

THE POLY POST

VOL. LXXVX NO. 6

WWW.THEPOLYPOST.COM

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025



DARREN LOO | THE POLY POST

Several findings of the recent audit were technology-based issues. Nicole Hawkes attributes the State Controller's Office's 1970s technology to the system's current incapacities of managing complex payroll functions.

CPP addresses \$3.6M improper payroll costs

Audit reveals projected cost, improper payments, missing timesheets

By **TERESA ACOSTA**
Arts & Culture Editor

An external payroll audit by the State Controller's Office found more than \$3.6 million in projected improper payroll costs at Cal Poly Pomona.

The report audited 105 transactions statistically selected from the 108,082 regular and overtime pay transactions, which Kimberly Allain, the senior associate vice president for employee and organizational development and advancement/HR operations at CPP, said was

far more than the other campuses that also had audits performed during a similar period.

"A larger volume just naturally produces a larger error rate," Allain said.

The State Controller's Office also audited Cal State Los Angeles' payroll. Of the 133,660 regular and overtime pay transactions, 105 were statistically selected for audit, according to the report.

In CSU LA's case, there were zero improper or unsupported costs identified.

Cal State Sacramento's payroll audit report also

revealed zero improper or unsupported costs identified within 77 out of 170,979 regular pay transactions statistically selected for the audit.

However, the State Controller's Office identified \$238 in overtime pay as improper or unsupported within the 113 transactions statistically selected for the audit.

This led to a projection of \$38,039 in improper of unsupported overtime pay within 4,187 transactions.

Bonnie Thorne, the president of CPP's California Faculty Association chapter, said there were

overpayments made to department chairs that pushed them into a higher tax bracket and resulted in negative consequences.

According to IRS.gov, when income is increased, the tax rate also increases at the higher level of income.

Another concern Thorne heard from faculty members is a lack of communication when they reach out to address payroll issues.

"If they thought there was a problem with their pay, they would reach out to payroll," Thorne said. "And I don't know, we thought the emails went into a black hole, so they would not

get a response, and it's just extremely frustrating for faculty."

Nicole Hawkes, the vice president and the chief of staff, promised improvement.

Furthermore, Allain said the audit was a "blessing in disguise" when she took over the unit in July 2020.

"As a new leader of that unit, it gave me a foundation or a groundwork to really implement the transformation that needed to take place in the unit," Allain said. "I was lucky enough to really get what you could consider a consultant to sort of look at the work and

to provide a way forward or true north for us to create this continuous improvement process."

The 23-page report performed on CPP, which looked at the period between March 1, 2017, through Feb. 29, 2020, detailed six major findings.

In the over five years since this period, and the conclusion of the investigation, Allain said all the issues have been addressed, and they were more or less taken care of before CPP was given a draft of the report Sept. 12, 2024.

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BRYAN DOAN | THE POLY POST

Documentation received by The Poly Post revealed the property did not come with state funding, and Enterprise Foundation spent \$2M to support operations during the first four years of owning the property.

THE POLY POST INVESTIGATES: CPP pays state workers at Lanterman

By **KATIE PRIEST & AVA UHLACK**
Audio Editor & Web Editor

Cal Poly Pomona has used more than \$10 million in state funds to pay the salaries and benefits for employees, contractors and consultants to work on the Lanterman property between 2015 and 2023, out of which 85% went to pay university police and

maintenance employees.

Campus South, previously known as the Lanterman Developmental Center, has been under the care of CPP since 2015. CPP faculty, staff and students don't use the property.

Instead, the university leases out portions of the site for Hollywood film projects, but The Poly Post investigative team uncovered the

university moves some state-side safety and maintenance employees off CPP's main campus to monitor and maintain the 300-acre property. When the property was transferred to the campus, the governor's office mandated "that state funds will not be specifically appropriated for the operation, maintenance or development of this property,"

according to the 2015 governor's budget summary.

According to documents obtained by The Poly Post, CPP has employed 30 campus public safety specialists for this project since 2015. Three public safety specialists cover the day shift, and two cover the graveyard shift.

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Graduating into uncertainty

Class of 2025 faces tough job market

By **AMI MEDINA**
Staff Writer

As the class of 2025 prepares to trade lecture halls for job searches, many are confronting a job market that feels a lot more like a closed door than an open runway.

According to data released by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the unemployment rate for recent college graduates jumped to 5.8% in the beginning of 2025, the highest since 2021, and the underemployment rate (working in jobs not requiring a degree) surged to 41.2%. Moreover, the gap between the unemployment rate of new graduates and that of experienced degree holders is now the widest on record outside the pandemic years.

According to MarketWatch, the United States economy declined in value by 0.3% in the first quarter of 2025, partly due to businesses increasing imports



ahead of new tariff policies, which contributed to a record trade deficit. This occurred alongside rising inflation, higher interest rates and reductions in federal program funding, contributing to broader economic uncertainty during the early months of President Donald Trump's term.

According to an article published by The Washington Post, government spending also slowed economic growth.

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Pomona's working class hit by Trump

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LA Fair serves up new food, attractions

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Congrats, grads; the fight has just begun

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CPP women's soccer celebrates at LA Angels

Pomona’s working class hit by Trump

By **NOEMI OROZCO**
La Voz Editor

Ten day laborers were arrested during an 8:30 a.m. raid conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection April 22 outside a Pomona Home Depot, just seven miles from Cal Poly Pomona’s campus. Federal agents also took 58-year-old Martin Majin-Leon into custody at gunpoint outside his barber shop in Pomona that same day.

Majin-Leon has since been released in a decision by a Riverside County judge that cited his lack of criminal history, consistent tax filings, two property holdings totaling more than \$1.5 million and longstanding community ties to the city, according to The South Pasadena. His next court appearance is scheduled for May 29.

A senior Department of Homeland Security official said in a statement to The Los Angeles Times that the operation at the Home Depot on South Towne Avenue initially targeted one individual with an active arrest warrant. There, agents met nine other individuals who were detained unwarranted.

“During the operation, nine additional illegal aliens were encountered and taken into custody,” the DHS official said. “Several of those



Club members of Students Standing for Freedom protest for immigration rights across the CLA Building Feb. 25

apprehended had prior charges, including child abuse, assault with a deadly weapon, immigration violations and DUI.”

According to Alexis Teodoro, a worker rights director at the Pomona Economic Opportunity Center, two of the ten day laborers arrested have been deported.

The PEOC works with day laborers and domestic workers within the region as part of its Day Laborers Program, helping those in search of safe employment at a proper wage and employers finding immediate assistance.

The program was created after border patrol agents

pulled over Eddie Cortez, Pomona’s first Latino mayor, and questioned his legal status while visiting a well-known day laborer site in 1993.

“Looking for work at a public sidewalk or public space is a constitutional right protected by the United States Constitution of America,” Teodoro said. “The day laborers who were just looking for work outside of Home Depot or near the sidewalks of Home Depot were just exercising their right to do so. They were taken just because of how they were talking or what they looked like, basically.”

The center also offers free legal services and advocacy initiatives for Pomona, San Bernardino County and Riverside County immigrant workers. Teodoro and his team at PEOC are currently campaigning for the release of Jesus Domingo Ross, an active member of their hiring program who was arrested during the Home Depot operation. According to CalMatters, Ross is being held at the Imperial Regional Detention Facility in Calexico.

Ross, along with two other Guatemalan day laborers, is awaiting their bonding set for May 6, according to

Teodoro.

“We hope to get a positive result, so we can bond out the day laborers and bring them back to Pomona where they’re dearly missed,” Teodoro said.

Francisco Beltran, a history professor at CPP, said day laborers have played an essential part in the industrialization of the U.S. since the late 19th century. Soon after the Immigration Act of 1965, the composition of migrants shifted from mostly white and of European backgrounds to primarily Latino and Asian.

Today, day laborers of color are the backbone of

many rebuilding efforts across the country. Earlier this year, migrant workers led cleanup and construction efforts following the Eaton and Palisades fires, a task that involved numerous health risks.

However, the push for their mass removal is a paradox for Beltran.

“They’re always the first to face the wrath whenever things go south, whenever the economy sours, whenever something happens and no fear, anxiety becomes channeled through a very racial lens at individual groups of people,” Beltran said.

Cities like Pomona, which have a large immigrant and Latino population, will face both economic and social effects if these communities choose to stay home because of deportation worries.

According to a press release by the American Immigration Council, undocumented immigrant households paid \$89.8 billion in federal, state and local taxes, and held \$299 billion in spending power in 2023.

They are also key to fixing labor shortages, as almost 1 in 4 are entrepreneurs.

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Reach **Noemi Orozco** at
managing@thepolypost.com

ECONOMY: Diplomas in hand, career offers on hold

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This is due to federal budget cuts and widespread layoffs tied to the Department of Government Efficiency, an initiative launched by Trump and led by senior adviser Elon Musk. DOGE aimed to streamline the federal government by cutting waste and consolidating agencies, but the spending cuts led to layoffs and reduced economic activity.

David Earl-Itoga, a recent graduate who studied hospitality management, is currently working as a line cook at a country club.

“Employers, even my own, aren’t able to afford quality

help,” Earl-Itoga said. “Pay is down, and budgets for overtime or quality staff significantly reduce the number of applicants.”

Earl-Itoga’s goal is to be a full-time chef in his own restaurant, but he’s been told to be mindful of the economy when starting up a business.

“Rent costs and labor costs are at an all-time high, and it stunts growth,” Earl-Itoga said.

Traditional entry-level positions for graduates are especially challenged as artificial intelligence has reduced the demand for routine tasks. Companies prefer more experienced hires or AI solutions over fresh graduates, according to Business

Insider.

“School was one and done for me,” Earl-Itoga said. “Culinary school specifically has been considered a waste of time in an industry where experience is everything. Getting a further education or a second degree would only slow my progression in skill or knowledge.”

Myah Vincent, a hospitality management student with an emphasis in special events, said she has been job hunting since January with limited success.

Vincent noticed a distinct lack of entry-level opportunities in her field. While a handful of postings in marketing exist, few focus on the kind of event planning

work she’s passionate about. This mismatch between graduates’ skills and the roles available adds to the challenge.

“The economy has most definitely changed my post-grad plans,” Vincent said. “In the past, grads with student loans could move out shortly after finishing school, even if it was tight financially. But now, I have no choice but to move back home for at least a year. Maybe two.”

Despite her desire to stay within the events sector, Vincent has had to widen her job search across the broader hospitality industry, considering food service and hotel roles just to get by.

“I’m trying to find

something I can enjoy for a few years while I save enough to move out,” Vincent said.

While Cal Poly Pomona’s Collins College has provided valuable networking and professional connections, she said the events emphasis is a niche area, and breaking in takes more than classroom experience.

Chandra Phung, an apparel merchandising and management student with a focus on fashion retailing, echoed similar frustrations.

“It’s been honestly tough,” Phung said. “It’s hard to find roles that really fit and offer a livable wage.”

Phung noticed many job listings remained unchanged

for months, suggesting either companies have stopped hiring new people or there are just too many applicants competing for the same jobs.

According to The Atlantic, hiring has slowed to a pace not seen since the aftermath of the Great Recession, a time when unemployment was nearly double what it is today. Fewer workers are willingly leaving their jobs in search of better opportunities, which is a sign that confidence in the job market has dropped. The quit rate **has plunged by a third since**

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Reach **Ami Medina** at
managing@thepolypost.com

PAYROLL: External payroll audit finds more than \$3.6M in projected improper costs

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The six major findings are as follows:

1. Inadequate segregation of duties and lack of compensation controls over payroll transactions
2. Inappropriate keying access to the State’s payroll system
3. Missing timesheets for regular pay
4. Improper payments and missing timesheets for overtime pay
5. Failure to collect outstanding salary advances
6. Late separation lump-sum payments

Allain explained the one residual issue was staffing; this included making sure payroll technicians were well-trained, correctly onboarded and given an experience that would lead to job satisfaction prompting them to stay.

Allain attributed staff shortages, such as losing five of the six payroll technicians, to the “Great Resignation.” According to the United States Census Bureau, this was when an unprecedented number of workers quit their jobs in 2021 and 2022 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As

a result, the remaining staff in CPP’s payroll department worked seven days a week for months.

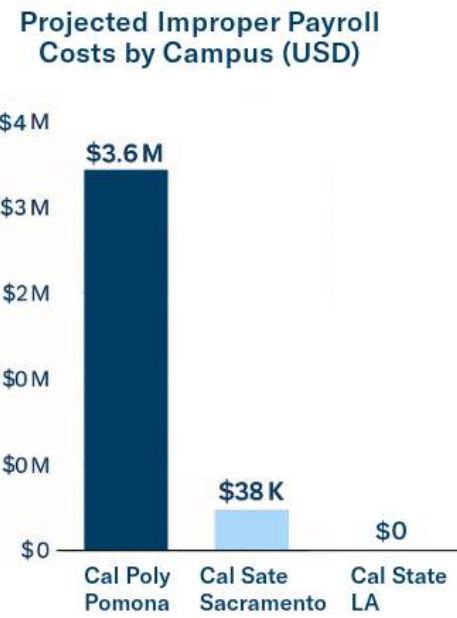
They worked evenings and weekends, which Allain admitted was unsustainable but important to the unit employees who take pride in their work.

In the CPP audit under salary advances, there were 59 transactions, and a net total of \$9,687 improper costs identified. Allain said the recovery of accounts receivable is currently up to date and does not have anything outstanding from the last three to five years.

To address the inappropriate keying access to the State’s payroll system, Allain said improvements were made to streamline the clearance process by delegating the collection tasks to each corresponding department.

For example, IT is notified to collect a laptop from an employee who is no longer in the position, and Facilities Planning and Management is responsible for collecting keys. Hawkes said outdated technology could also be a source for errors discussed in the findings.

The State Controller’s



Other CSU campuses also had payroll audits conducted during the same time frame. While the audit projected CPP had \$3.6 million in improper payroll costs, CSU LA recorded none.

Office uses 1970s, DOS-based software that requires technicians to key in entries twice. The entries are put into CPP’s system and again in the State Controller’s system, doubling the chance of human errors.

“That’s a symptom of an outdated technology that, quite frankly, when it was created, never contemplated the kind of labor environment with the complexity of appointments that people have, especially

in universities,” Hawkes said.

Among some of the technological improvements that have been made to reduce missing paperwork, such as the timesheets, was the transition from fully manual to digital. Allain confirmed a digitization project was 90% complete and is expected to be done in the fall.

Another integration made since Allain took over was the hiring of HR policy and audit readiness analyst

Ellen Bui. The position is an internal control used daily to maintain compliance in payroll and talent acquisitions, according to Allain.

Statistical sampling was done for the findings of the missing timesheets, the failure to collect salary advances and the late separation lump-sum payments to calculate projections. Fei Kang, an accounting professor in the College of Business

Administration, explained the methodology used in the report. Kang said the sampling was similar to general statistics theory, where, according to the report, a computer-generated, simple, random selection was used.

In the report, the confidence level was 90%, and the error rates were 0.70% for the missing timesheets for regular pay and 9.12% for improper payments and missing timesheets for overtime pay. Kang said 90% is a commonly used benchmark and an acceptable level to interpret how sure the findings are.

As a result of the payroll audit, Allain’s department requested a California State University internal audit of HR practices. The audit included other HR practices, not just payroll between 2021 to 2023.

The report was expected to be finished in early April, but The Poly Post could not find the published results at the time of print. Allain said they were told it was one of the best outcomes they’ve had regarding CPP’s HR

Reach **Teresa Acosta** at
managing@thepolypost.com

TERESA ACOSTA | THE POLY POST

Canva, CPP StratComm give false alarm

By **GAVIN CLAIBORNE & RYAN LEON**
Copy Editors

The Cal Poly Pomona community voiced concerns over online privacy after Canva sent an auto-generated email to all active CPP email accounts April 9, regarding an upcoming management of CPP-linked Canva accounts by the Department of Strategic Communications.

According to the email, recipients were informed their Canva accounts “will be affiliated with CPP Strategic Communications soon,” as a later message read: “An admin from CPP Strategic Communications has claimed the email domain linked to your Canva account, which means it will become affiliated with your organization.”

Esther Tanaka, the executive director for StratComm, said the auto-generated email didn’t apply to everyone affiliated with CPP, though, but rather an approximate 70 people.

In an email sent to The Poly Post, Tanaka said StratComm has an

“enterprise-level account with Canva,” and the department has been working on implementing single sign-on verification exclusively for all users who work in the department.

“The email you received was automatically sent from Canva as part of the SSO integration and domain verification process,” Tanaka wrote in the email to The Poly Post. “Once SSO is implemented for the StratComm account, only the users who are part of our group will be required to login with SSO.”

Tanaka also said any Canva accounts that aren’t linked to the department won’t be affected, and no further action would be needed.

“What we do want to point out is that the email was only applying to people within our team,” Tanaka said. “But they still had to send a notification to everyone with a cpp.edu email address that used Canva.”

Michelle Magcalas, the business systems analyst for StratComm, said enabling Canva single sign-on for members of the department requires a domain verification, but due to privacy laws

and practices, the auto-generated email had to be sent to “people with a corresponding email that has cpp.edu” to inform them of the changes, too.

“It’s kind of like when you get something from your bank saying that something has changed,” Magcalas said. “Whether it applied to you or not, they still send it out to everyone, so that’s kind of what happened for us.”

Magcalas said StratComm reached out to Canva to confirm the affiliation wouldn’t affect anyone outside of the department, and Canva verified that to be true.

Tanaka said the department has been using Canva to design graphics for a few years now, but the team has recently expanded to using new templates that include design elements from CPP’s latest branding campaign.

Those are available to staff within the department, including student assistants who create graphic designs for StratComm.

Magcalas said members of StratComm aren’t required to use Canva, but from her experience, people who’ve done marketing for different



According to Tanaka, Canva is used by StratComm for graphics, but has branched out to include design elements from the recent rebrand.

divisions have enjoyed “the ease of use and everything already being there.”

StratComm has worked with Canva to have the Australian-based company send a campuswide follow-up email notifying the CPP community their Canva accounts won’t be managed by the department, according to Tanaka.

“We want to reassure people, ‘You don’t have to change what you’re doing,’” Tanaka said. “‘You don’t have to change your email address, because nothing for you is changing.’ I wish we could share that message,

but since we don’t know who uses Canva on campus, we don’t know who to email.”

Canva released a campuswide follow-up email April 28 for clarification on the initial email.

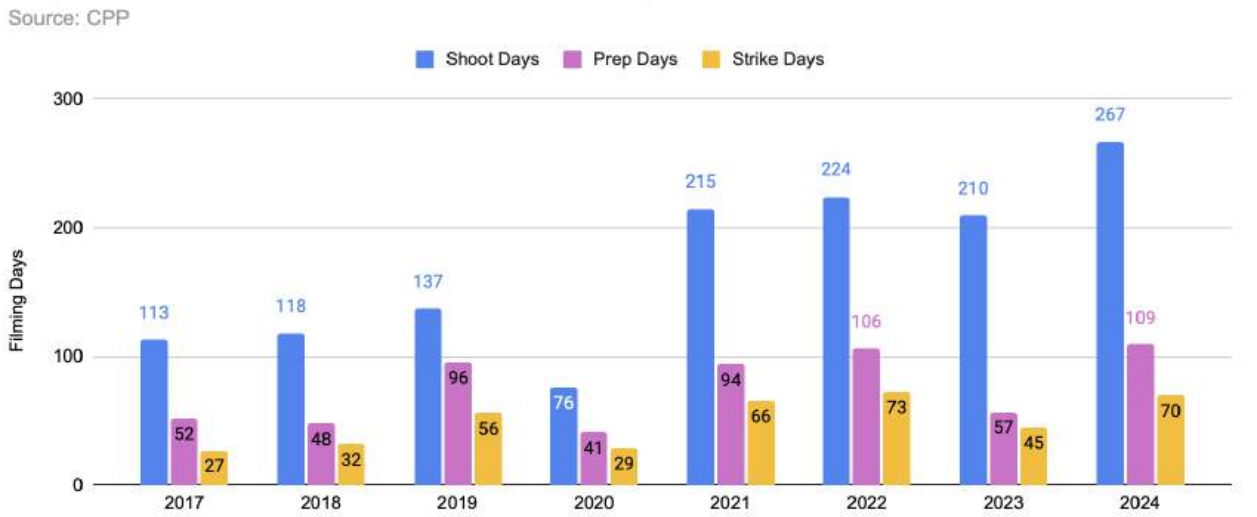
“You might have seen an email stating that your Canva account is being affiliated with Cal Poly Pomona Strategic Communications — and we understand how that could cause some confusion,” the email read. “The message you received was sent in error, and there’s no need to worry or take any action. Your account will not be affiliated with CPP Strategic Communications and an admin from CPP Strategic Communications will not control how you use Canva.”

Mia Healy, the Canva representative for StratComm and the account executive of higher education at Canva, said when a Canva customer is involved in an enterprise agreement of Canva, they are given access to single sign-on.

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Reach Gavin & Ryan at
managing@thepolypost.com

LANTERMAN: \$10M spent on salary, benefits



The number of days filming occurred on Lanternman between 2017-2024 including prep and strike days.

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In addition to public safety officers, CPP also employs campus maintenance personnel. Maintenance operations at Lanternman can either be handled by campus facilities employees or other vendors depending on the degree of specialization needed, according to Ceja. Since 2015, 68 employees across various areas have received benefits and salaries from stateside for work involving the site, according to public records.

According to KTLA, a University Police Department public safety specialist who was working at Lanternman was fatally stabbed in his car on Lanternman property in summer 2018 by another CPP employee, who was a part of the maintenance crew at Lanternman. He was later fatally shot by police.

Through a public records request, The Poly Post found CPP used more than 100 contractors to upkeep the site. It also found CPP used both Foundation Enterprises accounts and stateside funds, which refers to any financial support provided by the state to support the university, to pay these contractors.

Of these contractors, at least 11 consultants were contracted for work related to the site, including real estate and housing demand, environmental consulting, appraisal and legal services. The university contracted 10 of the consultants with stateside funds, which accounted for more than \$2 million in expenses.

Also, one of these consultants paid with stateside money and listed as a stateside employee is Benjamin Quillian, who previously served as the California State University system’s executive vice chancellor and chief financial officer before he quietly retired after an audit led to an investigation of “questionable travel expenses,” according to the Long Beach Post.

The documents The Poly Post acquired revealed CPP



Justin Beiber filmed his music video “Holy” in the now abandoned greenhouse on the Campus South property.

hired Quillian as a retired annuitant on the stateside, serving as part of the project management team for Lanternman.

“Cal Poly Pomona has maintained consistent project management oversight of the Lanternman Development project through the efforts of Dr. Ben Quillian, Ms. Roberta Achtenberg, as well as Mr. Jeff Marcowitz and Ms. Sonnet Hui, Project Management Advisors,” the official CPP page for the Lanternman site reported.

“As various initiatives were undertaken, dedicated working groups were established to ensure the successful completion of essential tasks.”

Of the remaining contractors listed in the report, 83 provided construction, maintenance, repairs and utilities on the Lanternman site between 2015 and 2023. CPP used more than \$5.7 million in stateside funds to pay for these services, which included plumbing, electrical, fencing and equipment repairs, concrete work, pest control and landscaping.

Furthermore, the utilities covered by these costs are electricity, gas, water, trash, sewage and phones.

According to Michelle Cardona, CPP’s associate vice president for financial services, the stateside fund that covers the cost of these contractors “operates on a

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First gen graduates credit family



GRAPHIC BY ALEXIS ALVAREZ

By **ALEXIS ALVAREZ**
Staff Writer

As finals week creeps up and the countdown for graduation starts, first-generation students say they are eager to finish their degrees and celebrate in May. While many students set to graduate might celebrate differently, most share the feeling of looking forward to commemorating their new milestone with family and friends. “Since I was a kid, I dreamed of going to college, and I dreamed of going further with my education and going to grad school and getting the highest degrees possible,” said Dajahnae Brown, a music student specializing in commercial vocal performance. “I just didn’t know that it was actually

possible for me because of where I came from.” Brown, who will be the first in her family to graduate from college, said it’s important her family will be with her to celebrate. She is looking forward to either eating Korean Barbecue or traditional soul food her mom cooks, such as smothered turkey wings, macaroni, yams and cornbread. “For my family, I think food is just one of the ways we have community with one another,” Brown said. “I feel like you could put all of your love languages into eating together.” Camille Tojin, a first-generation criminology student, looks forward to celebrating with her family by going to The Cheesecake Factory, the same place she went to when she

“I just didn’t know that it was actually possible for me because of where I came from.”
– Dajahnae Brown

graduated high school. Tojin said being the first in her family to graduate means a lot because she is the oldest granddaughter and daughter. “When I got my regalia, they were starting to get emotional,” Tojin said. “So did my Nina; she was crying. They’re really excited.” Tojin is grateful for her family’s support throughout college and wants to use her degree to make her family proud. Miguel Angel Geronimo

Guzman, a first-generation student majoring in computer science, said the way his family celebrates graduation is mainly kept as a surprise for him, but he is excited to be with his family from the states, and hopefully with his family from Mexico, in a big get-together. Guzman is looking forward to being with his family for the celebration because COVID-19 made it difficult to stay connected. “It’s an honor to be a

reason for our family to come together and be an example for other male cousins, my brothers, because I’m the oldest, to be an example for them,” Guzman said. “I graduated, and that higher education is something good that they can do to better themselves for the future.” Guzman is looking forward to his family cooking carne asada, which is thin slices of grilled beef marinated in lime juice and other seasonings, and ceviche, which is a seafood mix that can include crab and shrimp marinated in citrus juice, other vegetables and spices. He is also excited to participate in Raza Graduation, a cultural event to celebrate graduating Latinx students, held May 4. “I think it’s really cool that

setting is there because it feels more intimate,” Gomez said. “The official one by Cal Poly (Pomona), you just go up, get the thing where your certificate will go in, and then go sit back down, but for the CECACHE one, a person comes up to you and puts the serape on you.” Gomez also works for Male Success Initiatives, which will host a more intimate celebration where he will speak about his work and involvement in the program. More cultural commencements held at Cal Poly Pomona include Native Graduation; WRC Graduation; Lavender Graduation; Asian, Pacific Islander & Desi-American Graduation and Black Graduation.

Reach Alexis Alvarez at
ac@thepolypost.com



DAMARIZ AREVALO | THE POLY POST
Brew Master Eric Bassett explains the process of making beer during a brewery tour. The beer fermentation tanks convert sugar into alcohol and give the drink its carbonation.

IBW celebrates decade of craft

By **DAMARIZ AREVALO**
Staff Writer

Innovation Brew Works celebrated its 10-year anniversary with live music, brewery tours, new food and beers Saturday, April 30. Five new beers were showcased, including Prep Rally, a drink infused with Cal Poly Pomona grown Meyer lemons; Regenerative Studies made with Saison and CPP wild sage honey from the Lyle Center; Study Hall, a CPP orange juice mimosa seltzer base; and Bus Stop, a tangerine Indian Pale Ale with CPP grown pixie. Steven Mendoza, a crew member of IBW, explained the process to make new beers involves checking what the seasonal produce at CPP is and experimenting with what produce might pair well with the beer. They also go through the

creative process of relating the beer names to the life of a college student. Eric Bassett, the brewery operations manager, has been with Brew Works for eight years and has seen the growth of the brewery. He arrived early before the event started to set up and to celebrate the anniversary. “It’s crazy how 10 years flies by really quick,” Bassett said. “And the progression of the quality of both the food and beer and the interaction with the campus, students and different departments as well.” CPP Bronco Pep Band, CPP Jazz Combo, Ravenscrest and EKY’s World played live music at the event. The sound of the Bronco Pep Band was heard from the parking lot, and they played different popular songs such as “APT” by Rosé and Bruno Mars.

Bronco Pep Band director Manuel Gonzales, a mechanical engineering student, expressed playing at events has helped other students and himself to have a mental break from studying. Alfred Hernandez, a hospitality management student and member of the Cal Poly Rose Float club, attended the event to promote the club and said he enjoyed the experience. “I really like the music, especially the music right now that’s playing is a jazz kind of vibe,” Hernandez said. “I like the vibe, and it matches the gloomy kind of day.” Alan Chadwick is a plant science student and a member of CPP Apiary, which is a club about learning how to work with and tend to bees and how to make things with their honey.

Apiary is intertwined with one of the newest beers, which Innovation Brew Works showcased. “The energy is really good in here,” said Isabel Carrero, a communications coordinator for CPP Enterprises. “I love the live music and all the new beers. I’m going to try the Bus Stop, it’s a tangerine IPA, apparently. It’s really citrus heavy. I think they use the CPP forms of oranges with it, so I’m really excited to try it.” There was a 10-year IBW commemorative cup available to buy in addition to testers of the new beers, and guests who came to the event also had the option to take pictures at the photo booth with the IBW logo.

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Reach Damariz Arevalo at
ac@thepolypost.com

L.A. Times Festival of Books brings reading community together

By **Justine Sanchez**
Staff Writer

The LA Times Festival of Books is back, marking its 30th anniversary with a weekend long literary event at the University of Southern California campus. The country’s largest book festival offered book lovers plenty of new headlines across a variety of genres, as well as authors’ readings and signings. Each year, this free festival brings approximately 160,000 attendees of all ages, who explore a variety of topics, find new books and talk about them. “Literacy is so important, there are different organizations here to promote diversity and make reading fun and

accessible,” said Diana Bo, a volunteer and first-time attendee. “It’s nice that so many people are here because they love reading and sharing their stories.” Organizations such as Writers and Publishers Network serve the community and provide information, resources and opportunities for people involved or interested in publishing, whether they are an author, freelance writer, artist or own a publishing company. “Having thousands of people here under one intention, the love of books and the excitement of books, is amazing,” said Monique DeBose, a volunteer of Writers and Publishers Network.

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JUSTINE SANCHEZ | THE POLY POST

Among the many panels, authors and live readings, there are a variety of different activities for attendees to take part in to enjoy their time at the festival.

Preview: LA County Fair



ALEXIS ALVAREZ | THE POLY POST
The LA County Fair attracts approximately 750,000 guests annually. The fair presents slides, swings, ferris wheels, and a variety of food.

By **ALEXIS ALVAREZ**
Staff Writer

The Los Angeles County Fair returns to the Pomona Fairplex from May 2-26 and brings new food options and attractions for its 103rd anniversary. The theme for the 2025 Los Angeles County Fair is Art Unleashed, and according to Renee Hernandez, the director of communications, there are several hands-on activities such as an open art studio and clay throwing, which is done on a pottery wheel. Several LA County art institutions are hosting the activities, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA Opera, the Center Theater Group and the Getty Museum. Additionally, there is art from the LA Gallery and the Pomona Valley Association. Ray Cammack Shows is back with its carnival entertainment for the corporation's 39th LA County Fair and has four new rides, including three new roller coasters and a new swing that goes up 160 feet, according to Hernandez. There is also a new petting zoo with different

miniature animals such as horses, donkeys and cows. Keeping to its traditions, Hernandez said the highly anticipated food brings options everyone can enjoy. For vegan and vegetarian options, The Veggie Box offers a vegan empanada with a chimichurri and a mushroom-pulled-pork sandwich. For gluten-free options, Vartanian Concessions offers a turkey burger with a bacon jam and choice of gluten-free buns, as well as gluten-free corn dogs. Many of the vendors are offering classic food staples and new vendor items such as funnel cakes, chocolate covered strawberries, turkey legs stuffed with macaroni and cheese, pickle lemonade and dole whip floats. A new vendor available for its first LA County Fair is Disco Chicken, which offers items such as chicken sandwiches with a choice of classic or spicy, chicken and waffles and more. Some fan favorites are the spicy chicken sandwich, which includes hand-breaded chicken with jalapeños and additional flavor from their signature sauce, and

their chicken strips, which are also hand-breaded, according to Kayla Taggart, owner of Disco Chicken. "I'm really looking forward to the craziness and being able to share Disco Chicken and the theme, vibes and energy with people that come to the fair," Taggart said. To help save money, there are value meal passes where every concessionaire offers a meal for \$9.75. There are also discounted tickets and parking. All of the information can be found on the LA County Fair website, according to Hernandez.



ALEXIS ALVAREZ | THE POLY POST
Visitors of the LA County Fair can indulge in sweet, acidic Dole Whip. The cups are topped with a colorful paper umbrella.



JUSTINE SANCHEZ | THE POLY POST
Each booth set up has the option to purchase a book. Some tents have specific genres and others consist of a wide variety of books to choose from.

Books: A 30-year anniversary

Continued from Page 1

"This is where we belong." This festival serves as an opportunity for organizations to promote their goals and engage with the public, as well as provide an environment for up-and-coming voices to market themselves. At this year's Festival of Books, debut author Jason G. Waters set up his first booth to introduce his book "Sheldon Majors and The Chase" to the public. For Waters, the experience was more than just selling books, it was about stepping

into a new community of readers, writers and storytellers, as well as getting the chance to share a story of discovering who you are in the face of adversity, he poured his heart into. "I think it's important to make sure that stories are out there being told," Waters said. "People can read them and relate to them and find that they're not alone in whatever differences there are." Among the authors at the festival was also Sanman Thapa, a school counselor from New York City. His first published book, "A Fight for a Cup

of Chai," is based on his personal experiences as a factory worker in Nepal during the 1990s. The book details the labor struggles of South Asian factory workers during a period of social and political unrest. This struggle for better working conditions is represented in the workers' request for tea breaks, or a cup of tea, to help get them through grueling 12-hour shifts.

READ THIS ARTICLE IN FULL AT
[THEPOLYPOST.COM](https://thepolypost.com)

Reach Justine Sanchez at
ac@thepolypost.com

At The Hill section of the fair, visitors can find America Great Outdoors, which is a reptile house. The exhibit provides hands-on educational experiences about wild burros and California's park systems. The Hill has also crosscut sawing, where guests can saw their own piece of wood and brand it with their choice of imprints offered. Ben Garcia, lead for the crosscut saw demonstration, recommended the LA County Fair American Great Outdoors section for its family-friendly nature. He also recommended this section to people who like the outdoors or want to keep their children away

from technology for the day. "We have people coming back year after year," Garica said. "I've had one family. They've been coming back for 21 years. It's something that you never forget."



ALEXIS ALVAREZ | THE POLY POST
The petting zoo at the LA County Fair offers the chance to interact with sheep. Handwashing stations are available near the entrance.



BRYAN DOAN | THE POLY POST
Chan's Eatery is a fair food stand that serves Korean fruity pebble and ramen corn dogs. It recently added iced ube coffee to its menu.

Reach Alexis Alvarez at
ac@thepolypost.com

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Stay on Track for Your TAKE 30

Spring has sprung

Super bloom arrives in Chino Hills State Park

By **Adriana Flores Solis**
Staff Writer

The arrival of spring brings flower blooms to Southern California parks like Chino Hills State Park, which provides a scenic getaway with vibrant hillsides and native California plants. It is only a 20-minute drive from Cal Poly Pomona.

The hills are covered in black mustard and wild radish, which gives them a green and gold look from afar. California Poppies, red maids, Canterbury bells and Arroyo Lupine are some of the plants that can be found throughout the park.

Chino Hills State Park is colorful at this time of year because of recent rainfall and cold temperatures. Throughout the summertime, the park is dry because of heat and a lack of rain.

Joel Mwathi, a civil engineering student and resident of Diamond Bar, said he frequently visits Chino Hills State Park.

“I like the green hills around it, especially when you go up on the peak and you see all the space around,” Mwathi said. “I feel like it’s a cool place to take a break and relax. It’s a pretty calm and peaceful spot.”

Free street parking is available before reaching the main entrance. The street is in a residential area, so parallel parking is required. Visitors can also park inside the grounds for \$10. A park ranger is available at the kiosk during regular park hours.

If visitors choose to park on the street, it is about a mile hike up Bane Canyon Road before reaching the

kiosk and hiking trails. Cars, pedestrians, bikers and horseback riders shared the road leading up the hill. It is very narrow and steep, so caution is advised when driving or walking up the road.

The road up is scenic, featuring a variety of California Sycamore and Oak trees, with a view of the city and the grass covered mountains.

The park also has a campsite, where visitors can reserve a spot online or in-person at the visitor center.



With about 19 trails available, there’s a trail for everyone. The most popular are the Discovery Trail, Telegraph Canyon Trail, Bane Ridge Trail and Aliso Canyon Trail.

As the end of the semester approaches, hiking is a way for students to take a break from academics and enjoy the greater outdoors.

The benefits of hiking are not only physical, but they can also better one’s emotional wellness, according to the National Library of Medicine.

Britney Monsalvo, an aerospace engineering student, is an avid hiker and camper. Although

she has not visited Chino Hills State Park, it’s a top location on her bucket list.

“I enjoy being out in nature and exploring the wilderness because it’s such a relieving disconnect from school,” Monsalvo said. “My favorite local hiking spot would have to be Bridge to Nowhere in Azusa. It’s such a pretty hike, and when you hike after a rainy season, the water is so blue and beautiful.”

Daisy Pedroza-Diaz, a kinesiology student, recently visited Chino Hills State Park after seeing the location trending on social media.

“It can be a really interesting hike, as many of the paths trail off to more paths,” Pedroza said. “I like that there are many hills that allow you to oversee the full scenery, and the different paths make it a different experience each time.”

There are plenty of other locations to visit and see California wildflowers and hiking trails. Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve and Placerita Canyon State Park are two parks located in Southern California that also feature hiking trails and a variety of plants and flowers.

The park’s website brochure provides a list of helpful tips and regulations to keep both the land and visitors safe when visiting. There is also signage posted throughout the park to remind visitors about these safety rules.


The Chino Hills State Park is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. – 7 a.m. now through September.

Reach **Adriana Flores Solis** at ac@thepolypost.com



ADRIANA SOLIS FLORES | THE POLY POST
The trail paths are covered in black mustard, a tall, yellow plant not native to California.


Top 5: Graduation photo spots on campus



CHRISTIAN MAGDALENO | THE POLY POST

Rose Garden


Located across from the CLA Building, the Rose Garden is a well-known place on campus with over 230 types of flowers, such as white and yellow roses, daisies and a lavender walkway that leads guests toward the gazebo.



ADRIANA FLORES SOLIS | THE POLY POST

Aratani Japanese Garden


The Japanese Garden is right across University Drive from the Rose Garden. There are two koi fishponds and two small bridges. Plenty of shade is available, as well as an elevated surface that overlooks the entire garden.



ADRIANA FLORES SOLIS | THE POLY POST

University Plaza Fountain


University Plaza, also referred to as the Old Horse Stables, features two locations that graduates utilize for special-occasion photographs.



ADRIANA FLORES SOLIS | THE POLY POST

University Plaza Archway

The CPP archway is at the exterior part of the University Plaza, a close distance to the plaza fountain.



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The Bronco Statue

The Bronco statue has been an iconic part of campus since 2014. The statue is located next to Kellogg Arena and is across from the Bronco Recreation and Intramural Complex.

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It's hard to be excited for future prospects as we approach graduation with the state of our country in limbo.

The Trump administration's constant attacks on immigrants, higher education, diversity, equity, and inclusion and the American people themselves have turned this exciting time sour, and the lack of response from the campus administration is nothing short of abhorrent.

Cal Poly Pomona is a Hispanic-serving institution. With that designation, university officials have a responsibility to our students to address fears, concerns and questions. Instead, there is a lack of information coming from campus administration. President Soraya M. Coley, along with over 100 other university presidents, signed a letter in April condemning the government overreach and higher education. What would normally be a meaningful and symbolic gesture is overshadowed by the fact that the university never told students that this happened and has yet to



GRAPHIC BY CONNOR LÁLEA HAMPTON

hold any form of dialogue with the students.

Well, some might argue that not all good acts need publicity. We must push back and ask our university to loudly and publicly back students. A letter signed silently is nothing more than shouting into wind.

There have been no emails telling students where to go or who to reach out to. The last email sent March 28, that gave students anything of note, was prior to spring break advised international students not to travel home. Due to budget cuts in the

California State University system, some professors won't speak to the media or choose to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation or losing their job.

The International Center staff have been advised not to speak to the press. The center has not published any public information for students related to students who had their visas revoked or now what's happening to the students who had their visas revoked and then returned back to them over a random weekend. Campus administration

offered little to students in terms of information. The campus website claims the university offers "hands-on experiences that address real-life challenges," yet the university itself will not address real-life challenges like those faced by their students

As we prepare to walk across the stage in two weeks, students will face some of the worst economic prospects in history.

The state of the world, specifically our country, is becoming more and more concerning with each

passing day. It is all too clear the federal government, and even some state-elected officials, are not acting in the best interest of the American people.

It is even more disheartening to know campus administration, the people who are supposed to ensure academic freedom and embody progression, are remaining silent.

In our time with The Poly Post, we have been critical of the current administration on campus, and as we know, that time is coming to a close. And while we still argue the

campus administration still has many flaws, we compel them to work in the best interest of students and to ensure academic freedom and freedom of speech.

Fellow students and graduates, as we progress forward in some of the most tumultuous times in our country's history, we, too, need to stand up as protectors of each other's rights and freedoms. Everyone deserves the right to be educated without fear.

In the coming weeks, we will be bombarded with Coley's last commencement speeches.

We will hear a bombardment of pleasantries. The focus will remain solely on our achievement and success, with a focused vigor that this is something we as students should be proud of and look forward to in our academic careers. We cannot let that distract us.

As graduates, we will be going out into the world, transitioning into our first jobs.

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COMMENCEMENT IS A RIP-OFF



GRAPHIC BY CONNOR LÁLEA HAMPTON

Celebrate grads; don't scam them

BY GAVIN CLAIBORNE
Copy Editor

It's that time of year again. Graduating students have started purchasing their regalia in preparation for their moment in time as commencement ceremonies are just around the corner. What a scam.

According to Cal Poly Pomona's FAQ page for the spring 2025 commencement, students who choose to participate in commencement "must wear the approved CPP cap and gown with sash, and tassel assigned to your college or degree."

The price of the Complete Bachelors Package, the most basic package consisting of all the items students need as required to participate in commencement, is listed at \$79.95 (excluding taxes) on the Bronco Bookstore's website. So basically, the

minimum I have to pay to join my peers and walk at commencement is \$80. As an undergraduate student, there are a million more valuable things I could think of spending \$80 on as part of a celebration.

I could literally go to my nearest Uniqlo and purchase a couple of graphic T-shirts for roughly \$25 a piece — and in some cases, even less — and wear them on a weekly basis. But my university expects me to pay \$80 minimum for clothing I'm likely only going to wear once for about four hours. Great. How logical. That makes perfect sense.

It's also important to note this \$80-minimum price tag doesn't apply to graduate students. The least they'd have to give up to participate in commencement, at least at CPP, is roughly \$100. In essence, graduate students are required to spend more

than undergraduate students to participate in the same exact ceremony. That seems like an excellent way for CPP to reward those who've worked hard and dedicated time out of their lives to earn a master's degree.

For many college students, the struggle is real. We are not money-spawning beings who can use our mythical funds to purchase every leisure our studious and unstudious heart's desire.

Don't take my word for it, though. I'm not the only guy who holds this sentiment, apparently. Go check out some Reddit forums. You'll see what I mean.

"CPP just emailed about buying caps and gowns however the prices are so expensive even if I just buy the cap, gown, tassel, and stoles," a CPP student posted on the university's subreddit

The same student then asked fellow users

if purchasing non-CPP-approved regalia from Amazon would suffice for commencement, and several commenters expressed approval.

"I recycled my cap and gown from my community college and had 0 issues! I only purchased the tassel & sashes. You should be fine with the Amazon one," a commenter posted as a reply to the main subreddit post.

"I bought mine from Amazon, you'll be fine (already graduated). Arguably, you could buy the same color tassels on Amazon too," said another commenter.

This issue isn't a CPP-specific issue, either. It's a college issue.

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Reach Gavin Claiborne at
editor@thepolypost.com

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ADVERTISING OFFICE

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BUSINESS OFFICE

(909) 869-5483

BUSINESS FAX NUMBER

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EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

(909) 869-3530

EDITOR

editor@thepolypost.com

MANAGING EDITOR

managing@thepolypost.com

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

ac@thepolypost.com

SPORTS EDITOR

sports@thepolypost.com

COPY EDITOR

copy@thepolypost.com

PHOTO EDITOR

photo@thepolypost.com

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video@thepolypost.com

WEB EDITOR

web@thepolypost.com

ADVERTISING

advertise@thepolypost.com

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Letters should run between 250 and 500 words and may be edited for accuracy, clarity, length, style and libel. Cartoons should only be drawn on white paper, not lined paper. All submissions should not exceed 8 by 10 inches and must include the author's full name, telephone number and other relevant information, such as class standing, major and place of residence.

Visit www.thepolypost.com for more submission details.

Los Angeles Angels honor women's soccer at CPP Night



COURTESY OF CPPATHLETICS

Broncos' women's soccer head coach Jay Mason, who won West Region and National Coach of the Year, celebrates alongside National Player of the Year and CPP Female Athlete of the Year, Tara Oper.

BY LENA MORENO
Staff Writer

The Cal Poly Pomona women's soccer team was honored at Angel Stadium in celebration of its first NCAA Division II National Championship win.

The game was held on Cal Poly Pomona Night, where the Angels played against the Pittsburgh Pirates on April 23.

CPP affiliated attendees, such as alumni, students and faculty, received a co-branded CPP/Angels hat as part of the annual university event.

The 2024 women's soccer team, including the coaching and supporting staff, walked out onto the field together and was introduced to the stadium before the start of the game.

Head coach Jay Mason threw out the honorary first pitch to the Angels' current batting practice pitcher, Mike Ashman.

Ashman is a former Oakland Athletics and Pirates player, a CPP baseball player, alumnus and was CPP's head baseball coach from 1996-2010.

Notably, in 1980, Ashman was involved in the Division II National Championship with the men's baseball team.

"It's just great to know that he's still really connected with the university and some of the current administration there," Mason said. "It just shows the lasting impact that we can make after we leave this place, especially for our student-athletes."

Assistant coach Daniel Richards and volunteer assistant coach Andy Gutierrez were featured with Mason on the stadium's jumbo screens.

Alongside them was forward Tara Oper, who presented the NCAA trophy on behalf of the team's reigning success.

Oper described the night

as a surreal experience, stating how rewarding it felt to deliver the team's first national championship, fulfilling a lifelong dream of hers since she was young.

The coaching staff selected Oper to present the trophy because of her hardworking contributions over the last three seasons since joining as a transfer student after her freshman year.

"Her kind of desire to continue pushing herself to achieve and then obviously this last year as a senior, she had an unbelievable season," Richards said.

Oper has earned multiple honors throughout the course of the season, including the All-American and Division II Player of the Year.

Oper credits her teammates' transparency for being a contributing motivator throughout the season.

Having balance on and off

the field led to a season full of laughter and close bonds as opposed to rivalry, unifying the team as a whole, she said.

"Whether you had 80% that day, you give your full 80% and your teammates will be there to support you and get your back," Oper said. "And if you are feeling 100% that day, how can you push your teammates to get better and get their back?"

As for the coaching staff, it was always more than just receiving a trophy — it was about leaving a new legacy with their first championship.

Richards said the women's soccer program is built on community and resilience, a quality Oper affirms that has helped the team thrive and pursue excellence.

"Although this is the first year we've won it, we've been competing against top schools day-in, day-out, year after year from our conference and from

our region," Richards said. "Maybe some people didn't know how strong of a program we were just based on not getting a chance to see us on the national stage based on the region we were coming from."

Having the team honored at Angel Stadium was more than just recognition.

According to Mason, it reflected all the hard work and effort put behind the scenes people don't see

while they're in attendance at a game.

"They only get to see the game and the moment where it happens," Mason said. "For them to be honored was just really special for them to be on the field for them and their families. It's something they'll cherish for a long time."

Reach Lena Moreno at
sports@thepolypost.com



COURTESY OF CPPATHLETICS

Women's soccer head coach Jay Mason throws the honorary first pitch at Angels Stadium to CPP alumnus and current Angels batting practice pitcher Mike Ashman.

Broncos' Johnny Pappas becomes all-time runs scoring leader



COURTESY OF CPPATHLETICS

Johnny Pappas breaks a 38-year-old program record to become the all-time runs scoring leader with 169, but ends his career with 176.

BY JACOB RODRIGUEZ
Staff Writer

Broncos' baseball catcher Johnny Pappas cemented himself into the record books when he broke the all-time runs scored record with his 169th career run in the game against San Francisco State April 12, breaking the 38-year-old record set previously by Tom Weeks with 168 runs scored.

His teammates believed

he could break the record before the season even started. With each run Pappas scored, that reality was closing in.

He reflected on the moment when he broke the record, as infielder Julian Angulo hit a single into left field, bringing the opportunity for Pappas to score.

"As I'm rounding third to score, everybody, I could just hear them in the dugout just

screaming at me to 'run, run, run,' and I scored," Pappas said. "My favorite part of the whole thing was I looked up and saw every person I wanted to be there was in front of the dugout, just as excited as I was for it."

The Chino Hills native started his journey when he was 5 years old.

His parents signed him up to play T-ball, and Pappas said, "It's been baseball every year since."

Growing up, Pappas wanted to be a college professor and teach biology, getting his bachelor's degree and now pursuing his master's degree.

When Pappas isn't on the field, in the gym or in the classroom, he is either playing golf or bowling with his father, finding new music to listen to or playing video games, especially MLB The Show.

See PAPPAS / Page 11

Distance runners set the pace at Mt. SAC relays



The CPP women's track-and-field team secures its fourth consecutive CCAA Conference Championship, while the men's team records a second-place victory. COURTESY OF CPPATHLETICS

BY CESAR RIVAS
Staff Writer

With the Cal Poly Pomona track-and-field regular season coming to a close, it was the distance runners that stole the show at the Mt. SAC Relays April 17-19. The Broncos saw 14 personal records, six new entries to the CPP Top 10 and 14 NCAA Provo marks hit within both the men's and women's teams.

Some athletes on the women's team included a fourth-place finish from Vivian Martinez in the 5,000-meter race, as well as Galilea Jimenez in the 3000-meter steeplechase. Jade Kingston and Paige Moore finished and sixth and seventh in the 10,000-meter race.

Martinez spoke about setting a new personal record, as well as landing herself within the CPP Top 10 for the 5k. "I did have a PR, only by a second, but with the help of my support system, I learned that you can never be mad with a PR," Martinez said. "I was super happy about my performance, and I think I have a lot more left in the tank to get close to the 40-year-standing women's

5k record." Neshara Smith continues to put up Provo times that landed her within the CPP Top 10 in the 100-meter hurdles.

Samira Stevenson, Jessica James, Ta'ahjah Fann and Hannah Luster also placed themselves in the CPP Top 10 in the 4x100 meter relay race.

On the men's side, Collin Joyce and Isaiah Bond placed second and third, while also hitting an NCAA Provo mark in the triple jump.

Nnamdi Onwaeze and Alessio Sammacal also hit Provo marks in the 110-meter hurdles, while Tom McDonnell and Ricardo Vargas also placed second and third and set new personal records in the 10K.

"Ricardo and I helped each other out, and it ended up working out pretty well, keeping us on check for pace," McDonnell said. "I would take one lap and then he would take the next lap and kind of do that trade off when we'd start feeling it slow down, and we'd pick it back up and work off of each other. It was really helpful."

Despite track being an individual sport and having

a racer mindset, McDonnell credits all his teammates that helped him and Vargas finish second and third in their event.

Assistant head coach and distance coach Wes Ashford said the team is starting to reach its full potential. "They're coming along really well," Ashford said. "It shows that the hard work that they're putting in is starting to pay off in their races."

The Broncos' last chances to qualify and prepare for the NCAA DII Outdoor Championships May 22-24 are the CCAA Championship

in two weeks from May 1-3 and the Last Chance Qualifiers for regionals taking place May 9-10 at Azuza Pacific University and May 11 at Cal State LA.

"Conference championships are next up, so we're just getting our minds right, ready to compete and to try to win some conference championships, individual conference championships, as well as the team conference championship," Ashford said.

Reach Cesar Rivas at sports@thepolypost.com

SMITH HURDLES INTO NCAA INDOOR NATIONALS

BY ISAAC COX
Staff Writer

Neshara Smith finished third in the nation with a time of 8.33 seconds during the 60-meter hurdles race at the NCAA Division II Indoor Track & Field Championship in her first season on the Cal Poly Pomona women's track & field team.

"I knew it was going to be a strain to try and get first, but I knew I wasn't getting anything less than top five," Smith said. "Just to prove to myself in the prelims that I am standing at No. 3 overall, and I'm going to keep that spot. I refuse to get anything lower."

Women's track and field assistant coach Ian Jennings said when Smith crossed the finish line during the DII Championships in Indianapolis, she had a smile on her face and tears of joy in her eyes because of all the hard work she's put in to eventually qualify for the invitational and becoming an All-American.

These weren't the first of Smith's accolades during her first season. She was also named Athlete of the Week honors and holds the school records for indoor long jump, indoor 60-meter hurdles and indoor pentathlon.

Smith, who has been training since she was 3, said her faith, family, coaches and teammates have played a significant role in her journey.

Neshara Smith qualifies for the NCAA Outdoor Tournament with a Provo time of 13.84 seconds in the 100-meter hurdles, simultaneously recording a CPP Top 10 program record.

"I prayed, and my meet-day music is church music," Smith said. "I would not be here where I am without the Lord."

The coaches, according to Smith, were the main reason why she committed to CPP. She also emphasized how meaningful it was for Jennings to attend the invitational with her.

"He was so happy," Smith said. "He was happy that both (of) our hard work paid off, and he was ecstatic. I cried because I was grateful."

Sprinter and middle-distance runner Yasmeen Delgado said Smith is a competitor, expects a lot from herself, and the hard work shows from the results.

"She's pretty motivating," Delgado said. "You will always know where Nene's at because you can hear her yelling. And she is an extremely hard worker."



COURTESY OF CPPATHLETICS

READ THIS ARTICLE IN FULL AT [THEPOLYPOST.COM](https://thepolypost.com)

Reach Isaac Cox at sports@thepolypost.com



Vivian Martinez runs her way through life's obstacles

BY ISAAC COX
Staff Writer

Track-and-field has become a pathway to success for many student-athletes, including Cal Poly Pomona's own Vivian Martinez.

Martinez currently holds records in multiple events, such as the indoor mile, the 3,000-meter and the outdoor 4x800 relay race that has stood since 1992.

Martinez also became the California Collegiate Athletic Association Women's Track Athlete of the Week when she placed second in the 1,500-meter race at the Pomona-Pitzer Track & Field Invite April 15.

"It's just so surreal, and I'm finally being seen for who I am," Martinez said. "I'm excited to see what else I can do because I feel like I still have a lot more to give and show everyone the things that I have."

CPP pole vaulter Isabelle Carreon gave insight into Martinez's personality and leadership.

"She's been a great leader for everybody on the team,"

Carreon said. "Vivian is extremely humble, and I think it's really awesome to see. She's just a phenomenal athlete, and to see all the hard work that she puts in and to remain humble as she is, it's really inspiring to all of her teammates."

Martinez not only shows grit and determination on the field, but she is also a vocal leader to her teammates and everyone around her, according to her teammates. She still has more to show and give as the season winds down. She wants to qualify for nationals for the 15K and 5K races.

Growing up, Martinez participated in many different sports. She started off with cheer, dance, volleyball, basketball, cross-country and then flag football. She said each sport shaped who she is today, not only as a human being but also on the track field.

One of the most challenging parts in Martinez's life was bouncing between four different high schools, trying to find the right fit for her and her

siblings, and her mom wanted them to get an education outside of South Central Los Angeles.

In the process of finally settling there, Martinez met Julia Butler, a current distance runner on the women's track-and-field team.

Butler said Martinez has been an important part of her life — since their time together in high school to now at CPP.

"I've been lucky enough to actually have Vivian as a teammate for more than our college experience," Butler said. "We went to the same high school for a bit of time, so I've got to really get to know her over the years, and she's always been such a driving force on our team."

As a highly motivated student-athlete, Martinez said her family keeps her focused through the ups and downs.

READ THIS ARTICLE IN FULL AT [THEPOLYPOST.COM](https://thepolypost.com)

Reach Isaac Cox at sports@thepolypost.com

Superstition or coincidence?

How Dylan Esquivel’s lucky dime led to shutout



Left-handed pitcher Dylan Esquivel boasts a career 83 strikeouts, with 48 being recorded in the 2025 season. COURTESY OF CPPATHLETICS

BY CHRISTIAN MAGDALENO
Sports Editor

Broncos left-handed pitcher Dylan Esquivel approached the mound to face reigning CCAA champions the Monterey Bay Otters at home. It was a routine evening for the veteran lefty. He wore his familiar white jersey on the same mound he’s pitched the last three years. Everything was the same, except for one small trick in his back pocket — his lucky dime.

Whether it’s superstition or coincidence, this dime stayed with him the rest of the night as he pitched a complete game shutout against the Otters, earning him the FloCollege/CCAA and National Collegiate

Baseball Writers Association West Region Player of the Week for Feb. 17-23.

Esquivel recorded six strikeouts throughout the night, while only giving up six hits and one walk in his seven-inning appearance allowing the Broncos to come out on top 6-0.

“It was one of the most exciting moments of my career,” Esquivel said. “I worked really hard for that moment, so it was really nice to see it pay off.”

He said one of the most rewarding aspects of his accomplishment was seeing his picture on the school’s banners and social media platforms.

Esquivel also expressed how satisfying it was to see his team come back

following a loss in the team’s first game in that day’s doubleheader.

In that first game, the Broncos fell short despite having a 7-5 lead going into the ninth inning, which turned out to be a 4-run inning for the Otters.

The Broncos returned for game two that evening with Esquivel leading the team on the mound.

Esquivel gave up one hit of the game early in the first inning but pitched 1-2-3 out innings until the fifth inning when he walked one Otter.

The sixth inning proved to be one of the most productive innings for the Otters as they collected two hits but were unable to capitalize leaving two runners stranded.

While it was a successful

night for Esquivel, he detailed how his lucky dime came into his arsenal.

“It was a week before season started and my family kept finding dimes on the floor, and we were all confused and scared for a little bit,” Esquivel said. “We were like ‘Why are all these dimes coming out of nowhere?’”

He continued to find dimes into the next week when the Broncos faced The Master’s University, where his teammate Andrew Campbell found the lucky dime in Esquivel’s bag.

“It was pretty freaky, so I put it in my back pocket, and I ended up pitching really good that day,” Esquivel said.

In his five innings pitched against The Master’s, he struck out seven batters while only allowing three hits and 2 runs during the away matchup Feb. 15.

Esquivel held The Master’s hitless until the bottom of the fifth inning, giving up a single and two hits later in the sixth, ending his outing on the mound.

Since picking up his lucky dime, Esquivel amassed 48 strikeouts in 51 innings pitched, making him the No. 13 ranked pitcher in the CCAA for strikeouts.

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Reach Christian Magdaleno at sports@thepolypost.com

PAPPAS: Leads program in runs

Continued from Page 9

Baseball head coach Randy Betten highlighted Pappas’ leadership on and off the field to bring the best out of others around him, whether in practice or a game.

“He’s unbelievable,” Betten said. “You know I’ve seen him grow up in this program. He’s been here forever. Just to have him break that record is pretty incredible. As a student-athlete, he epitomizes what a championship-type player is. I’m proud that he’s going to hold that record for a long time.”

Broncos’ outfielder Brent Cota and infielder Beau Betten both agreed having great chemistry with their teammates off the field reflects on their performances on the field.

“He’s a bulldog,” Cota said. “He’ll get in your face. He’s the guy everyone looks to. He knows the game, how to bring you up when you’re down and how to bring you back down to earth if things are going too well. It’s awesome to share the field with him.”

Beau Betten reflected on what it has been like to play with Pappas the past few years.

“Johnny is one of the best guys and teammates I’ve ever played with,” Beau Betten said.

Pappas considered attending Cal Poly Pomona since he was in middle school when he was on a traveling baseball team. Assistant coach Jenzen Torres was a coach on the team while playing for the Broncos.

Pappas continued to hone his craft as an athlete, which carried over to his time at Ayala High School.

In his junior and senior years, Pappas earned All-Palomares League second and first-team honors and broke the program’s record for single-season RBIs.

According to Pappas, one of the biggest reasons for choosing CPP was its history of success in the program and wanting to bring more success to it.

“By the time my senior year came, I was assigned to be a Bronco,” Pappas said. “It was a dream come true, like it was literally my dream of a little kid, and as I got closer and closer to actually getting into college, I was like, ‘Yeah, this is the place I want to be,’ not just for baseball but for school.”

Since coming to campus in the fall of 2019, Pappas has become one of the program’s most decorated players in recent memory.

Among his many accolades, some of the most notable include being a three-time All-CCAA honoree, a two-time All-West Region honoree and the first-ever CPP male Iron Bronco last spring.

READ THIS ARTICLE IN FULL AT THEPOLYPOST.COM

Reach Jacob Rodriguez at sports@thepolypost.com

2025 Graduate

MIA Iglesias

Congratulations on your graduation! Your hard work and dedication are truly inspiring. Wishing you continued success in all you pursue.

♥ Love, PPM ♥

Gavin

Watching you grow into the thoughtful and passionate young man you are today has been one of the greatest joys of my life.

Your graduation is more than a milestone. As you step out into the world always seek the truth with courage, speak with clarity, and write what is in your heart with purpose. Use your voice to illuminate, challenge, and inspire. The world needs honest, fearless storytellers just like you.

No matter how far your dreams take you, remember that you'll always have someone in your corner cheering you on. I'm so proud of the man you've become and excited for everything that lies ahead.

With all my love and faith in you and your journey, Mom

Congrats

Lauren

We’re incredibly proud and grateful to have had you apart of The Poly Post team these past four years.

Your talent has truly made an impact.

Wishing you all the best on your next chapter!

You’ll be deeply missed!

The Victoria Times

PETERBOROUGH EDITION • 16 April 2025 • FREE

SHE JUST GRADUATED!

The newest intern to arrive in Washington D.C., Victoria Mejicanos has finally obtained her baccalaureate degree and has lots to look forward to. When she returns in July, she will be back on the job market ready for her next opportunity. She shared the journey would not be possible without the support of family, friends and colleagues. “I am so incredibly grateful for the love and support of the people around me, and hope to one day be able to repay every single person for their help,” Mejicanos said. To all those who have ever doubted me, thank you.” She said she plans to obtain a masters degree in the near future after gaining industrv experience.

CONGRATULATIONS!

2025

Graduate


Matt,

I've watched you give your all to this dream-through long nights, early mornings, and every challenge along the way. I've seen your determination, your heart, and your strength in everything you do.

As you graduate as an engineer, know that you've already achieved something remarkable-not just through your studies, but through your perseverance, character, and purpose.

I am endlessly proud of the man you are and all you are becoming.



With all my love, Mom



FUTURE

DESIGNER

Genevieve C



→ Congratulations! I love you ♡
Everyone is so proud of you.
Can't wait to see what is next.




Congratulations Masline!
-FROM CRISTIAN "ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS"

Ain't Nothing Gonna Break My Stride

Congratulations

On your Master's Degree



Jared Buck

We Are Proud of You!
Mom & Dad



Congratulations

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