

VALLEY LIFE: STUDENT ART SHOW
VALLEY COLLEGE ART STUDENTS EXHIBITED THEIR ARTWORK IN MONARCH HALL.



OPINION: COLLEGE TOO PRICEY
THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S MOVE TO FORGIVE STUDENT DEBT IS NOT ENOUGH.

VACC center of stop notice

GRIFFIN O'ROURKE
PHOTO EDITOR

Construction company MAD Steel sent a stop notice to Pinner Construction and the LACCD over a \$500,000 dispute.

The notice against Pinner was filed last week in order to alert the district of Pinner's refusal to pay their subcontractors money owed from the arbitration. Pinner won a \$3.2 million settlement in April 2022 after an independent arbitrator found the LACCD mainly at fault for a series of delays. Among the most costly delays includes the construction of tall walls in the Valley Academic and Cultural Center main stage theater, which was a part of MAD Steel's contract.

Over a year later, MAD Steel is still seeking what they claim is their share of the settlement. The stop notice would have halted further payment to Pinner for its work on the VACC. However, Pinner responded by claiming the stop notice was without merit, sidestepping it with a \$15,000 bond paid through Irvine-Allant Insurance Services, Inc. Pinner also sent a contract modification to MAD Steel subtracting \$15,000 from their original contract price of \$3,444,516.54, but the steel company did not sign the revision.

"Our contention is that Pinner owes MAD Steel a minimum of about half a million dollars," said MAD Steel lawyer Scott Doonan. "I'm going to demand mediation with Pinner because the meeting I had with them was... I could have banged my head on the wall, and I would have gotten a better response."

The Valley Star reached out to Pinner Construction on multiple occasions, but they canceled a 2 p.m. meeting on Wednesday with the Star staff.

The dispute stems from a paragraph in the subcontract agreement with Pinner, which covers the legitimacy of a subcontractor's claims in the event of loss of efficiency, productivity, delay or disruption.

The mediation would involve an independent mediator to interpret the contract for both sides, as the two companies have conflicting viewpoints on the clause. Doonan expects talks to fall through with the construction company and plans to follow with a court action.

"I believe Pinner wants to pay out the least amount of money as possible to the subcontractors on their claims," Doonan said. "I think paragraph 16 is something completely different than what they're interpreting it as, and I think it's bad faith."

According to Doonan, the stop motion will not delay construction at the VACC.

Veterans honored at Valley



JEREMY RUIZ | VALLEY STAR

MEMORIAL- Valley student and veteran, Joel Catano, plants an American flag outside of the student services center ahead of Memorial day. Catano, the first year business major and United States Marine Corps sergeant, was among one of the many students and faculty to honor those who have fought for the country. The Valley College Veterans spearheaded the planting of the flags, as well as the free In-n-out offered to the vets. Krixa Lim, the veterans counselor organized the observance that took place on Wednesday. The national holiday takes place on the last Monday of the month. It is one of the three to acknowledge the sacrifices of those who served. David Fierro, a veteran at Valley, placed a flag on the ground in honor of other veterans, and himself as well. "It's important to memorialize everybody that gave their life for the country," said Fierro. "We have all the benefits we have because of them, which is something not every other country has. They made the ultimate sacrifice for this country."

- Text by Jasmine Alejandre

Auto theft trending on TikTok

NATALIE METCALF
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

The LACCD sent out a crime alert on Wednesday, warning students about a recent TikTok trend in which viewers can learn how to steal Kias and Hyundai's using a USB cable.

The email was sent in conjunction with the Taskforce for Regional Auto Theft Prevention. The alert cautioned students to be vigilant of their cars being stolen, specifically Kia and Hyundai vehicles. A recent trend on tiktok has surfaced involving a tutorial of how to steal the Korean manufactured cars. Most videos show people breaking windows and using a USB cord or phone charger to turn on the ignition. Valley College has not seen any reports of stolen Kia or Hyundai vehicles, but other colleges in the district have.

"LA Trade Tech had 4 Kai or Hyundai cars -- they're not sure which -- taken about three or four weeks ago," said Valley Deputy Ismael Rodriguez, in reference to cars that have been stolen due to the Tik Tok trend. "ELAC had one taken about 3 weeks ago."

The LACCD urged Monarchs to be mindful when parking their cars. If students own a Kia or Hyundai manufactured between 2010-21, they may be susceptible to auto theft as a result of the the Tik-Tok trend. The crime alert stated students should install a steering wheel locking device. Free steering wheel locks may be available to car owners at their local law enforcement agency.

Students were also urged to install a battery disconnect switch, lock all windows and doors and park in a well lit or otherwise secure location. Two of the recommendations from the district require professional assistance such as installing a kill switch and aftermarket car alarm.

In a press release from February of this year, Hyundai introduced a free anti-theft software for customers vulnerable to the recent social media fad. The company created a method for the cars to not respond to USB cables as a key. The software update was launched on Feb. 14 and included model years 2017-2020 Elantra, 2015-2019 Sonata and 2020-2021 Venue.

According to the press release, the software updates can be installed by a Hyundai dealership member and take up to one hour to be completed. The company will allow the free update until June of this year. Customers will receive a window decal to let potential thieves know the vehicle is equipped with anti-theft software.

USA Today reported earlier this month that these cars are still being broken into and stolen even with the software updates provided by Kia and Hyundai. According to the Associated Press, Kia and Hyundai car thefts have increased 85 percent in 2022.

The Tik Tok trend is titled "Kia Boyz," where a group of teenagers discovered a hack in 2020-21 Kia and 2015-21 Hyundai vehicles in which a phone charger or USB cable can be used to hotwire the vehicles. Cars that do not have an engine immobilizer are targeted in the challenge.

Spring Finals Schedule

DAY CLASSES

Day and Date Of Final Exam	MONDAY JUNE 5			TUESDAY MAY 30										
	Time of Exam	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm							
Normal Class Schedule	6:30 - 7:55	MW	9:40 - 10:50	MTWTh	1:00 - 2:10	MTWTh	6:30 - 7:55	TTh	9:40 - 11:05	TTh	1:00 - 2:25	TTh		
	6:45 - 7:55	MTWTh	9:40 - 11:05	MW	1:00 - 2:25	MW	9:40 - 10:55	TThF	1:00 - 2:15	TThF	9:40 - 12:10	TTh	1:00 - 3:30	TTh
			9:40 - 10:55	MWF	1:00 - 2:15	MWTh								
			9:40 - 12:10	MW	1:00 - 3:30	MW								

Day and Date Of Final Exam	WEDNESDAY MAY 31			THURSDAY JUNE 1								
	Time of Exam	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm					
Normal Class Schedule	8:15 - 9:25	MTWTh	11:20 - 12:30	MTWTh	2:20 - 3:30	MTWTh	8:00 - 9:25	TTh	11:20 - 12:45	TTh	1:45 - 3:10	TTh
	8:00 - 9:25	MW	11:20 - 12:45	MW	2:40 - 4:05	MW	8:00 - 9:15	TThF	11:20 - 12:35	TThF	1:45 - 3:00	TThF
	8:00 - 9:15	MWF	11:20 - 12:35	MWF			8:00 - 10:30	TTh	11:20 - 1:50	TTh		
	8:00 - 10:30	MW	11:20 - 1:50	MW								

EVENING CLASSES

CLASSES MEETING AT 3 PM OR BEFORE 5 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT 5 PM OR BEFORE 6 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT OR AFTER 6 PM		
Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time
M	M June 5	4 - 6pm	M	M June 5	4:30 - 6:30pm	M	M June 5	7 - 9pm
T	T May 30	4 - 6pm	T	T May 30	4:30 - 6:30pm	T	T May 30	7 - 9pm
W	W May 31	4 - 6pm	W	W May 31	4:30 - 6:30pm	W	W May 31	7 - 9pm
Th	Th June 1	4 - 6pm	Th	Th June 1	4:30 - 6:30pm	Th	Th June 1	7 - 9pm
MW	M June 5	4 - 6pm	MW	W May 31	4:30 - 6:30pm	MW	M June 5	7 - 9pm
TTh	T May 30	4 - 6pm	TTh	Th June 1	4:30 - 6:30pm	TTh	T May 30	7 - 9pm

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

To use the schedule: Locate the day and hour of your class on the grid. Days of the week are abbreviated M T W Th F for Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Finals for the fall semester are from Tuesday, May 30 to Monday, June 5.

Except for classes of less-than-semester length, the last day of

regular instruction is Sunday, May 28.

Final examinations must be held on the day and time scheduled and in regularly assigned classrooms.

Friday classes will have their final during the regular class meeting on May 26.

Saturday classes will have their final during the regular class meeting on June 3.

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Monarchs springing toward the finish line

Students take advantage of campus facilities as they prepare for finals week.

JASMINE ALEJANDRE
STAFF WRITER

The last few weeks of the spring semester look different for each student. Some eagerly wait in long lines at the student bookstore to purchase their cap and gowns, while others fuel themselves with caffeine as they study for finals.

Whatever the case is, one thing is for certain: there's a lot of stress to go around.

"These past few weeks my stress has been over the top, around a ten," said Leslie Florentino, who will be attending CSUN in the fall with a major in Chicano studies. "I'm already done with finals, but when I was taking them I had to take walks and breaks."

For students who have not yet completed their finals, there is the Finals Late Night Crunch

Time, a four day event hosted by The Valley College Academic Resource Center and the ASU. Crunch time is an opportunity for students to have a place to study and get help during this tense time. The study sessions are being held at the cafeteria from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. This event was only from Monday through Friday, the week before finals.

"I think this was a great opportunity for everyone to come together as a community and help each other out."

- Rachel Hansen, Valley College student

At the sessions, students were provided amenities such as free snacks and coffee. There was free tutoring available for those who needed it, for nearly every subject. Free massages were also available.

"I usually listen to music and try to get my mind to stop racing, then I take it step by step," said Rachel Hansen, a Valley student whose major is undecided. "I think this was a great opportunity for everyone to come together as a community and help each other out."

Every student deals with their stress differently, some through studying and taking breaks, others through activities such as art. Valley has had events this whole semester for students who prefer other methods to destress themselves and relax. The art gallery hosted various creativity and wellness workshops through their Art Is

Good For You series. The latest one, Drawing Experiments and Deep Breathing, taught students breathing techniques that helped promote calmness.

"The workshops are always important, especially during finals week," said Jenene Nagy, associate professor of art and the art gallery director. "It's important for students to find time to be present and to give themselves permission to take a break and rejuvenate."

The workshop series wasn't the only activity available to Monarchs. The Student Health Center held Yoga Relaxation Sessions, which were led by instructors and taught students to relax and learn techniques.

Whether it is by listening to music or by doing stretches, everyone is doing their best to get through their last weeks of classes all in one piece.



ASH SHAFA | VALLEY STAR

CRUNCH TIME - Valley College student Anna Argueta studies for her finals at the campus' library.

Sewell takes next steps with prestigious scholarship in hand

The latest awardee of the esteemed Jack Kent Cooke scholarship has completed a full-circle journey.

ASHER MILES
STAFF WRITER

Hailing from Chicago's west side, Sewell's unwavering tenacity has propelled her through a 20-year journey at Valley College, culminating in the prestigious achievement of the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship.

Despite being the scholarship recipient, she was informed of the news last.

Faculty, friends and family collectively organized a celebration at Valley for Sewell to bask in the glory of her academic achievements. On a Thursday afternoon in May, the unsuspecting 36-year-old mother was ushered to the multi-purpose room to meet with Elliot Coney, the Umoja Black Scholars counselor and coordinator.

"It was one of the best moments I've ever had," reflected Sewell. "To know that I was supported on that level...it was truly awesome."

As the soon-to-be-awarded Sewell opened the door, streamers popped alongside friends, family and colleagues wailing their congratulations.



JEREMY RUIZ | VALLEY STAR

SCHOLAR - Cecily Sewell is a screenwriting major at Valley College who was one of 80 total recipients of the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship for community college students.

A look of bewilderment, and then, sudden understanding washed over Sewell's face. She gazed up through tawny-colored sisterlocks, poised to

receive her coveted scholarship.

After enduring four months of rigorous interviews and applications reviews, the native of Chicago's 13th and Pulaski

beat out 1,500 other applicants to be one of the 80 to secure the highly coveted scholarship. As a Cooke Scholar, the Umoja and EOPS sponsored Monarch

has scored generous financial support, ongoing advising, college planning support and the opportunity to partner and connect with fellow Cooke Scholars.

"Cecily, you have been selected as one of the 60 students in the country to receive this prestigious scholarship," Valley President Barry Gribbons told an all-but-sobbing Sewell. "From a nationwide poll of 1,700 applicants coupled with your leadership and academic achievements, I am proud to announce you as a 2023 Cooke Scholar."

However, 20 years ago when Sewell instituted herself at Valley, becoming a Cooke Scholar seemed like a far-off reality.

"My teenage and young adult years were the opposite of my childhood and they overshadowed the happiness from my youth," the scholar admitted. "I was homeless for years, I dropped out of four [high]schools, and I had to get my GED. That's how I ended up at Valley my first time."

As she pursued her screenwriting degree in the Media Arts department, she often brought her younger sister, Xoe, along to class. Eventually, Sewell, who was 16 at the time found herself on academic probation with a

0.6 GPA. While she found work as an operation manager, she knew that her journey at Valley could not culminate to only that.

The Columbia-bound scholar removed herself from academic probation, elevated her GPA to a 3.9 and set her sights on finishing her degree. However, she credits a helping hand from the Valley community with some of the success of her journey.

"When I met her I knew she would be a great fit for the scholarship because of her accomplishments," said Umoja Coordinator Elliot Coney. "With the cooperation of students who have received the award previously, and other counselors, we were able to assist her in essays and collectively went over her statements."

Looking back at her journey, the "Cookie" scholar is finally able to exalt in the alleviation of academic finances, and bask in the felicity of a two decade chapter coming to a jubilant denouement.

"I'm going to an Ivy League school with a full ride," said the scholarship winner. "It allows me a certain type of peace. I finally get to tell the 15-year-old version of myself that we did it."

"Middletown" struggled to keep its act(s) together

Valley presents a thought-stimulating exploration of the human condition, despite a befuddled second act.

ASHER MILES
STAFF WRITER

The Valley College theater department's rendition of "Middletown" by Will Eno was an interesting display of artistic expression with an underwhelming follow through, leaving the audience with both a sense of excitement and disappointment.

The execution of director Matthew McCray's rendition of Eno's thought-provoking play was leaps and bounds superior to the previous fall production, "The Laramie Project." However, by the second act, the show's shortcomings caught up to the production faster than a bad case of stage fright. Although the straightforward stage design, intellectually stimulating plot, and standout performances initially captivated the audience, the production lost momentum due to the loose storyline, indirect character objectives and misaligned tonal shifts. By the final half hour, the show had lost the spark and was running on empty, leaving

the audience expecting more.

This existential play is no easy feat to perform, though, and while there were certainly areas for improvements, the execution of "Middletown" was commendable.

"Middletown" is a poignant piece by Massachusetts native Will Eno that draws connections and inspiration from Thornton Wilder's classic play "Our Town." Both plays share a common theme of exploring the joys and sorrows of life. Eno's play delves into the lives of ordinary people in a small American town, all of whom are brought together through witty and often surreal dialogue. Through the inspection of intricate existential themes, Eno's play challenges the audience to contemplate the complexities of existence so that they may discover a better understanding of the value of life.

Two of the most intriguing performances from the ensemble were from Nevada Hardman and Sophie Haaland, who played the mechanic and the librarian, respectively.

While the play's writing does not provide extensive details regarding the origins of the mechanic, Hardman artfully filled in the gaps with his physical portrayal and strong character objectives. His long-hair and sporadic movements poignantly informed the audience about everything they needed to know about the character's struggles, vividly illustrating the character's inner monologue.

Likewise, Haaland's performance as the librarian was consistent, never succumbing to the play losing its steam. As the keeper of the knowledge and history of "Middletown," the librarian acted as the glue that kept the town together, with precious detail. Haaland's masterful handling of the existential and sometimes surreal dialogue shined and created a juxtaposition between her and less attuned actors.

Together, these two characters provided thought-provoking explorations of the human condition, prompting audiences to consider themes of belonging, iden-

tity and the power of knowledge.

Ultimately, in the realm of storytelling, a strong start can often be overshadowed by a lackluster finish. Regrettably, this was the case for this production, as the existential themes gradually overtook the majority of the cast, leaving the intended meaning befuddled.

Despite the production's shortcomings, it is noteworthy to acknowledge the commendable efforts of the theater department, especially in light of the unforeseen weather concerns that resulted in the move of the set to the Monarch Hall. Monarch Hall proved to be a more effective venue for the play as compared to the courtyard of the Campus Center.

Looking ahead, it is exciting to anticipate a continued upward trajectory from the department, especially as standout actors continue to improve. We hope to see even more productions that exceed our expectations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMANTHA JO

PRODUCTION - (L-R) Nevada Hardman, Sami Keil and Sophie Haaland perform in "Middletown," Valley College's theater department spring play. The show ran for three nights in Monarch Hall.

Culture takes shape in recent student art exhibit

Students used a variety of mediums to showcase their creations that were on display at Valley's art gallery.

MILAN RAFAELOV
STAFF WRITER

The Valley College Art Department held its annual student exhibition on Wednesday, showcasing faculty-selected pieces chosen from students' assignments.

The artwork demonstrated proficiency in a wide range of mediums and techniques like linoleum prints, ceramic sculptures, metal welding and oil and acrylic paintings. These captivating creations were dispersed in artful disarray across the room. Students were excited to see their work showcased and share their accomplishments with family, friends and peers.

Isabel Montalvo, a 20-year-old graphic design major, featured a piece of her art titled "Gratitude." Using corn husk and glue, she expresses her appreciation for her mother and grandmother's cooking. The sculpture features skillfully folded and glued corn husks, forming robust hands delicately cradling a bowl filled with tamales, all resting atop a lazy susan.

"When I got the idea I was thinking of strong hands," said Montalvo. "I got the inspiration



GALLERY- Professors and students discuss the students' creations at the Annual Student Art Exhibition on May 24 at the Art building.

from my mom and my grandma. I never got to meet her [grandmother], but I've heard lots of good stories about her tamales. Both of them are good cooks. It's called gratitude to show my appreciation to them."

Ani Manukyan, a student who migrated from Armenia to the United States in 2019, crafted a deeply personal painting. Devastated by the loss of

a dear friend due to the ongoing war in her home country, Ani divided the canvas into four distinct pieces, weaving together a powerful native of uncertainty, conflict and grief.

Among expressive and emotional work, there were also technical and skillful pieces. Harper Fordsmith is a 20-year-old psychology major taking Art 700 and was introduced to welding. For

her piece, she made a multiform assortment of metallic shapes welded together in abstract bliss.

Each student showcased their unique style and personal motivation, eagerly anticipating future opportunities to refine their skills. The event celebrated art student's efforts and shone a spotlight on their dedication. The exhibition served as a meaningful culmination of the semester.



HUSK- Isabel Montalvo poses next to her art piece titled "Corn husk and glue" at the Annual Student Art Exhibition.

Stephanie Schlatter: Valley's new associate dean

The dean's goal is to maintain student enrollment and provide resources to disabled students.

NATALIE METCALF
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Valley College shot an arrow through the bullseye when hiring Stephanie Schlatter as acting associate dean of services for students with disabilities.

Being a mother of a disabled son gave her a push to change her career path from finance to special education. The amateur archer has previously worked in the district, with past jobs at Pierce College, Santa Monica College and Compton College. Schlatter plans to provide opportunities for disabled students on campus, with the hopes of increasing enrollment, in person courses and student engagement.

"I changed my career midway when I found out my son had a disability," said Schlatter. "I went into special education and got a masters degree and served my second career in the disability field."

The new dean of services is an active person, as she has

hobbies including cycling and archery. She enjoys practicing her hobby at Van Nuys' Woodley Park. Schlatter plans to take classes at Valley in the near future; whether the subject is archery, pilates or rock climbing.

At Pierce, Schlatter assisted students in the transfer process and finding jobs in the career center. She has worked in many college environments in the community college district, helping students find resources for transferring as well as job security.

Schlatter finds working for students with disabilities unique and interesting as she recognizes the difference in students' strengths and weaknesses. The new dean wants to show respect to every monarch, no matter where their disability lands on the spectrum. Her main goal is to promote academic success among students and help them achieve their educational goals.

The associate dean has raised two sons, one of which has a disability. Both of her children have graduated from Cal State Long Beach and are in the workforce.

"My greatest achievement is being a mother," said Schlatter. "But also being able to advocate and learn how I could best help my son and maintain his independence and his ability to live his life as he chooses."

"My goal is to grow our program, get students back and ready to be face to face with their teachers."

- Stephanie Schlatter,
Acting Associate Dean
of Services for Students with Disabilities

Originally, Schlatter was a social science and business major at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. Before transferring, Schlatter was a community college student at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo and was not sure what she wanted to major in.

"When I was in college in the '80s, there weren't as many counselors available," said Schlatter, looking back at her academic career. "It wasn't as clear as I think I would have liked it to be, so I'm really impressed now that our students really do know how to get online and look up things and find out what kind of things will benefit them."

The dean can relate to students in the present day, as she was a community college student who transferred to a four year institution. Only one month into her new job, Schlatter is assessing the resources the program has and is excited to connect with students by providing more benefits to the Students with Disabilities program.

"My goal is to grow our program, get students back and ready to be face to face with their teachers," said Schlatter. "For those choosing online classes, I want to make sure they have the technology skills that they need to be successful."



DEAN- Stephanie Schlatter was appointed as the new associate dean for the Valley College Services for Students with Disabilities Office.

Mental health workshop aims to deliver solutions

Therapist leads discussion on ways to cope with one of the most common mental illnesses.



SAVANNAH GREENLY | VALLEY STAR

BLUE - Registered Associate Marriage and Family Therapist Lauren Rogers discusses the symptoms of depression and methods of self-care during the event "Feeling Blue? Take Care of Your Mental Health Workshop" at Valley College on May 17.

KENYA HARRIS
STAFF WRITER

Mental health workshops are common at Valley College. In an event hosted by Student Health, Monarchs discussed self care, anxiety, burnout and the stressors of work, school, and family obligations that add to the pressures of being a student.

Associate Marriage and Family Therapist Lauren Rogers from Pure Hearts Therapy presented her audience with all kinds of ways to treat depression. Rogers discussed the issues of insurance, and how it doesn't end up covering enough of the needed treatment for many people with depression.

"Depression is the world's biggest club, but it makes you think that you are alone," said

Rogers, as she explained to her audience that anyone dealing with depression was not alone.

One of the more common illnesses is depression. A 2023 Gallup poll revealed that 29 percent of US adults have been diagnosed with depression—the highest percentage since 2015.

The overall mental health of Americans is declining. According to a 2023 report on the 2023 State of Mental Health in America report, 21 percent of US adults experience mental illness. That is approximately 50 million Americans. From 2019-2020, the same non profit Mental Health America identified 20.78% of adults with mental illness in America.

Rogers' presentation focused on explaining multiple forms of treatment including different types of therapy, medica-

tion, self care, and seeking support from others. She impressed upon the audience that coping skills and self care are behaviors that must be repeated every day. During the presentation the audience was given time to share how many of them had been let down and received inadequate mental health care and treatment for themselves or a loved one's mental illness.

Psychology major and student Manal El Hajoui was greatly pleased with the presentation. El Hajoui's experience echoed the experience of many members of the audience. She said the presentation was a catalyst and it was very informative.

When Manal had gone to seek a therapist for herself, she had difficulty finding a therapist. On and off for six months, she was waitlisted and sent to

contact providers that were all too busy to take on new clients, when she needed. Fortunately, she was able to learn some vital information about how to finally get a therapist.

During the presentation, someone brought up the app TimelyCare. TimelyCare is a telehealth app available to Valley students that provides multiple on demand sessions with a therapist, at no cost across the semester, while currently enrolled at Valley.

"We hope that with these events individuals will become aware of symptoms, ideology, and stigma that may be interfering with them seeking those services," said Student Health Coordinator Evelyn Pirchardo.

Debt forgiveness only a drop in the bucket

Administration needs to take additional steps to lower the cost of college.

KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

While the Biden administration takes steps to alleviate \$20,000 in student debt for nearly 38 million borrowers, students are still left scrambling because the cost of four-year universities continue to skyrocket above what students can afford.

The new policies include a substantial amount of student loan forgiveness, offering a glimmer of hope for individuals struggling to pay off their educational loans. However, the growing costs of college tuition is still a concern, particularly for students attending four-year universities.

"I got accepted to UCLA after high school, but I decided not to go because it was too expensive," said second year kinesiology major Michael Chavez. "I decided to go to Valley because I was going to pay \$53,000 for four-years if I committed to UCLA."

Data provided by the Biden administration shows that since 1980, the average cost of both four-year public and private colleges has nearly tripled. While Pell Grants can cover nearly 80 percent of the cost of a four-year degree, many low and middle-income students have no choice but to borrow if they want to get a higher degree. More than \$20,000 in debt



ELLI BAYATI | VALLEY STAR

POTUS- President Joe Biden spoke at the Boys & Girls Club Youth Center in Monterey Park following a mass shooting on March 14.

will be forgiven for 38 million students who will be attending a four-year university. But, suppose students who attend Valley College, where the annual tuition amounts to approximately

\$1,238 for in-state residents, over the course of two-years students should receive about \$5,000 to \$6,000 in FAFSA aid. According to financial aid statistics, over the last decade, the

average grant aid for full-time undergraduate students has doubled, increasing from \$5,190 in 2001 to \$10,590 in 2021.

"It all depends on what major students pursue," said Wesley

Oliphant, Valley economics professor. "If students want to become a doctor or lawyer, it's the best option to get a masters. But any other major is not a priority to get a masters degree."

Assuming no financial aid, scholarships, or grants, the total cost of tuition for four years would be \$80,000. If the student takes out \$10,000 in FAFSA each year at an interest rate of 3.73 percent, the accumulated loan after four years would be approximately \$41,307.

These numbers strike fear to many students who are hesitant to attend top California universities because even with FAFSA and student loans, the pay is still well above the cost of admission.

One must also consider the cost of living, textbooks, tuition and gas. The skyrocketing rise of the four-year universities such as UCLA which can cost \$43,955 and USC — the most expensive school in California at \$60,446 for full-time local students.

The overall cost of attending college for four years amounts to \$121,307. The numbers demonstrate the importance of understanding the burden associated with pursuing a college education.

While the recent student loan forgiveness policies initiated by the Biden administration are beneficial to many individuals, it does not address the root of the problem: college is too expensive.

Constituents should call for Feinstein to resign

The 89-year-old California senator faces pressure following a three-month absence.

ASHER MILES
STAFF WRITER

Peek-a-boo. Diane Feinstein, we don't see you.

After a three month absence, the recent public appearance of senator Dianne Feinstein has reignited debates surrounding the potential for legislation that would establish an age limit for elected officials.

Despite the recent backlash over her absence causing a delay in the confirmation of Joe Biden's judicial nominees, the congresswoman confidently responded with, "No, I haven't been gone. I've been working," after being questioned about her nonattendance.

Her absence from Feb. 27 to May 10 coupled with staffers leaking to press outlets of her cognitive lapses, indicate that senator Feinstein may be facing challenges in fulfilling essential functions of her job.

"I have worked with her for a long time and long enough to know what she was like just a few years ago: always in command, always in charge, on top of the details, basically couldn't resist a conversation where she was driving some bill or some idea. All of that is gone," one staff member reported.

It is true. The advanced age of elected officials sometimes comes with sharp cognitive declines. However, it always allows engendered complacency. This, often at times, results in younger constituents being left

on the short end of the stick.

Legislating an age limit will not address the fact that Feinstein has been unable to represent California during her monthslong recovery. However, a more efficacious solution could be an age neutral max on term limits, while also performing periodic cognitive examinations on congressional members.

Without term limits, well-to-do corporatists easily leverage and compound their net worths. This is reflected in Feinstein performing some of the most unusual trades in Congress, resulting in the politician holding a \$200 million net worth.

Some of her dealings include when, in April 2018, Feinstein's late husband purchased \$250,000 of Facebook stock before she praised the company during Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook testimony. The purchase was not disclosed until May 2018.

Nevertheless, she sold Allogene stock after attending covid briefings, netting \$1.5-6 million in January of 2020, violating the Stock Act.

A long career and ability to leverage a position in politics to line pocketbooks can get one far. Allegations have raised concerns about her mental acuity and continue to be echoed by members of both the Democratic Party and her staff.

Yet, all of these reasons should not constitute legislation towards an age limit in congress, that would, ultimately, result in a lack of diversity of age.

Although mature legislators

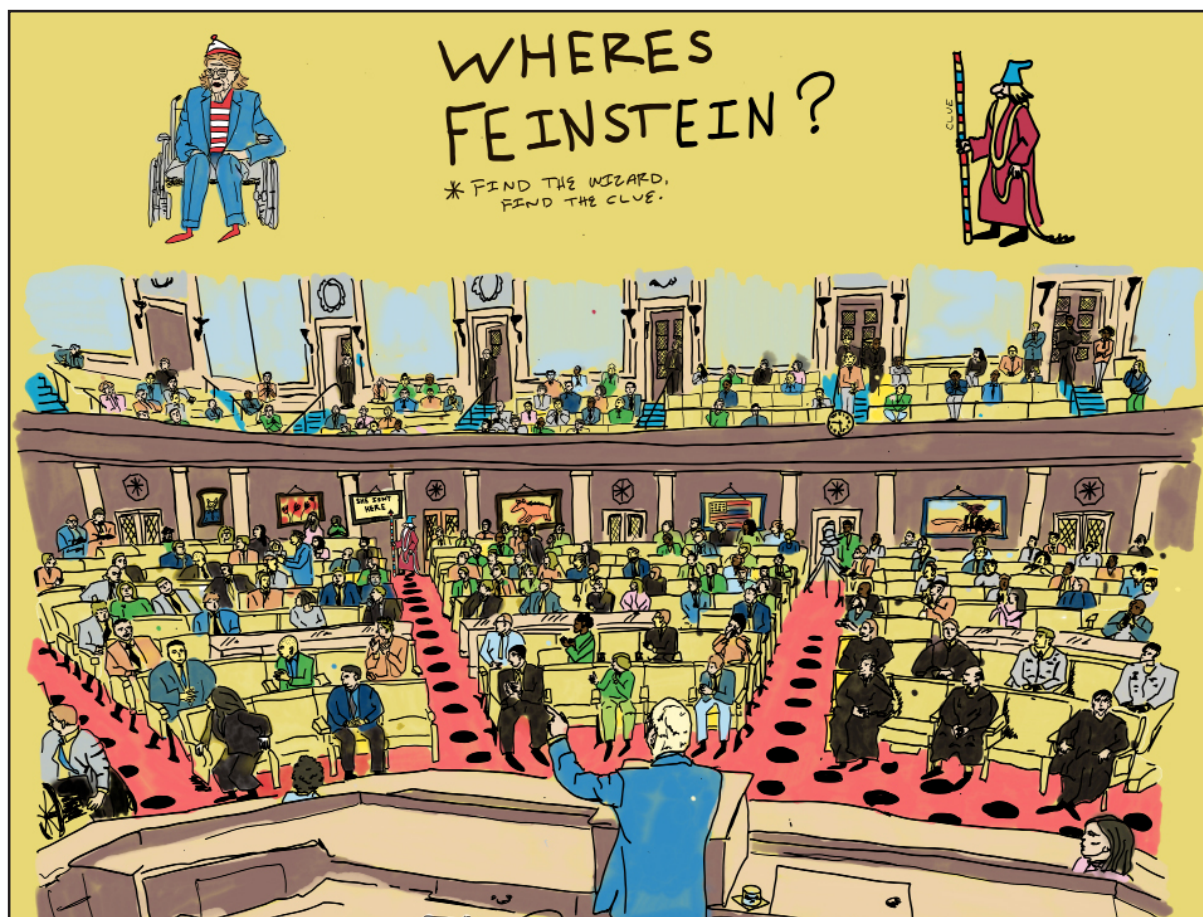


ILLUSTRATION BY MILAN RAFAELOV | VALLEY STAR

WALDO- Even a Google search can not help with this one.

may have a possibility of experiencing cognitive declines, it does not mean that they should lose their jobs. However, if anyone of any age is unable to perform their job for their constituents, it is best that they resign from their position. Nevertheless, Feinstein

epitomizes the root, not the symptom, of the problem.

These features and more can be found in full @www.thevalley-starnews.com

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.



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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.

VALLEY VIEW | DO YOU THINK COLLEGE IS TOO EXPENSIVE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

TEXT BY JASMINE ALEJANDRE

PHOTOS BY JEREMY RUIZ



"Yeah, it's so expensive. I'm a new student here. I've been here for three months and California life is very expensive."

-EMMANUELLE VICTOIRE SIBAI, ENGLISH MAJOR



"It's very expensive in every country. It's especially quite expensive for us because of the international fees."

-KARAN KAPOOR, CRIMINAL JUSTICE MAJOR



"I consider it an investment in myself. I think it's actually classes that require expensive books and materials. It's easy to budget classes. I'm in an art class, so sometimes it requires materials."

-SIMONE LARA, SCREENWRITING MAJOR



"It's been affordable for me. You can get financial aid; I'm very glad of it."

-JENNIFER BROWN, SCREENWRITING MAJOR

Monarchs looking for freshman to step up next year

After being eliminated from the playoffs, Valley baseball says goodbye to talented sophomores.

KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

After winning four straight playoff games, the Monarchs playoff hopes came to an end after losing two straight playoff games to the no. 6 Hornets of Fullerton College. A defense that looked unstoppable in the first five playoff games, allowing fewer than six runs, failed to stop the Hornets offense last weekend.

The recipe of success for the Monarchs served them well in their opening playoff game, as Valley College baseball allowed a combined seven runs in the three games they played against Cuesta College. The hot streak continued as they dispatched East LA College last week 16-1 in a double eliminations tournament. However, over the weekend Valley baseball (27-20, 14-7 WSC South) was eliminated from the second round of the playoffs as they faced off against six seeded Fullerton College (26-22), dropping the last two road games by a score of 10-7 and 10-4, their up and down rollercoaster season came to a close.

"I couldn't be more proud of the program," said head Coach Dave Mallas.

Consistency and success has been hard for Valley to fight for. The team has earned two consecutive trips to the playoffs in the past two seasons and has never advanced to the super regional round in the history of the program.

It was the first time that Valley made the playoffs in a back to back season from 2022 to 2023 in all years that Mallas was coaching. But this season, Valley finished with a better overall record than College of the Canyons to secure the second-spot, but lost the top seed to Glendale College for the second straight year in Western State Conference South.



LOOK AHEAD - Monarchs head coach Dave Mallas watches his team play against the East Los Angeles College Huskies.

The Monarchs had a group of sophomores who were cornerstones for the offense and defense on Valley baseball's field. The team was led by Royce Clayton Jr. and Brandon Cuervo who came in huge for Valley's successful season and ran in the playoffs.

Only missing one conference game two months ago, Clayton Jr. set the conference on fire, tallying three home runs, 26 RBIs and 43 runs. His teammate Cuervo, who played 39 games hit .367 during conference play while also bat-

ting in 12 runs and 25 RBIs.

The 5-foot-9 athlete in Clayton Jr. showcased his excellence and showed up to work everyday to help lead the team as the primary offensive player. He made the most plays at the biggest moments and was ranked third with seven steals and was ranked in 12th place for conference stolen bases with 13.

What did haunt the Monarchs deep into the playoffs and majority of their rollercoaster season was the unavailable sophomore pitcher Danny Veloz

who only played 14 games this season, struggling with an injury to get back on the field. In just 14 games, Veloz still put up a good season with 33 strikeouts in conference games, averaging 9.58 strikeouts a game and allowing zero home runs which let the team go with 11-3 with him being in the lineup.

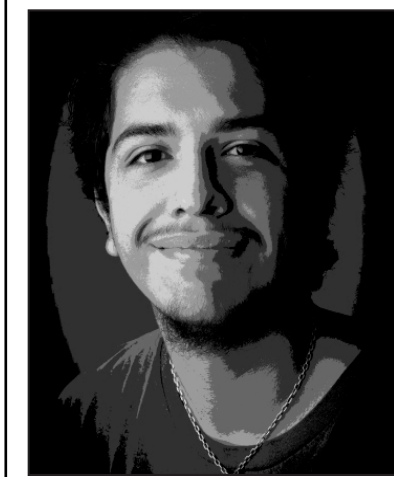
When the 2022 first team Western State Conference player played in the super regional second round, the Monarchs scored their second most runs in a game, trouncing East LA

College 16-1. Veloz finished that game allowing one home run, four hits and four strikeouts.

Mallas says a new roster full of young and inexperienced freshman will be prepared for what is ahead and the Monarchs will be ready to go next year.

"A lot of our roster is constructed around freshmen who are not experienced like some of the top-seeded teams in the conference and state," said Mallas. "They're going to make mistakes and grow to be better next season."

Greatest hits



NICHOLAS OROZCO
SPORTS EDITOR

As Valley College sends its 2023 graduates on their way, this column aims to honor the men and women who dominated in their respective sports.

In water polo, the men notched a 19-9 record and were led by sophomores Hakop Ansuryan, Sako Kaputikyan and freshman Johnny Agazarayan. Each was named All-American to conclude the 2022 season.

Coach Jim McMillan led his team to the playoffs for the eighth consecutive season.

Switching to the hardwood, the Lady Monarchs were led by sophomores Jordyn Jiron, Jaqueline Privado, Leena Vo and Dyani Del Castillo.

Jiron averaged 14.7 points a game while also averaging 35.3 minutes a game. Her teammates Privado, Vo and Del Castillo averaged 10, 9 and 8 points per game respectively.

The Lady Monarchs are sending three sophomores to the next level. Jiron heads to Park University in Parkville, Missouri, Privado is headed to San Francisco State and Del Castillo to Simpson University in Redding.

Defeating Imperial Valley 74-44, the Monarchs moved onto the second round of playoffs to face Moorpark College. The playoff run was cut short by Moorpark.

Sophomores Bobby Velasco, Tyler Olivas, Brandon Cuervo and freshmen Sean David and Max Aude made it happen on the diamond. The Monarch five all slashed over a .300 batting average.

Danny Veloz's pitching earned him a trip to Hawaii University, where he will pitch for the Rainbow Warriors. In this past year for the Monarchs, the right-hander put up some impressive numbers. Overall, he produced a stingy 1.46 ERA in 80 innings. Veloz was even more dominant in conference play with an ERA of 0.29 over 31 innings making him the number starter in the state.

Valley baseball reached the second round of playoffs after eliminating Cuesta College and East LA College but were ultimately eliminated by Fullerton College in a three-game series.

The biggest name for the Monarchs this season was Lilliana Noriega. The 19-year-old swimmer first broke a 48-year-old school record in the 50-yard freestyle event. After performing well in the conference meets, she punched her ticket into the state finals.

Noriega competed in the 50-yard, 100-yard freestyle and the 100-yard backstroke. She reached top 16 in the state for the 50-yard and 100-yard freestyle. In an event that was not her strong suit, Noriega finished fifth in state for the 100-yard backstroke.

Valley witnessed great team performances individually and as a team. With that, this sports editor signs off on his final column hoping that the Monarchs continue to knock it out of the park.

Monarch football begins spring training

Valley College kicks off spring practices, holding drills and evaluations during the week.

KEVIN KHACHATRYAN
STAFF WRITER

As Valley College prepares for its fall football season against new opponents in a tougher conference, head coach Lester Towns looks to make the playoffs for the first time since taking charge of the program in 2019.

"My goal is to win the first five games. Our expectation is to win the conference."

- Head Coach
Lester Towns

to be ready for the challenge."

As the Monarchs welcome freshmen and new recruits entering the program during the offseason, the coaching staff is working to build some team chemistry.

"For all of us it's the first time we're working together," said Towns. "The number one thing is having the guys work together - building the relationship, team bonding and getting to know each other, especially the offense and receivers for the quarterback to run the plays."

Towns strongly emphasizes the importance of bringing Valley's football players into a cohesive environment every year, which he hopes will build accountability within the program.

This fall, the Monarchs will face conference opponents LA Southwest, Glendale and Pasadena College. The Vaqueros of Glendale and the Lancers of Pasadena will likely be challenging adversaries that Valley will likely struggle against. Last season, Glendale finished with an overall record of 5-5. The Vaqueros finished third in the Metro conference and battled against Citrus College to make the playoffs, ultimately losing 42-21.

Southwest does not seem to pose as much of a threat to the Monarchs as Glendale and Pasadena, as the college finished last season with the worst record in the Metro conference, 0-10.

Throughout the spring semester, Towns has been encouraging players to work out in the weight room while



BELL- Brahma Carlo Arvizu pulls on Valley College Monarch freshman running back Caleb McCarty as he rushes in a game against Pierce College. Valley won the game for the Victory Bell.

recruiting new players, hoping that fresh talent and a healthy roster will foster a winning record in the upcoming season.

"Spring is no different than division one football," said Towns. "Spring time is developmental, were hoping the

kids develop and give them some pieces of the playbook to be ready for the season."

GRIFFIN O'ROURKE | VALLEY STAR



Griffin O'Rourke | Valley Star
Heavy rain batters Los Angeles Valley College as people walk across campus near the Student Union building.



Ava Rosate | Valley Star
Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass proposes her budget proposal at City Hall during her first State of the City address.



Photo Courtesy of Robyn Carmona
Jewel Jackson talks about African American professionals during Black History Month.



Griffin O'Rourke | Valley Star
Thousands of strikers from the UTLA and SEIU unions fill State Historic Park in the final rally of their three-day strike. Local 99 reached an agreement for better pay and benefits with the district soon after.

Spring '23 comes to a close

By Griffin O'Rourke

Spring semester 2023 in Los Angeles was filled with historical events like record-breaking weather, a mayor's address and large protests. At Valley, the spring sports teams broke records and made memories. Women's basketball, women's swim team and men's baseball all made state playoffs but only the swim team qualified for the state finals with Lilliana Noriega leading the way, smashing Valley's previous records. At the beginning of the semester in Feb-

ruary, the Umoja Black Scholars led the campus during Black History Month with events and seminars across campus. Los Angeles saw large swathes of strikers break out across the county for two separate movements: one for school workers and one for Hollywood writers. At her first State of the City address, Mayor Karen Bass unveiled her \$13 billion budget to combat homelessness and fund police, vying for an affordable, safe Los Angeles.



Xavier Dubon | Valley Star



Nicholas Orozco | Valley Star



Xavier Dubon | Valley Star

Top Left: (R) Monarchs sophomore guard Leena Vo goes up to attempt a contested layup against (L) Moorpark's Skylar Dillon during the playoff game against Moorpark college.

Top Right: After placing fifth in the preliminary event for the 100 yard backstroke, freshman Lilliana Noriega competes in the State Final.

Bottom Left: Valley's men's baseball team high fiving each other as they win the game against Palomar College 7-1.