



VALLEY LIFE: THEATER

THE COLLEGE'S THEATER PROGRAM WILL RETURN TO THE STAGE IN NOVEMBER.

the VALLEY STAR



The Independent Student Newspaper of Los Angeles Valley College



SPORTS: WATER POLO

MONARCHS DEFEAT PANTHERS 19-6 SATURDAY, GAINING FIRST CONFERENCE WIN.

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‘Inside job’ suspected in campus felonies

Keys were used to commit a slew of crimes that resulted in missing property to the tune of thousands of dollars.

ANNETTE M. LESURE
STAFF WRITER

In a month's long investigation, Valley College Sheriff's Department is still attempting to pin down suspects for the theft of thousands of dollars of high-tech equipment.

Some of the hardware stolen included Chrome Books and a customized MacBook Pro valued

at around \$6,000. While the campus' Sheriff's Department is investigating the incident, the school is focused on modernizing the door locks to prevent future crimes according to Valley President Barry Gribbons. He was unsure of the total dollar amount lost.

Eric Swelstad, Media Arts Department Chair, had his MacBook Pro stolen in July. The computer was specifically tailored for the department. Swelstad

said the device was purchased in May using "taxpayer dollars via a Career Transfer grant."

"Somebody had a key and got in because there was no forced entry and took my [MacBook Pro] laptop," said Swelstad. "It is spooky and very frustrating because it's an expensive item, and we work with these people. These are people we trust. It's definitely an inside job." John Hooker, supervisor of

the mailroom at the Administration and Career Advancement building, had boxes of electronics and three identical MacBook Pro laptops in his office the day of the theft. The perpetrators managed to take Swelstad's laptop that was at the top of a stack, as Sheriff's believe someone startled the thieves away.

Hooker, who had been away from the campus for a few days when the crime occurred, reported

ed the missing laptop in early July. IT programmed the stolen laptops with a message that reads: 'Please return to Valley College' when opened. Stolen computers typically have hard drives removed and erased, rendering them impossible to track.

See 'Felony'
on page 2

Sanitation protocols disinfect Valley campus

CASSANDRA NAVA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In order to adhere to updated sanitation standards, Valley College has bumped up their cleaning regimen along with an updated custodial schedule and staff.

To prevent unwanted exposure and potential cases of COVID-19, the LACCD guidelines state that all nine campuses must regularly disinfect indoor areas of campuses. Valley is preventing possible infections with its implementation of a second custodial shift and new cleaning procedures. The additional custodial shift ensures all classrooms and indoor areas are disinfected daily, with the "A" shift starting as early as 4 a.m. and the "B" shift starting at around 2:30 p.m.

The custodial staff sanitizes indoor spaces using electrostatic sprayers used to kill any harmful bacteria on high-contact areas. The equipment uses an electrically charged disinfectant that attaches itself to surfaces and "coats to hard nonporous surfaces," according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Along with the upgraded disinfectants, there is also special care given to air quality and filters. Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values has a rated system of filters, with MERV 13 being the standard filter at which tiny particles can be trapped and not spread with airflow. These filters have been reported to stop the spread of viruses, making them an effective method to a cleaner campus. According to William Karrat, director of maintenance and operations at Valley, the use of MERV 13 air filters is a crucial first step, but he stresses the importance of the increase of outside air into buildings. By increasing ventilation, viruses are less likely to linger in a classroom.

"In general it is just a cleaner campus," said Karrat. "Increasing the outside air, aside from the filters, is probably the second best way to reduce the amount of infections."

Expenses for pandemic-related cleaning supplies and emergency use protections such as plexiglass barriers came from the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act. With \$6,154,624 given to Valley College, about half of those funds were used to cover the expenses of the increased custodial staff, disinfectants, plexiglass barriers and hand sanitizers throughout the campus.

Although these additional protocols were implemented following the pandemic, president Barry Gribbons states that these measures will continue to exist.

"Going forward we will continue to look at guidance provided by the CDC and LA County Public Health," said Gribbons. "When the new vaccine mandate is fully in effect that will likely have an impact as well. Having 90 plus percent of our students and employees vaccinated will have a big impact on preventing the spread of COVID."



VALLEY STAR | RYAN BEAUCHAMP

TREES- After about two years of minimal trimming, trees on campus receive a cleanup. Valley president Barry Gribbons commented on the progress, "We have done some tree maintenance in the last two years, but not to the scale as what was done in the last couple of weeks." Valley has been recognized as a Tree Campus USA school by the Arbor Day Foundation eight times. The college received this title for maintaining a tree advisory committee, a campus tree-care plan, dedication of annual expenditures, creating a student-service learning project and observing Arbor Day. The operation began four months ago and will continue until next Friday.

Fareless rides for Valley students

LACCD students ride public transportation free-of-charge under the fareless pilot program.

MARCOS FRANCO
MANAGING EDITOR

Valley College has partnered with LA Metro transportation authority to provide fareless bus, train and subway rides for students.

The pilot program provides cost-free transportation to students and low-income riders in Los Angeles. The agreement first began with K-12 LAUSD students on Oct. 1 and plans to include community colleges in mid-November according to LA Metro Communications Director Dave Sotero. Students will receive a Transit Access Pass (TAP) card through their college after submitting an application. The prepaid electronic card allows passengers to board buses and trains after scanning it on the fare-box. The program is a trial-run to determine the possibility of fareless transportation for all riders in the future and is dependent on federal and state funding. The board hints towards ending the commitment if funding is not received.

"Valley College and all LACCD schools are participating in the program," said Valley President Barry Gribbons. "Students will be able to use Metro services for free, not just to come to Valley but wherever they go. It's going to be an exciting benefit for students."

According to the LA Metro website, 75 percent of the county's community college students who ride transit are low income. By providing cost-free rides, the transit company helps students connect with educational and recreational opportunities.

All 230,000 students in the district will be eligible for the TAP card. Although it is too early for campus officials to know the exact details of the application and collection process, cards will be distributed by the college. The LACCD will pay \$7 per student annually which will be the equivalent of \$1.61 million per year. Students voiced their appreciation for the partnership, claiming the move to be an ease of finances.

"This is going to benefit students," said 20 year-old business major Shelly Bosa. "I don't drive yet so I use the bus to get to school and work, free

rides would be super helpful."

As one of the most traffic-dense cities in the world, Los Angeles is exposed to 60 percent more vehicle pollution than the state average. By eliminating the expense of ride fares, the LA Metro board plans to reduce carbon emissions through incentivizing use of public transportation over driving.

Transit agencies in incorporated areas are also participating in the initiative including Foothill Transit of the San Gabriel Valley, Santa Monica, Culver City, Montebello and Norwalk. The LA Metro is projected to lose \$50

million in annual revenue over the course of two years, however \$41.5 million will be provided by the American Rescue Plan. Members of the LA City Council shared their support for the fareless pilot program on twitter while voicing their persistence to provide all riders with cost-free transportation.

"This is a huge deal — but falls short of the goal of universal fareless transit," board member and LA City Councilmember Mike Bonin wrote on Twitter. "It's a necessary step for economic and social justice."



VALLEY STAR | JEREMY RUIZ

METRO- A man secures his bicycle to the front of a bus at the Valley College Metro.

IMPORTANT INFO

Oct. 18

The deadline to submit a baseline COVID-19 test is Oct. 18. The test is needed to enter any LACCD campus.

The deadline to upload vaccination status or exemption is Oct. 18.

Oct. 25

Late start classes begin on Oct. 25. Students can enroll for any eight-week course up until that date. There are online and in-person courses available. Class schedules are available on lavc.edu.

The winter class schedules are online now, and priority registration will open next week.

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

Follow up-to-date campus news and events on Twitter @ValleyStarNews

Cat colony no more

Valley’s cats were decimated as carnivorous canidae filled their bellies

LUIS FLORES, AVA ROSATE, ASHLEY CASTANEDA AND ALUA KARATAY
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

First came the howling, then the shrieks. Valley College’s feral cats were stalked and hunted by coyotes as they fell victim to the urban food chain.

Dating back to 1999, Valley homed an abundance of undomesticated cats that lived on campus among students and faculty. The population of cats, that once consisted of 50-100 stray felines at its peak, has almost completely vanished. Now the population consists of two or three cats who are rarely seen on campus. Despite students, faculty and community members providing the cats shelter, stray coyotes fed on the feline population and slowly reduced their presence to nearly zero. The vanishing of all the cats is believed to be caused by coyotes straying onto campus, feeding on the felines.

“There’s no more food left for the coyotes to eat,” said maintenance staff Travis Marshall. “The gardeners found cat remains in the bushes.”

Marshall said he has seen two cats left on campus which hang out on roofs to avoid the coyotes.

Care for the cats started decades ago according to Anthropology Professor Rebecca Frank. Kane, a former campus carpenter, built cat

shelters 15-20 years ago. Frank has been supporting the cats for roughly eight years along with Linda Manning, a member of the Valley Glen community and maintenance operations member Tom Lopez who retired before the campus closure.

During their peak in 1999, campus personnel and cat caretakers gathered in campus center voicing disagreements and planning out means to cope with the growing feline population, according to a 22 year old article from the LA Times.

After meeting and dis-

“The coyotes come out at night.”
- Jasmine Xocoxic

cussing population-control solutions, both groups agreed to spay the cats, preventing population growth on campus. Valley President at the time Tyree Wieder, implemented the plan immediately and gave it a six-month trial, which proved ineffective decades later.

“The population was not under control,” said Frank. “Most of the cat population lived under the bungalows.”

Students complained when cats wandered into the athletics sand pit and used it as their litter box. In a last ditch attempt to



PHOTO BY | AVA ROSATE

CATS- The Valley campus was known to be home to many cats in previous years. Due to natural events such as hungry coyotes, the population has dwindled down to two known cats.

control the cat population in the bungalows, Manning put birth control in the cat’s food which contains megestrol acetate, a contraceptive which prevents female cats from going into heat and becoming pregnant.

Despite complaints, students, faculty and community members showed support by sheltering the cats along with donating food, medicine and supplies.

To this day, the community still tends to the few cats still living on campus.

Valley student Jasmine Xocoxic started her first semester on August 30 and says she hasn’t seen any cats.

“The coyotes come out at night” said Xocoxic, however she

has not seen any during the day.

Decades of the feral cat population living on Valley’s cam-

pus sees its end coming at the hands of wild hungry coyotes.



PHOTO BY | CHRISTOPHER PEREZ

HOUSE- The floor of an abandoned cat house is filled with straw.

Schools struggle to protect against fraud

The state’s community colleges requested \$75 million in one-time funding and \$25 million ongoing.

ISAAC DEKTOR
NEWS EDITOR

California’s Community Colleges recently included \$100 million for cyber security funding in their 2022-23 budget request following widespread fraudulent applicants receiving aid money.

False applications were submitted to the tune of 65,000 according to the Los Angeles Times. Nearly all of the state’s community colleges were targeted, including eight out of the nine LACCD schools. The Peralta Community College district alone distributed \$179,000 in financial aid to fake students, according to Edsource.

“We might see 20 new accounts get created from the same address, and that’s when that will be flagged.”

- Barry Gribbons

The scam works like this: a surge of fake applications are submitted through bots or software that is programmed specifically for a task. If successfully admitted into the college, the bots enroll in 9-12 credits and apply for financial aid. Once the funds are received,

the fictitious students drop out and take the money with them.

The 2022-23 budget request states that cyber attacks on schools are on the rise and asserts that institutions must be more secure in the age of virtual education.

“Technology infrastructure, both at the system and local level, and the pandemic have further exposed vulnerabilities, especially as cybersecurity attacks have grown worldwide,” reads the document.

The requested funds, if approved, will be used to renovate CCCApply - the program exploited by online criminals engaging in admissions fraud - and to invest in a “statewide financial aid verification platform,” according to the budget request. Additionally, funds would be used to create a more robust infrastructure around technology and data security.

President Barry Gribbons described the safeguards the district uses to defend itself against the growing sophistication of bots and financial aid fraud.

“The most effective way that we have to guard against it is to confirm that students have shown up to class and having the instructors drop students who don’t show up the first two weeks,” said Gribbons. “But we often times will catch bots even before that. For example, we might see 20 new accounts get created from the same address, and that’s when that will be flagged.”

Nearly half of educational institutions around the world were targeted by hackers attempting to gain access to school funds and data using ran-

somware according to Edscoop. Over half of the hackers successfully encrypted data from those institutions that were targeted.

The U.S Department of Education announced in July that verification requirements for financial aid documents would be slackened in order to increase access amid the pandemic.

“Department research shows that targeting verification this aid cycle, can help approximately 200,000 more students

from low-income backgrounds and students of color enroll in college and continue on the path to a degree,” read the statement.

While the lax verification process for FAFSA may increase enrollment - specifically of marginalized groups - it has had the unintended repercussion of being exploited by hackers in order to defraud schools and taxpayers throughout California.

Valley student Eliana Levi, who majors in psychol-

ogy, believes that preventing people from exploiting the financial aid system is of the utmost importance.

“We need to make the system safe ASAP, even if it comes at the cost of eliminating these programs,” said Levi. “This mistake is really costing taxpayers and it’s a bummer.”



GRAPHIC BY | ISAAC DEKTOR

SECURITY- California’s community colleges seek to develop stronger safeguards against financial aid

Felony

From page 1

“Bio had computers stolen too,” said Hooker. “The [Allied Health and Sciences Center] building was left open because of the air duct cleaning they were doing. Someone walked into the

secure lab that was left open and took the keys and then got the computers. I don’t know if they were desktops or laptops; all I know is that there were nine computers taken from there.”

As Valley continues to renovate, new door-lock technology will be used to secure new

buildings and transform old ones.

“We are looking into a long-term project of converting to electronic locks,” said President Gribbons. “With changing to electronic locks, one has the benefit of being able to manage who has access to unlocking and locking doors more easily.

With the number of doors on campus, that would be a costly and long-term project.”

While LACCD’s Deputy Felix refrained from commenting about the on-going case, he said that the department would make every attempt to help out newly appointed Sheriff’s Detective

Noe Ramos, who was recently made aware of the break-ins.

Sheriffs continue to secure the campus with active patrolling, as they proceed to investigate.

Vaccination and exemption deadline approaches

In order to be allowed to enter one of the nine LACCD colleges, students must provide proof of vaccination or exemption by Oct. 18.

To request a vaccination exemption, students must go to their student portal and click “COVID-19 Vaccination Exemption,” where they will be asked to fill out some personal information and select which form they need. Students will then be directed to the corresponding form.

The exemption could be either medical or religious. In a medical exemption form, students need to include their provider’s name, number, address, and signature. For a religious exemption, students must simply state their belief or practice that is the basis for their request, as well as why it would prevent them from getting the vaccine.

Students who submit an exemption form will have to take COVID-19 tests every week, which can be scheduled through the Cleared4 portal.

BY EDWARD SEGAL

LACCD recieves environmental grant

California Attorney General Rob Bonta announced a \$10 million grant for vehicle-related air pollution research for learning institutions across the state.

The Automobile Emissions Research and Technology Fund grant provides funding to public and nonprofit colleges and universities through grants for study, research and development to mitigate carbon emissions from automobiles. The LACCD will receive \$719,567.81 of this money to support a public education campaign, encouraging the transition to zero-emission vehicles. This will be done through the monitoring and display of vehicle emissions and the impact they have on air quality.

The source of the money comes from the \$10 million settlement paid by Volkswagen to the attorney general’s office following the 2015 diesel emissions scandal, in which the automotive company illegally concealed diesel-emission from its engines during EPA testing.

The grants come one year after Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the 2035 goalpost of phasing out gas-powered vehicles in the state.

BY MARCOS FRANCO

Health center open to students

Students seeking services at the Valley College health center may find themselves with a vast selection of resources available to them on-campus.

The on-campus health center provides services such as primary care for minor injuries and illnesses, STI and HIV testing, pregnancy testing, blood pressure screenings, and more. These resources are available free of charge to Valley College students.

“The health center is operated by Valley Community Healthcare, and has additional locations located off-campus, where students can receive the COVID-19 vaccination and additional services such dental and vision care,” said Arianna Garcia, a spokesperson of the health center.

The appointment-based on-campus health center is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Students may call 818-763-8836 to schedule an appointment.

BY SAMSON BADER, ISABELLA VODOS, ASHLEE SALAS
SPECIAL TO THE STAR



REHEARSAL - The ensemble of "All Together Now!" practices choreography in the Main Stage Theater

Theater returns to Valley

Valley’s theater department to perform “All Together Now!” from Nov. 12-15.

ANNETTE M. LESURE
STAFF WRITER

Valley College’s Theater Program will simultaneously perform with more than 5,200 shows around the world over a four-day period, and feature songs from well-known musicals such as “Mamma Mia!”, “Little Shop of Horrors” and more. The show, titled “All Together Now!” was created by Musical Theatre International with the goal of bringing artists and audiences back to the theatre, providing theatres and schools with the opportunity to fundraise to recover from over a year and a half of closures. The debut will be from Nov. 12-15, with in-person and virtual performances around the globe. The rules of the licensing stated that the lyrics of the 15 out of 35 songs ultimately chosen cannot be changed but can be depicted in any creative way the directors and performers choose. “This is my first time [participating] in a global performance,” said theater major Satya Vanii. “I am excited about this because it makes me feel we are all in solidarity and connected. We join hands sharing what we all love doing: performing and creating! The [show] title is so fitting!” The audience can expect some modernized show changes being created by director and Theater Arts professor Cathy Pyles, who has been instructing at Valley for 18 years. Prior to teaching, Pyles performed in many Broadway musicals such as “CATS” and “42nd Street.” “[Musical Theatre International] sent us the sheet music, rehearsal tracks for us to rehearse with and performance tracks for those that can’t afford to pay a band right now,” said

Pyles, whose diverse cast and crew encompass the LGBTQIA community and a broad spectrum of ages. “The great thing about this show is there are no restrictions on gender or ethnicity. You can have any person you want sing any song.”

“The great thing about this show is there are no restrictions on gender or ethnicity. You can have any person you want sing any song.”

- Theater Arts Professor Cathy Pyles

The show will have songs such as “Spread the Love” from “Sister Act” which was originally performed by nuns. The song will now be portrayed as gay pride. “Children Will Listen” from “Into the Woods” will be presented by four older actresses of the ensemble. While “Seize the Day” from Newsies, which was originally inspired by the 1899 real-life newsboys strike in New York City, will be a depiction of Black Lives Matter protests. “I am all for the diversity because for the last few years as a society we have been doing as much as we can to have our voices heard in the LGBTQIA community and Black Lives Matter movement,” said Valley alumnus and theater arts major, Eric Jaison, who is a part of the LGBTQIA community. “It’s a privilege and an honor to be able to put myself in the shoes of those who I am portraying as an actor and speak for those who don’t have a voice.”

As of Oct. 4, over 40 countries were in participation. Although there are no current statistics on the total number of performers, if each show casts 25 people as Valley has, that would tally roughly 130,000 performers. “I just found out that my high school dance teacher is doing the show on the same weekend. It’s so surreal because we have been waiting and aching for this moment to be back on stage and show our art to everybody,” said theater arts major Rachel Logan who is performing in three pieces, one being a solo of “Astonishing” from the musical “Little Women. “Having all these schools do the same thing at once really goes to show how much community theatre means. The fact that we get to share this all together and we are all connected in that way, it’s very important.” In a bittersweet coincidence, “All Together Now!” will be the last show ever performed in the Main Stage Theater prior to the demolition of the Theater Arts building in June 2022. There will be one final spring performance in the small Horseshoe Theater, just before the end of an era of a building that was built in 1961. The structure will be torn down after housing theatre arts students and staff for 60 years and up to 60 hours a week, according to costume maker and shop supervisor Samantha Jaffray. “It is going to be very emotional,” said Jaffray. “A lot of us have spent a lot of our lives in this building. This is like a family so it’s going to be wild. The new building is so beautiful, but this [old one] has so much history.” Information on ticket prices and how to purchase them will come closer to the performance date.

Valley club works to empower members through activism

Women Empowerment club focuses on spreading awareness of gender equality.

CASSANDRA NAVA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Following an annual Women’s March held in North Hollywood, the Women Empowerment club at Valley College is looking to make Monarchs aware of women’s issues. After finding a community of like-minded individuals in her high school, Sandra Sanchez brought the Women Empowerment Club to Valley College once she became a student last year. The club was chartered this spring and has been a part of a major movement; being co-hosts with the official Women’s March organization. Garnering attention to women’s issues is the main goal of the club, and the members have plans to keep the conversation going with fellow Monarchs. “I think it’s important to have a women empowerment club at a college campus,” said Kimberly Perez Solis, vice president of the Women Empowerment club. “It is so important at that age to target women’s issues like sexual harassment, gender roles, sexism and gender rights. In college we’re at an age where it’s important to talk about these things and have these conversations. It also gives women a community where they feel safe and they feel like their rights are valued and respected.” As reported by The Valley Star, the club co-hosted the Oct. 2 march, gathering local community members to advocate for

reproductive rights. The event allowed community members of the San Fernando Valley to congregate in North Hollywood to protest the restrictive Texas abortion law. Upwards of 400 activists gathered for the hour-long march which spanned a little over one mile. The Women Empowerment club fought to hold the event closer to the Valley campus, but despite the last-minute changes the club looks to hold more campus-centric events in the future.

“I think it’s important to have a women empowerment club at a college campus. It is so important at that age to target women’s issues like sexual harassment, gender roles, sexism and gender rights.”

- Vice President of the Women Empowerment Club Kimberly Perez Solis

October is domestic violence awareness month, and Sanchez is using her position as ASU president to help form an event that raises awareness. According to the National Organization for Women, “Women ages 20-24 are at greatest risk of nonfatal domestic violence, and women age 24 and under suffer from

the highest rates of rape.” Plans for a one-time self defense course with a certified coach will occur this month if the proposal on the ASU agenda board is approved. “Domestic violence is a pretty common issue among women,” said Sanchez. “It not only affects women, but men too. This is something that we should be educated on.” The club members look forward to creating events that allow students to express their activism. Women Empowerment and ASU are working together to plan logistics for January’s annual Women’s March. This time, the college will be a focal point of the march, allowing the use of the campus as a starting or ending point. The Women’s March organization was created on Jan. 21, 2017, the day after the inauguration of former President Donald Trump. Though it was only scheduled to be in Washington D.C., thousands of marches across the nation and worldwide arose in support. According to Britannica, around 4.6 million people showed up in support of women’s rights in the United States alone. The Women Empowerment club meets two Wednesdays a month, one online and one in person. The club posts zoom links, dates and information about their events to their Instagram page, which acts as their form of communication to Monarchs.



MARCH - Club Vice President Kimberly Perez Solis chants at the Rally For Abortion Justice March.

Valley View | What do you think about the district’s mandate and policies?

Text by Marcos Franco
Photos by Luis Flores



“Since we’re not sure if everyone around us is vaccinated, it is still a good idea to wear a mask. I think the vaccine mandate is a good idea moving forward, but the district should have done it a little bit sooner.”

- Grace Seukunian, 19, Music



“The district mandate should have been at the beginning of the semester. It is inconvenient to implement halfway through [because] we are already so wrapped up in classes.”

- Kayla Rangel, 18, Psychology



“I think the mandate is good for the campus, but each person should have a choice on whether they want the vaccine or not. I already got the vaccine, but it was something that I wanted to do. It [getting vaccinated] should depend on someone’s personal preference.”

- Marciano Rodriguez, 19, Business



“I think the masks are still necessary, even after a vaccine the virus can spread. I think it’s too late to require the vaccine.”

- Maria Baghayan, 18, Criminal Justice

LACCD students scammed by classic con methods

Valley students were made aware of a system-wide scam in September meant to trick students out of their money under the guise of an opportunity.



GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION | MATTHEW ROYER

SCAM- Valley College students were subject to a district-wide scam carried out over email.

ISAAC DEKTOR
NEWS EDITOR

Scammers recently targeted students around the district with a years-old con, the current rendition of which offered a “UNICEF Part-Time Position”.

Con artists would offer fake checks to students who followed the instructions in the email, further directing them to keep some of the money and wire the funds back to those carrying out the scam. When the check is rejected by the bank, students

are responsible for the total sum.

President Barry Gribbons advises students to verify any emails they receive before clicking a link or engaging with the sender.

“Really look carefully at the sender and make sure it has a

domain name that they recognize like lavc.edu or laccd.edu,” said Gribbons. “I know it can be confusing because they look very

“... Don’t deposit a check from someone you don’t know and then transfer the money. No matter how convincing the story, it’s a lie.”

- *FTC Councilmember Kando Pineda*

real, but it is really important to scrutinize who’s sending it.”

The internet has been a usual haunt for con artists over the years, with the Federal Trade Commission writing a post nearly seven years ago on their website titled “Fake Checks: The nanny or caregiver scam”, which outlines a similar scam to the one

sporadically hitting the district.

“Don’t send money to someone you don’t know, either in cash or through a money transfer service,” wrote FTC Councilmember Kando Pineda. “Likewise, don’t deposit a check from someone you don’t know and then transfer the money. No matter how convincing the story, it’s a lie.”

Pineda claims that scammers went so far as to tell persuasive stories designed to win over the victims with compassion, asking them to receive medical equipment needed by the made-up person they were supposed to babysit.

While financial hustling on the internet is an age-old problem, the recurrence of fraudulent spam on “large numbers of LACCD student email addresses,” according to an email sent by the district to all students, raises the broader issue of data security.

LACCD students were targeted directly last September with a similar email offering a “Part-Time Job Opportunity.”

The district responds to potential data breaches through

its office of information technology, which investigates reported incidents and crafts an appropriate response based on the severity of the breach.

The office recognizes four levels of information breach severity ranging from critical to low. A critical breach involves the successful hacking of a district system while a low designation is used for the successful or attempted hacking of a single individual.

Upon a critical breach, also designated P1, the office activates its information security incident response team to investigate and design a response. The team is constructed based on the scope and nature of the information security event according to the office’s public documents.

Students who receive emails from unknown domains should contact Valley’s public information office, check for information about the sender on the student portal or call the appropriate department in order to verify the email’s legitimacy before engaging with it.

The most important movie you have never seen: “Tomorrowland”

If the pandemic has caused endless doom scrolling, now might be the perfect time to watch a story about relighting the spark of optimism.

HILARY VAN HOOSE
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Filmmakers Brad Bird and Damon Lindelof took a risk in a landscape of remakes and sequels by creating a retro-futuristic blockbuster with a heart-felt original story. Despite not being a box office success, it paid off in more important ways.

In 2015, most critics panned “Tomorrowland” as a bundle of trite platitudes about optimism wrapped up in a shiny package. But this is a deeply personal story that explores optimism, not blind faith about things turning out well despite inaction.

“Tomorrowland” tells the story of Casey Newton, a brilliant girl with a flare for science played by Britt Robertson, who convinces former gifted boy-scientist turned aging cynic Frank Walker (George Clooney) that it’s not too late to save the world. The pair and a charming android girl named Athena (Raffey Cassidy) embark on

a perilous yet family-friendly adventure to Tomorrowland in hopes of finding out how to prevent the end of the world.

For lovers of sci-fi and Disneyland alike, this film does not disappoint. It features everything from a Terminator-esque chase scene to a backstory about Disneyland’s Tomorrowland as a clever front for the real thing, with Walt Disney as a member of a secret society of geniuses who built another world in an alternate dimension. Viewers might need to watch this film a second time because of the worldbuilding details stuffed into each scene. Can viewers expect anything less from the writers who gave us “Lost” and “The Incredibles?”

An entire generation of kids were encouraged by Walt Disney and JFK’s promises of a “great big beautiful tomorrow” where they would study civics and STEM and use their hard-earned skills to solve all of the world’s problems. “Tomorrowland” came out in 2015, at a moment

when many felt those promises had been broken for a long time. Written almost as a love letter to the optimism of baby boomer-era kids who had lost hope as adults, this film explores themes reminiscent of “A Christmas Carol,” about overcoming the cynical and misanthropic worldviews foisted upon young people.

“Tomorrowland” argues we can do anything — even save the world.

This film is even more relevant in 2021. At a time when ignoring and belittling scientists and the scientific method is prolonging a worldwide pandemic and accelerating a climate catastrophe. In a moment when so many people think the only two ways to react to an existential crisis are to either pretend it is not happening or to resign themselves to destruc-



PHOTO COURTESY OF WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES
TOMORROWLAND- George Clooney stars in Brad Bird and Damon Lindelof’s “Tomorrowland.”

tion and enjoy the spectacle of watching the world burn, “Tomorrowland” reaches forward from the past to remind us that it is not too late to keep those

promises made decades ago.

If we nurture and embrace the scientists, the visionaries, those with imagination and tenacity; “Tomorrowland”

argues we can do anything — even save the world.

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Dysfunction shows ASU needs change

After claims of bias come to the forefront, ASU bylaws should be shifted to create fairer guidelines for the appointment process.



Valley Star | Jeremy Ruiz
UNION - A man walks by the Student Union building Monday. Vacant positions from last spring's elections were recently appointed by ASU.

MATTHEW ROYER
POLITICAL NEWS EDITOR

Developments with recent ASU appointment proceedings provide the student body with a troubling look at its student government but not all hope should be lost.

On Sept. 28, an ASU meeting had a set goal: appoint students to positions left vacant after last spring's election. Students interested were given a set time to plead their cases for the positions of vice president, parliamentarian, officer of political affairs and commissioner of fine arts to the officers and commissioners currently in office. When all was said and done, which was plenty during a meet-

ing with a tense tone throughout, all but two positions were filled. The 3-2 vote in favor of former ASU Vice President Shoshana Cassell over Kimberly Perez Solis stirred up questions of partiality. ASU President Sandra Sanchez expressed disappointment in the decision and stated that her fellow board members did not come into the process with an "open mind" as previously reported by The Valley Star.

Despite the disagreement, all three vice-presidential candidates, including Cassell and Perez Solis, are set to serve on the ASU together in their respective positions as vice president and parliamentarian. The other VP hopeful, Sean Moran, will serve as commissioner of fine arts.

Cooperation between the

board will be quintessential in this upcoming term for ASU as the campus comes back to life during the tail-end of a global pandemic. For this reason, those elected or appointed should learn from this experience and work together to better shore up the guidelines for future boards.

For example, the claims of bias came after an observation was made that Cassell had previously served on the ASU with Commissioner of Student Life Ethan Shalom. With Cassell knowing Ethan, one could be led to believe that his brother, Eliran Shalom, who serves as commissioner of health and wellness, may also know the former VP. On the other hand, Perez Solis serves as vice president to Sanchez in Valley's Women Empowerment club. While

Sanchez could not cast a vote in the appointment, an assumption could be made in where her vote would have laid.

These circumstances would not have been possible a few years ago according to ASU Advisor Monica Flores.

"Maybe two years ago - In the ICC constitution and bylaws in the past, if you served on a club as an officer you could not serve on ASU," said Flores. "Students noticed that there wasn't as much involvement. To increase involvement, ASU members can serve on clubs."

Bylaws of the past created strict boundaries for candidates. As a compromise, current ASU officers and commissioners should design regulations to present to the student body in

which a new appointment process should be displayed prominently.

To curb the sense of bias that these appointment votes create, there needs to be a veil of secrecy attached to the system. When candidates enter to fill vacant positions, the opportunity to propose their ambitions to the board members should not come through oral presentation, but rather only written documentation presented by the advisor without the candidate's name attached. If more than one candidate enters consideration, ASU hopefuls would be assigned a random order in which their written documents are shown. Voting members would then vote to appoint based upon the number in the set order that best represents their vision for the position, instead of adhering to the currently flawed system of knowing the candidates in advance and allowing verbal responses.

This process would create a sense of fairness across the board, which would ideologically align with the annual ASU election in which positions are decided upon through direct democracy.

Bylaws are the second of two steps. For the first step, the ASU must put aside any differences and work together to better the campus and the student body which it serves. ASU is an important cog in the machine that is Valley College, but changes need to come.

"It's really up to the board if they want to amend their constitution and bylaws," said Flores. "Somebody on the current board can say 'why don't we form a committee and try to amend the ASU constitution and bylaws,' so that we can add something about this whole topic of being biased and what not. It's up to them. Ultimately, the students on our campus decide."

Tutoring services are overlooked by valley students

Lack of academic preparedness is one of the top five reasons students drop out of college, the ARC offers resources for their success.

ANNETTE M. LESURE
STAFF WRITER

Despite numerous tutoring opportunities available at Valley College, students are not taking advantage or are unaware of the resources offered to them which could help with academic success.

Five out of 10 students interviewed said they had heard about tutoring services on campus, and only one of them reported trying it. The other half — all first-year students — were not familiar with the tutoring services at all, with the single student finding the it on their own.

All of the students said they would consider tutoring if they were in need of help. Perhaps the reason students are not seeking support is due to a lack of outreach and awareness. Or maybe students are not taking initiative toward the first steps in implementing tutoring because of a lack of confidence.

"It was tough. I didn't do that well the first semester," said second-year nursing student Lesly Cermeno. "Near the end, I met with counselors again, because I wasn't sure how to reach them or how often I needed to talk to them."

Cermeno was not told about counseling until after her first semester and said she is more likely to find a tutor in the future.

According to the U.S. Department of Education and the National Bureau of Economic Research, "high-dosage" tutoring — when tutors and tutees meet at least three times per week — is exceedingly beneficial toward the success of students from all cultural and financial heterogeneity. Valley tutoring services offer as much assistance as a student needs with flexible timeframes for their schedules.

Studies from the Council of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education Associations proved that tutoring provides students with

a review of course material as well as discussion on their comprehension of the subject, resulting in knowledge retention and higher grades. The data further supports the fact that tutoring increases test-taking and academic success.

In an era of pandemic-related relief such as the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III, colleges and students are receiving more assistance than ever before toward academic support. This being provided to manage academic needs and expenses exacerbated during the pandemic. However, these needs and benefits existed prior to the pandemic.

While taking things

“Looking back, I think I made it too hard on myself without the tutoring.”
- Zeke Perry, Student

for granted is human nature, Monarchs are forgetting that it is a privilege to have these college services. Students should remember 15-year-old student Malala when putting their education second. In 2012, she was shot in the head by the Taliban on her school bus headed home, after speaking publicly about "a girl's right to learn." Malala woke up from a coma ten days later with her family in Birmingham, England. This earned her international support as it was a profound world statement showing the depth of value that lies behind education.

Ranking first in the world for its education system, the United States offers eager learners the opportunity to achieve tertiary education. Students must take advantage of all the opportunities Valley predecessors fought to provide to safe-



Valley Star | Stephen Castaneda
ARC - Students prepare for for classes on the second floor of the library on Monday Aug. 30.

guard the success of learning.

With more than five free tutoring sources available in most subjects, ranging from ARC, SSD, EOPS, TRIO and NetTutor, students are encouraged to habitually seek help for academic struggles.

"I survived math without tutoring," said Valley student Zeke Perry. "Looking back, I think I made it too hard on myself, going without the tutoring. Maybe I would've ended up with a better grade if I had gotten some help with it."

The third-year stu-

dent sought assistance with general counseling when he first arrived at Valley.

"I think when it comes to school a lot of people think, 'I got this, I can do it by myself,'" said Perry. "But if you find yourself caught in a corner even with one assignment that could make or break you, [counseling] is there. Take advantage of it and see what better things it can lead you to."

EDITORS NOTE

The views expressed on this page are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Valley Star, its instructors, editors, staff or those of Los Angeles Valley College, its administration, faculty, staff or students.



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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. Send by Thursday for the following week's issue.



MAX AYRAPETYAN assists a goal for the Monarchs in the second quarter. Ayrapetyan scored a total of five goals for Valley during Saturday's game against Chaffey.



COACH MCMILLAN (left), head coach of Valley men's water polo, talks to the Monarchs during their two-minute break after the third quarter.



SARGIS KAPUTIKYAN (center) tries to block Panthers' Jorge Mariscal from passing the ball in the fourth quarter.



ARMAN HUNANYAN (right) of Valley attempts to steal a wet pass thrown to Panther's attacker David Cuaron (left) in the third quarter.

Monarchs sink Panthers

Freshman Max Ayrapetyan and sophomore Niki Matheisen powered the Monarchs 19-6 win against the Panthers.



NIKI MATHEISEN takes a shot in the first quarter. Matheisen helped score four goals in the first quarter during the Monarchs 19-6 victory over Chaffey on Saturday at Valley.

STEPHEN CASTANEDA
SPORTS EDITOR

Valley College men's water polo ended their four game losing streak after triumph versus Chaffey College. During their second Western State Conference game of the season, Saturday, the Monarchs (4-8, 1-1 WSC) opened the first quarter with a 8-3 lead against the Panthers (2-5, 0-4 WSC) and never looked back. The Monarchs outscored the Panthers by more than a dozen, picking up their first win in conference play 19-6. "It's a great improvement since the start of the season,"

said Monarchs head coach Jim McMillan. "You know, a win is a win and it makes us feel good, but we gotta get ready for tomorrow. We're just trying to work together as a group and play for our school and not ourselves." Freshman driver Max Ayrapetyan and sophomore driver Niki Matheisen steered the first half of the game for Valley. Matheisen accounted for four of the five goals in the first quarter and five assists in the match while Ayrapetyan scored three goals in the second quarter. Freshman driver Erik Sarkissian wrapped up the game in the fourth quarter having scored three goals. Valley's defense weathered

the Chaffey attack as freshman goalkeeper Daniel Smkovsky saved six shots in the contest. Matheisen was active on the defensive side of the ball as well with five steals. After this match, Valley is ranked third in the Western State Conference under Cuesta College and Ventura College. "We want to make it to the conference championship game," said McMillan, "One of the main goals for me is to have the kids get good grades, to learn hard work ethic and have a little bit of fun." The Monarchs will be back Tuesday at 2 p.m. for their fourth conference game, this time, against Ventura College.



LEVON HARUTYUNYAN (left) avoids a block from Panthers attacker David Cuaron (right) against Chaffey college on Saturday during the Monarchs' victory in LAVC swimming pool.

MONARCHS RESULTS

FOOTBALL				
36	VALLEY			
31	HARBOR			
6	VALLEY			
56	SANTA ANA			
Overall W-L		1-4	Streak	Lost 1
PCT		0.200	Home	1-1
Overall Ranking		4th	Away	0-3

- Next:
- Antelope Valley College at Antelope College Oct. 16 @ 6pm
 - Santa Barbara City College at Valley College Oct. 23 @ 6pm

MEN'S WATER POLO				
5	VALLEY			
18	CUESTA			
19	VALLEY			
6	CHAFFEY			
15	VALLEY			
13	CIRTUS			
Overall W-L		5-8	Streak	Won 2
PCT		0.384	Home	2-1
Overall Ranking		4th	Away	2-1

- Next:
- Ventura College at Ventura Oct. 19 @ 2pm
 - Golden West Tourney at Golden West Oct. 22-23 @ TBA
 - Santa Monica College at Valley College Oct. 27 @ 3pm

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL				
NO OFFICIAL SCORES WERE REPORTED FOR SCRIMMAGE AGAINST VENTURA COLLEGE				
Next:				
Scrimmage vs Alumni at Valley College Oct. 23 @ 12pm				

WOMEN'S SOCCER				
1	VALLEY			
2	WEST LA			
GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CANCELED SEASON DUE TO LACK OF PLAYERS				
0	VALLEY			
3	CANYONS			
2	VALLEY			
1	BAKERSFIELD			
Overall W-L-T		3-8-1	Streak	Won 1
PCT		0.292	Home	0-6-1
Overall Ranking		6th	Away	3-2

- Next:
- Antelope Valley College at Valley College Oct. 15 @ 4pm
 - Santa Monica College at Santa Monica Oct. 19 @ 3pm
 - Citrus College at Citrus Oct. 22 @ 3pm
 - West LA College at Valley College Oct. 26 @ 4pm

WOMEN'S WATER POLO				
19	VALLEY			
5	CHAFFEY			
CUESTA COLLEGE CANCELED THE REMAINDER OF THEIR SEASON				
Overall W-L		5-4	Streak	Won 2
PCT		0.556	Home	3-0
Overall Ranking		4th	Away	2-1

- Next:
- Citrus Tournament at Citrus College Oct. 15-16 @ TBA
 - Long Beach Tournament at Long Beach Oct. 22-23 @ 3:30pm
 - Pierce College at Valley College Oct. 27 @ 3:30pm