ticks, which is the most random thing he could have added. It's pointless."

-ULIZES TORRES, ART MAJOR



"I don't really use Twitter that much, but I did see that happen, which was kind of funny. When it comes to Elon Musk, I don't think he should have been able to buy it in the first place because then he would use it to his own advantage."

-SABRINA RIVERA, UNDECLARED



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GOT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

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

Battle of the Bell; Brahmas fall flat

Final bell rings on Monarch season.

NICHOLAS OROZCO
SPORTS EDITOR

With the victory bell up for grabs and tensions running high from the opening kick off, the Monarchs outpaced Pierce College and grossed nearly four times their rivals rushing yards, defeating them 36-8 in the final game of the season.

On a cold Saturday night, the Monarchs (2-3) traveled across the San Fernando Valley to face longtime rival, the Brahmas of Pierce College (0-5). The final game of the season came with a long-term rivalry as both teams fought for the victory bell. Dating back to the founding of both schools, the rivalry has fueled the programs to take down one another.

"The biggest thing that we focused on was we wanted to get up [scoring]," said head coach Lester Towns. "We wanted to play our game."

The bell has been a staple for the schools as the winner of the football game takes it home. Valley has held the bell since 2015, when they defeated Pierce 39-7. Ringing the bell prior to kickoff, screaming "we ready, we comin," from the sidelines.

Big runs from sophomores Michael Clark, Daniel Mauricio and freshman Graham Blubaugh, and Marcus Arthur allowed the Monarchs to move the chains right out of the gate. The drive culminated in a pass from Clark to freshman Jason Wagner in the endzone. A two-point conversion put the Monarchs up 8-0.

A second-quarter interception by sophomore Vincente Zepeda, put the Monarchs at the Brahma's 11 yard line. A short run by Clark was followed by a pass from Wagner to freshman



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

EXPLOSIVE- On a fake field goal attempt Valley College freshman Dennis Wallace throws for nine yards with freshman Stefan Roberts making a jumping catch in the endzone. Roberts only made one touchdown catch with multiple players stepping in as quarterback.

Stefan Roberts, with Roberts making a leaping catch in the corner of the endzone. Another pass and catch from the duo and the two-point conversion was good.

The Brahmas only moved the ball seven yards the following drive and were forced to punt from their own redzone. The Brahma's punter fumbled the ball and Valley was able to recover and secure a

safety, making the score 18-0.

The Monarchs scored another touchdown on a pass from freshman Andy Chavez to Wagner prior to halftime.

"This game for me was just about the sophomores, playing everybody and giving them an opportunity to play and have fun," said the head coach.

Pierce scored their first touchdown late in the first

quarter. A pass from freshman Matthew Abajian to freshman Alex Vales connected for six. The Brahma's two-point conversion attempt was good.

The Brahma glory was short lived, as Jason Wagner, from Valley's 28 yard line, returned the ball all the way for a touchdown.

Within the last five minutes of the matchup, big runs by Clark, Arthur, Mauricio and sophomore

PJ Trusty contributed to the final touchdown. The end whistle blew with the final score 36-8.

The Monarchs retain the bell for the eighth consecutive year.

"We always talk about tradition and leaving a legacy," said Towns. "The sophomores that were here and get the win and now pass the torch to the young freshman."



CHRISTIAN CRUZ | VALLEY STAR

COMRADERIE- Freshmen forwards Karen Hernandez and Angie Diaz congratulated each other in a September matchup against College of the Canyons after Hernandez managed to tie the game in the final ten minutes of the first half, but failed to get the win in a 2-3 loss.

STANDOUT- Top scorer Angie Diaz was the main focal point of the Monarch offense with 16 goals and 6 assists, finishing with a total of 38 points on committing .667 percent for shots on goal.



GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR

Monarchs finish strong

The Monarchs ended their season with a three game win streak.

SEAN SCULLY
STAFF WRITER

The Monarchs made Glendale's home turf their own on Friday, shutting out the Vaqueros 4-0, ending the season on a three-game winning streak.

The Monarchs started the match off strong. The girls applied consistent offensive pressure and set up effortless scoring opportunities. Within ten minutes of the contest, Monarch Melanie Velasquez scored the first goal from a free kick at the 15-yard line.

"It felt great to open up our final game of the season with a goal," said Velasquez with a smile. "I did it for the team."

With the score 1-0, the Monarchs' tireless ball movement exhausted the Vaqueros defense and kept them on their heels. At the 22-minute mark, Angie Diaz scored the second goal of the night with a clutch shot from the ten-yard line to the top right corner of the net.

Valley accumulated 26 shots on goal and three corner kicks in the first half, while Glendale failed to put a single shot on goal. As the match continued, the Monarchs' continued to dominate up and down the pitch.

Assisted by Joanna Serrano at the 28 minute-mark, Melanie Velasquez further extended the Monarchs' lead by sending a precise ground shot from the five-yard line to the corner of the net.

Instead of being comfortable with their 3-0 lead, Valley pushed the gas pedal even harder. At the 35-minute mark, a deflected corner kick set up Monarch Karen Hernandez for a straight shot from the 15-yard line.

With five minutes remain-

ing in the first half, the Monarchs set up for a penalty kick after being fouled inside the penalty area. The shot went wide left, leaving Valley up 4-0.

"We feel very good being up at half but this was expected of us," said Monarch Coach Melissa Fernandez during halftime. "I'm happy with the way we are moving the ball around and the energy exerting from our bench. But I also want to get the freshman more adapted to our style of play so they'll see some action in the second half."

Valley continued to assert their dominance at the opening of the second half by leaving their starters in their strongest positions and putting pressure on Glendale's defense.

"Keep moving the ball," shouted Monarch Assistant Coach Stacey Rodwell from the sidelines. "Continue to make good decisions and the game will come to us."

Eventually, underclassmen Lena Cardenaz, Juliana Serrano and Jackie Zuniga were substituted into the match, giving the audience a glimpse of the 2023 Monarch Women's soccer starting lineup. As the game progressed, Glendale became increasingly lethargic, lacking competitive energy and overworked from the consistent defensive battle.

At the 75-minute mark, Valley continued to put shots on goal and kept Glendale in a defensive position. In the final half, Valley acquired 21 shots on goals, bringing the total to 47 for the entire game — while Glendale struggled for two. At the 90-minute mark, the final whistle blew and the Monarchs' 2022 season came to an end.

Monarch outlook

NICHOLAS OROZCO
SPORTS EDITOR



As fall sports wrapped up their season's this past week, Valley College's teams finished with a mixed bag of results. Football, women's soccer, men's and women's water polo all played their last games. Football concluded their season with the overall record of 3-7. Two of those wins came from conference. They ended their season on a high note with a two game win streak against Santa Monica and long time rival Pierce. The Monarchs looked completely different on Saturday when they played longtime rivals Pierce College in the battle for the bell. Valley displayed a new energy that persisted throughout the entire night, almost shutting the Brahmas out entirely. This could have been due to the fact that these two schools have had a rivalry dating back over fifty years. The rivalry clearly fueled the intensity of the game — with both teams wanting to ring the bell. Following the win, families of the players filled the field to commemorate the sophomores' final game and the end of the season.

Women's soccer finished their season with a record of 8-12-2, hamstrung throughout the season by a lack of offense. The Monarchs scored a total 46 goals while allowing 53 this season. Although their net scoring was negative, the ladies always came to each game with a positive attitude. Every opponent was a tough adversary as associate head coach Greg Venger said, "it's a tough conference." Finishing the season with a three-game winning streak was a way to send the sophomores off in a positive way and also served as a testament to the character of the Monarchs.

The men's water polo team returned to the playoffs once again. Undeclared at their home pool (6-0), the team boasted an overall record of 19-9. The Monarchs participated in multiple tournaments: Golden West, Cuesta, Saddleback and won the Riverside Tournament with a 3-0 record. The Monarchs' triumphant reign drowned when they fell to Cuesta College for the conference title. Saddleback ultimately sank them in the Southern State Regionals. In the end, water polo continued its trend of successful playoff runs before falling short of winning a title or state championship. Four players from the squad were selected to the All-Western State Conference first team. Sophomores Hakop Ansurayan, Sako Kaputikyan and freshmen Johnny Agazaryan and Vindislov Danilov. Sophomores Max Ayrapetyan and Edward Shanakian were named to the conference's second team. Freshman George Saroyan earned honorable mention.

With spring dawning ever closer, Monarch fans will soon be able to enjoy men's and women's basketball, softball and baseball. The Lady Monarchs will host their first home game on Saturday at 3 p.m.



Griffin O'Rourke | Valley Star
Stage Manager Martin Gordodo reads through the script during a dress and tech rehearsal while actors switch scenes. The stage was built in an empty Campus Center classroom and resembles the Fireside Bar, a real bar in Laramie, Wyoming, that Matthew Shepard frequented. Scenes unfold around the audience as the cast play their parts and dramatic lights signal changes in the scenes. The actors are directed to interact with audience members in character, especially during intermission.



Griffin O'Rourke | Valley Star
(L-R) Second-year theater majors Deckland Jones and Edward Malcolm talk about moments of needed brevity in the somber play. "The characters aren't funny. It's how seriously they take themselves, which comes off as comedic. The comedy doesn't come from making light of his [Matthew Shepard's] death. It comes from the interesting ways people make their own interpretations and perspectives based off of it," said Malcolm.



Griffin O'Rourke | Valley Star
(L-R) Stephen Belber (Edward Malcolm) interviews Zubaida Ula (Alanna Walker) about the murder of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard in the Fireside Bar scene in Valley's rendition of *The Laramie Project*. The theater arts program emulates the original performance, which premiered in 2000, by the Tectonic Theater Project that travelled to Laramie, Wyoming, and uncovered what residents thought about the killing of Shepard.

The Laramie Project roams the halls of Campus Center

By Isaac Dektor | Editor-in-Chief

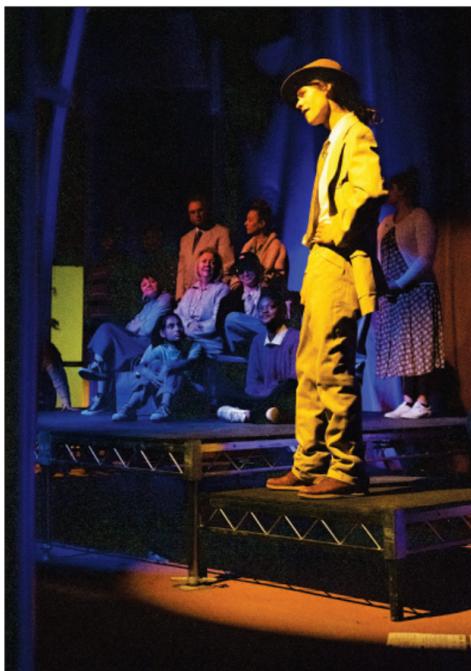
Without a stage to host its productions, the theater department ambitiously converted the second floor courtyard, north-facing hallway and classrooms of Campus Center into Laramie, Wyoming for a roaming play.

Director Matthew McCray leads the 14-person ensemble of Valley College students, community members and local actors in the department's fall production of "The Laramie Project." The show is based on the tragic true story of Matthew Shepard, a gay University of Wyoming student who was targeted and murdered for his sexuality. Valley's ensemble includes theater majors, first-time actors and Laramie Project enthusiasts. Local actor Dawn Halloran graduated from Valley last spring but returned to audition for the show.

"I was alive when Matthew Shepard was killed," said Halloran, who plays Rebecca Hilliker among other characters. "It was a devastating day and it stuck with me for a long time."

The show opens in the second floor courtyard of Campus Center where an impromptu stage was built. Audience members are then ushered down a hallway and into a classroom by actors still in character. Through lighting changes and sound queues, one classroom is transformed into multiple sets.

"It reminds me a lot of the choose your own adventure books I would read as a kid," said sophomore Edward Malcolm, who plays Doc O'Connor, Stephen Belbert and other ensemble characters. "But only this time, the adventure is sort of already predestined for you."



Griffin O'Rourke | Valley Star
The play starts off with the first act called "Moments, A Definition", which lays the setting for the play. The theater stage was built in the second-story outside the courtyard of the Campus Center.



Isaac Dektor | Valley Star
Stake Ecclesiastical leader of the Mormon church Doug Laws, (Sam Gordello), preaches over his Bible in a scene revealing the religious climate of Laramie, Wyoming. A Campus Center classroom is used for both the church set and the Fireside Bar stage which are separated by moody lighting.