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## Vista: February 4, 2021

University of San Diego

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The Official Student Newspaper of the University of San Diego since 1968

# THE USD VISTA

## Academic integrity violations on the rise at USD

*USD's interim vice provost sent out a mass email addressing the rise of cheating during a global pandemic*

TYLER PUGMIRE  
NEWS EDITOR

On the first day of the Spring 2021 semester, Roger Pace, Ph.D., interim vice

provost, sent an email to the USD student body regarding an increase of academic integrity infractions that have happened since shifting to an online learning format.

In the fall semester of

2020, the first remote learning semester, there were a total of 32 academic integrity violations reported to the office of the provost, according to Dr. Pace. This was an increase from 23 infractions in Spring 2020, and is more than 400% increase from the five cases in the Fall semester of 2019, the last semester to be fully in-person.

These numbers are likely lower than the actual count of students that have been caught by professors because some professors refrain from reporting to administrators and prefer to handle the situation independently. This has become a problem for administration because they are finding it more difficult to find serial violators of the academic integrity policy, according to Pace.

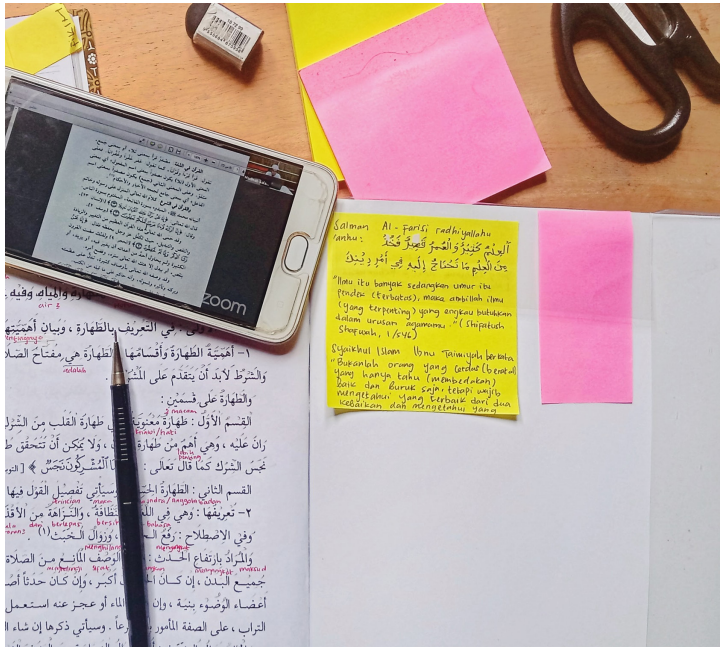
Plagiarism has been the most prominent form of violation to the academic integrity guidelines, followed closely by using third-party

websites for exam answers, he said.

Cases have risen at universities across the globe, with as many as 100 cases of cheating at the University of British Columbia on a single math midterm, as well as at Texas State University where there has been a 33% increase of cheating cases reported. As stated in an email sent to the student body, the main offense at TSU comes in the form of visiting third-party websites during exams in order to find answers.

One of the more popular websites students look to for homework and test answers is Chegg, which has begun reporting to universities if they suspect foul use on their website. Chegg's stock price has tripled since the COVID-19 lockdowns and classroom restrictions that began Mar. 13, 2020.

[See Dishonesty, Page 2](#)



Academic dishonesty rose by over 400% from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020. Photo courtesy of Wulan Sari/Unsplash

## Toreros fall to No. 1 Zags, 90-62

*Sullivan's 16 points among silver linings as USD makes Gonzaga bend, not break*

ERIC BOOSE  
SPORTS EDITOR

After the first ten minutes of Thursday night's game, the University of San Diego men's basketball team held a five-point lead against the top-ranked Gonzaga Bulldogs, but that would be the best they could do. The visiting Zags scored 15 unanswered points to take the lead before cruising to a 28-point victory, continuing their unbeaten start to the season and handing the Toreros a seventh loss in just nine games.

Despite being heavy underdogs, San Diego was the stronger of the two teams in the early stages of the game, holding GU to five points in as many minutes. And, while the Toreros

were taking good shots and out-scoring the visitors early, head coach Sam Scholl attributed his team's strong start more to their ability to stop the Bulldogs.

"We were doing a really good job in transition defense," Scholl said. "(Gonzaga) are so powerful, and they can score in so many ways, and they are so fast and explosive scoring in transition. I felt like we did a great job of not letting them have any transition points, we did a great job of no second-chance points, no offensive rebounds, we had five guys really determined in their role to get rebounds to finish possessions."

But the Toreros could not keep the Bulldogs' potent offense down forever. A collection of turnovers and fouls did not help. After a strong start to the game,

Torero mistakes helped the Zags build momentum and find more scoring opportunities.

"We just had some what we call 'atomic bomb turnovers' or 'runout turnovers,' where we turn it over and it leads to a breakaway dunk or layup,

where you're just handing them points," Scholl said. "So, we felt like we gave them nine points in the first half, just on our own self-inflicted mistakes. When you're trying to beat the number one team in the country, and our

[See Gonzaga, Page 11](#)



Finn Sullivan led the Toreros' offense, finishing with 16 points and six assists. Photo courtesy of Chad Cushing/USD Athletics

### Editorial: Beyond bid day

HALLIE WILTSHIRE  
ASST. OPINION EDITOR

When thinking of the college experience, one of the first ideas that comes to mind is Greek life. Across the United States, nine million college students are members of Greek organizations. However, for many, the words "sorority" and "fraternity" hold a negative connotation. The portrayal of sororities and fraternities in popular culture is of, at their best, party- and social-based organizations, and at their worst, racist and elitist organizations that promote alcoholism and sexual violence.

With 26% of USD's student body participating in Fraternity & Sorority Life (FSL), the presence of such organizations is ubiquitous. It is nearly impossible to scroll through Instagram without seeing at least one post about a Greek life event. Despite the significant levels of participation, most members of FSL claim that USD's Greek system is different from other larger universities. Although this may be true on some level — as USD does not have FSL housing, which often acts as the epicenter of deplorable behavior — the toxicity that is ingrained in the Greek system at large still persists.

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#### Spring semester changes

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#### Twitter blocks Trump

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# NEWS

## Honor code infractions climb during online learning

*Cases of cheating have increased by over 400% as USD announces another semester of remote learning until further notice*

### Dishonesty from Page 1

These violations occur more often in the STEM departments because most exam questions are based on formulas and numbers, whereas an English or philosophy exam comes in the form of essay

answers, according to Pace.

USD professors have been notified through the college deans that these infractions are on the rise, and have been asked to come up with their own questions, as opposed to those from a textbook.

“We are hoping for a grassroots effort, where faculty can encourage students (to take their exams without any outside help),” Pace said. “We are not recommending the use of the Respondus Lockdown Browser,

and we know that there are concerns from students about privacy there.”

times, it seems as though most of the cheating comes from a “time crunch” as Pace says. He also

**“We are not recommending the use of the Respondus Lockdown Browser, and we know that there are concerns from students about privacy there.”**

**- Roger Pace, Ph.D.**



Cases of cheating have risen at universities across America as they navigate online learning.

Tyler Pugmire/The USD Vista

Administrators aimed to alleviate the urge to cheat on exams by sending out the mass email, and do not plan on sending another blanket statement to the student body, but are exploring other ways to encourage honest learning.

“My goal with the email was to motivate students to rethink how they’re approaching it and even though that there may be easy ways around the work, that is never an adequate substitute for learning the material,” Pace said.

As students navigate their way through a global pandemic, it is clear that no one is entirely aware of what anyone may be going through and, in uncertain

noted that there does not seem to be many cases of premeditated cheating at this time.

Less than a week after the email by Pace, while San Diego remained in the purple tier, Gail F. Baker, Ph.D., provost and vice president, announced that the spring semester would be starting remotely. Classes will remain online until the county can enter the red tier, and when professors feel it safe enough for themselves to deliver material in a socially distanced, in-person classroom.

While classes remain online, USD officially has more than 1,000 students living in on-campus housing, according to Pace.

## Biden reverses many Trump policies

*President Biden has spent his first days reinstating many Obama-era policies*

MIKAELA FOEHR  
COPY EDITOR

In recent administrations, executive orders have become a common quick-fix for presidents looking to enact change, and President Joe Biden is continuing this pattern. Since taking office on Jan. 20, Biden has signed 28 executive orders as listed on the Federal Registrar. These orders have followed two major themes: addressing coronavirus and reversing Trump-era policies.

Executive orders are pieces of quasi-legislation addressing the function of the Executive Branch, which presidents have the power to enact unilaterally. While swift in enactment, executive orders do not have the strength of a law, are often contested in court, and can be easily reversed by a new head executive.

The Trump policy reversals Biden has taken on include allowing transgender people to

serve in the military, re-entering the Paris Climate Agreement, revoking the Keystone XL Pipeline permit, including non-citizens in apportionment counts, and reinforcing Affordable Care Act provisions. In addition, Biden has signed memorandums, which are not as forceful as executive orders, repealing the travel ban on people from seven predominantly Muslim nations and reinforcing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

Many Democrats and liberals have praised these actions; however, the ease in which Biden enacted them also shows how easily they can be reversed. Nearly all of the policies that Biden has reversed were campaign promises that President Trump made in 2016, indicating that four years of work can be dismissed with the stroke of a pen if concrete laws are never passed to support them.

More pressing than the easily-erased policy legacies of past presidents is the fact that some

of these boomeranging executive orders deal explicitly with the lives and rights of certain groups of people: allowing transgender people to serve in the military, for example. According to the AP, there were an estimated 14,700 transgender people serving in military ranks, both active and reserve, in 2019. These service members have had their professional careers in limbo for the past five years, from when Obama passed an order allowing open service by transgender people, to the reversal by Trump, through years of court challenges, to the current policy of the Biden administration.

These executive orders, while undoing some of Trump’s most controversial policies, are not necessarily permanent, and will likely need action taken by Congress and the President together to outlast the next administration’s preferences. There are also expected challenges in the Supreme and district courts.



Biden was sworn in on Jan. 20

Photo courtesy of GPA Photo Archive/Creative Commons

# Changes on campus for the spring semester

*New dining spots open, places to study, and the new challenges USD is facing with more students on campus*

KARISA KAMPBELL  
CONTRIBUTOR

With the start of the spring semester and an increase in students on campus, there are some new changes to what is and is not available to USD students. While San Diego remains in the most restrictive, purple tier at the time of publication, due to the number of COVID-19 cases, many on-campus dining options, services, and activities are either not being offered or are offering remote services only. However, some select spaces, dining, and services remain open and committed to serving students.

As an alternative to apartment studying, Copley Library, the Learning Commons, and the University Center (UC) are all open for individual study on campus. Masks must be worn while studying in these spaces, and there is no eating allowed, per current state and county guidelines. Reservations for Copley Library must be made

distanced tables and chairs are available to use for studying or eating, especially around Copley Library and the UCs. In addition, there are also tables and benches available around residence halls.

Blake Burke, first year, shared his favorite place to study on campus.

“I like studying at the tables outside of San Buenaventura because of the proximity to my dorm and how convenient it is to go outside and get some fresh air between classes,” Burke said.

Although indoor gyms such as the Jenny Craig Pavilion and the Bosley Fitness Center are closed, there are other options available on campus to work out and promote a healthy lifestyle. Outdoor gym areas such as the swimming pool, tennis courts and TRX training stations at the Sports Center remain open on a reservation-based operation only.

The Torero Store is open and is a great place to grab Torero gear, school supplies, or even electronics such as a laptop or calculator. They are open Monday



Lines have been blocked off outside of the SLP in order for students to have adequate space apart from each other.

Tanner Claudio/The USD Vista

***“If you’re going to let more students on campus you should open up more dining on campus to reduce the lines.”***

***- Grace Bentley***

beforehand and can be made through the library website.

In addition to these indoor study spaces, there are plenty of outdoor spaces available throughout campus. Socially

through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Support services for students also remain open, mostly through remote services. These resources include counseling services, Campus Assault Resources

and Education, and the Center for Student Success. For more information visit the USD Student Wellness website.

In addition to the dining services that were open last semester, the Student Life Pavilion and Tu Mercado, a new option for takeout or outdoor dining has recently opened to provide students with more eating options on campus. Bosley Cafe, located in the San Buenaventura apartments and next to the Mata’yuum Crossroads, is now open every day from 10:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Its menu includes a variety

of snacks, smoothies, waffles, and other tasty treats.

Jess Fernandez De La O, a current first year living on campus, shared her excitement about this new eating option.

“They have so many good options and the people working there are so sweet,” Fernandez De La O said. “They have a great attitude and are always at the disposition to help. It’s really nice to go in for a smoothie so close to where I live and see their smiling faces.”

With the limited dining options on campus comes long lines at the SLP. Grace Bentley, first year, commented on these lines and the lack of enforcement to maintain social distancing in line during the busier dinner times.

“If you’re going to let more students on campus you should open up more dining on campus to reduce the lines,” Bentley said. “Opening Bosley isn’t enough. With COVID, it doesn’t make sense to have one main dining option open because then everyone is congregating and being in lines together, and you know we’re not social distancing.”

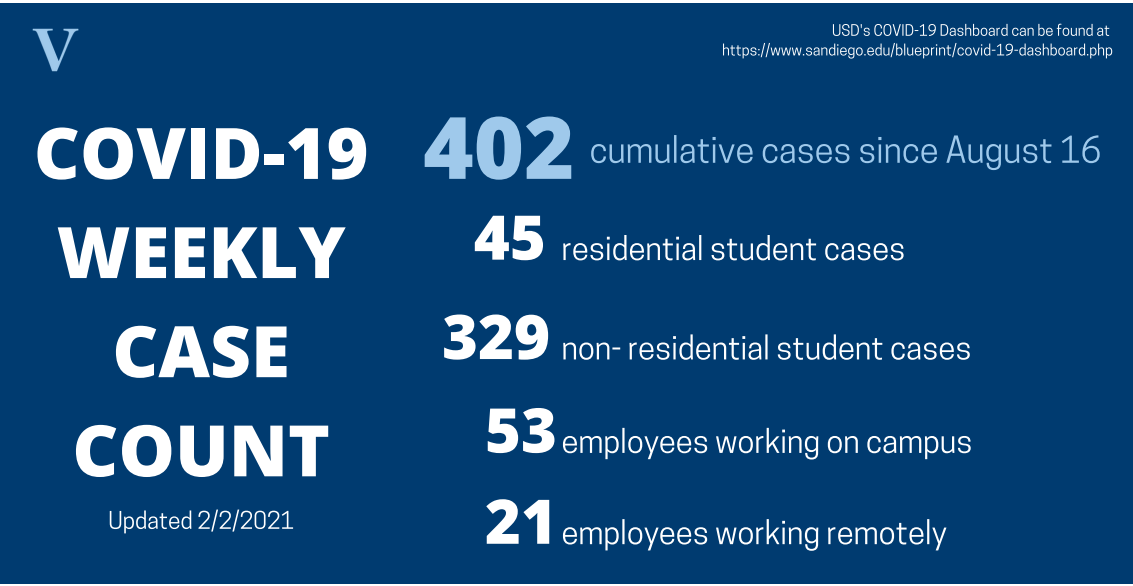
Bentley isn’t alone in these frustrations. Since the beginning

of the semester, lines at the SLP have reached upward of 45 minutes during peak times. Students are being forced to wait outside, sometimes in inclement weather, for long periods of time since the SLP is the only on-campus dining option open that accepts meal swipes as payment for dinner.

First year Meredith Bacon was part of an experiment managing the line earlier last week that was facilitated by the faculty.

“The staff at the dining hall are aware of the situation and had us write the time that we got into line on a sticky note, and give it to the cashier as we left,” Bacon said. “What they will do with that information, I don’t know, but hopefully something because something needs to be done.”

Although the spring semester has begun as yet another online learning semester, there are still some options for students on campus to get out of their rooms, study, or dine. Bosley Cafe opening is a step in a direction towards more eating options being open on campus, and is hopefully only one of many to reopen soon. La Paloma, Bert’s Bistro, and Blue Spoon are all closed for the foreseeable future.



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# EDITORIAL

## The reality of recruitment

*Fraternities and sororities at USD claim to be striving for more diversity and inclusion, but the current recruitment process undermines that goal*

**From Bid Day, Page 1**

The FSL community at USD is composed of 18 fraternities and sororities within three councils. Primary recruitment is done in early spring before the semester begins. For the Panhellenic sororities, it is a three-day process in which Potential New Members (PNMs) meet a number of current members to learn more about sorority life on campus.

The document outlining the Panhellenic recruitment rules is 17 pages long, with every possible detail accounted for. Section IX describes the expected attire for each day of recruitment, which is both demanding and limiting. Although this attire is not technically described as ‘required,’ it is anticipated that all PNMs will dress in the prescribed manner. Additionally, it assumes that PNMs have the resources or means to purchase the required clothing in order to fit in or look the part. Four completely different outfits ranging from “snappy casual” to “formal” do not come cheap, particularly considering the high standards set by a relatively wealthy student body.

This is a common criticism of FSL: the financial burden imposed upon members. Across all seven Panhellenic sororities, the average new membership cost is \$819. Before the pandemic, the average cost of Fall and Spring active dues was \$543 and \$490 respectively.

***At its core, FSL is too focused on image to be inclusive.***

They have since been lowered due to COVID-19.

At its core, FSL is too focused on image to be inclusive. PNMs are expected to dress and act a certain way during recruitment in order to stand a chance of being accepted. The recruitment process lends itself to judgements based on surface-level visual characteristics. Current members meet hundreds of PNMs in only a handful of days, leaving little time to

***Perhaps the root issues don’t lie with FSL as whole, but with the recruitment process.***

actually get to know them on an individual level. If sororities and fraternities don’t really know their PNMs, how do they choose

who gets a bid and who doesn’t if not based on appearance? Focusing on people’s unique personalities and interests should not be the exception, it should be the norm. If the typical recruitment process is not centered on PNMs as people and instead is about choosing those who fit the cookie-cutter mold, it is inherently based on image. By being judged based on looks, PNMs are by extension being judged by race and social class, since having more money means more access to the clothes and accessories that make a more appealing PNM. Further, the model individual for Greek life has, historically, looked one way: rich and white. Unconscious bias pushes those selecting PNMs to choose individuals who fit that model of the classic-looking sorority girl.

Greek life in the United States has always been very white and exclusive. Many BIPOC report that they feel excluded. The first Greek life organization in the United States, Phi Beta Kappa, was founded at the College of William and Mary in 1776. During the next following centuries, Greek organizations continued to expand to college campuses across the country. White students, through both formal and informal racist practices, more readily had access to higher education, and thus to the clubs and organizations on campus. When BIPOC students were able to attend majority white universities, they were specifically excluded from

sororities and fraternities.

USD is not a diverse university in terms of race and ethnicity. 52% of USD students are white. Striving for more diversity and inclusion within FSL is a worthy goal. Particularly in our current social and political environment, not fighting for diversity is a grave error. However, the history of racist and discriminatory practices by Greek life cannot be ignored, as they continue to influence the

perceptions of those both within and outside FSL.

Perhaps the root issues don’t lie with FSL as a whole, but with



FSL has been inherently exclusive since its founding, with many BIPOC reporting their lack of acceptance in these organizations.  
Photo courtesy of James Fitzgerald/Unsplash

the recruitment process. How can we expect sororities and fraternities to be diverse and inclusive if the path to join said organizations is based almost purely on looks and appearance?

Virtual recruitment this year was reportedly less formal and more conversation-based, allowing PNMs to shine as individuals — a silver lining of the pandemic continuing to force all activity online. This should be the new standard. Spend more one-on-one time with PNMs and talk to them as people. Abolish the strict dress code and allow PNMs to dress as they please. For an even more drastic proposal, follow the model of “The Voice” TV show and don’t look at PNMs at all until after they receive their bids.

Until the recruitment process is no longer heavily based on image, FSL will continue to lack diversity and inclusion.

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# EDITORIAL

## Twitter finally blocks Trump; should we be worried?

*Some are taking concern with social media now censoring politicians. However, it is well within their right to do so*

**BAYLYNNE BRUNETTI**  
ASST. OPINION EDITOR

After an already tumultuous presidency, President Donald J. Trump started 2021 tweeting enough election fraud rhetoric to incite a coup d'état against the American government. He has fired off tweets about unfound election fraud since last November. This continuous rhetoric fueled the fire that led to an insurrection at the Capitol in Washington D.C., taking the lives of U.S. Capitol police officers and several of Trump's supporters. Because

***Twitter made the right call. They justified their decision with multiple reviews of their guidelines and rules.***

their platform allowed Trump to rattle off his election fraud fantasies, Twitter stepped up and permanently suspended Donald Trump's account. In a statement by Twitter, the company said they suspended his account due to the risk of further incitement of violence.

Twitter made the right call. They justified their decision with multiple reviews of their guidelines and rules. Trump did in fact incite violence — a violent insurrection at that — which should be more than enough to block him from Twitter. However, the issue at hand is the precedent that is being set by banning public officials from social media platforms.

Jack Dorsey, the CEO of Twitter, published a series of tweets to say that even he was worried about the example they were setting. Dorsey stated, "This moment in time might call for this dynamic, but over the long term it will be destructive to the noble purpose and ideals of the open internet. A company making a business decision to moderate itself is different from a government removing access, yet can feel much the same." This decision opens up the argument about what the future of the internet looks like, especially if Twitter moves toward having the powers of censorship at their fingertips.

Twitter and Facebook are completely private companies. They have become useful platforms for civic engagement — in most cases. They do not exist as a government entity

or to serve the United States government. If members of the Democratic Party were spewing falsehoods about our elections, I firmly believe that these platforms would move to fact check and block those posts.

This rhetoric that Twitter or Facebook possess too much power and are trying to block conservative voices in order to push a liberal agenda is merely more propaganda to continue the fear mongering that has grown exponentially in the last four years. We should be more concerned with the fact that private companies had to alert the masses to the lies that were

being spread from our very own government officials.

Another issue that arises in this situation is the argument that suspending his account violates Trump's First Amendment rights. However,

Twitter is a private entity, giving it the right to make its own rules and guidelines for its platform. The First Amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging

***Though I do worry about the blurred lines of social media platforms censoring speech, I worry more about the violence that takes place when they do not.***

the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Therefore, unless Twitter has become the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate in the midst of this chaos, they are not violating Trump's rights.

Even if Twitter were to inch toward the government sector, this would still not be a violation of the First Amendment. There are exceptions that stem from the baseline of the First

Amendment that classifies as unprotected speech. The most common example: yelling fire in the middle of a crowded movie theater. You cannot use your "freedom of speech pass" to incite a violent attempted coup. The Supreme Court has made

it clear that not all speech is protected. The Court established the clear and present danger test which states that speech that "is directed at inciting or producing imminent lawless action" and is "likely to incite or produce such action" is not protected by the Constitution.

It is fair to say that under this test, the speech that led to the insurrection at the Capitol would not be protected under the Constitution.

Though I do worry about the blurred lines of social media platforms censoring speech, I

worry more about the violence that takes place when they do not. These companies do not exist to protect our freedom of speech; that is the government's job. Twitter and other platforms have teams of lawyers that advise them on all the issues that have been mentioned above. They do not want to be sued or be involved in the crosshairs of government lawsuits. So, I trust in their policies and their legal reasoning behind why they are taking a step to halt violence when it presents itself on their platforms.

Alas, it seems Twitter was right in banning Trump from their platform. However, it does still leave a dangling question about what the future holds in terms of social media censorship. I do not have a crystal ball, but I do not see Twitter making this their new status quo and becoming the overlords of free speech. I hope this was an isolated incident in which Twitter saw an opportunity to make right in the wake of the horrific events at the Capitol, but only time will tell.



"...Twitter is completely stifling FREE SPEECH, and I, as President, will not allow it to happen!" -@realDonaldTrump May 26, 2020

Daisy Martinez/The USD Vista

**The views expressed in the editorial and op-ed sections are not necessarily those of *The USD Vista* staff, the University of San Diego, or its student body.**

# 2020

## WRAPPED

Here's our 2020, wrapped.

### 2020 Wrapped: A Year in Review

Most people would be hard pushed to name a year in modern history more marked by unforeseen change and historic events that will be remembered for years to come, whether we want to remember them or not, than 2020. It was a year in which “unprecedented” quickly became everyone’s least favorite word — the kind of year that will one day spur the questions of “where were you when \_\_\_\_ happened,” from the future children of the world to their parents, who will all have an answer.

From a global pandemic that altered almost every aspect of life as we know it, to the loss of some of the world’s greatest icons, here is a look back on everything we faced on campus at USD and nationwide: the good, the bad, and the ugly.

### 2020 Wrapped

See our highlights of 2020

Our top stories, events, and a light at the end of the tunnel →

The USD Vista

2020 Wrapped



Photo courtesy of Fred Kearney/Unsplash

### The Death of Kobe Bryant

The world came to a standstill on Jan. 26, the day 41-year-old Los Angeles Lakers shooting guard Kobe Bryant lost his life in a tragic helicopter accident alongside his 13-year-old daughter and seven other friends. Bryant will go down in history as one of the greatest basketball stars that has ever lived.



Photo courtesy of Muenocchio/flickr

# Coronavirus Spreads Across the Globe

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a world health emergency on Jan. 30 after the COVID-19 outbreak originating in Wuhan, China. The virus spread like wildfire across the globe and eventually throughout San Diego and on the USD campus. Students were brought back from study abroad programs, classes were moved to remote teaching only, and eventually on March 17, students were given 24 hours to move out of on-campus housing. Despite everyone clinging to the hope that students and faculty would have been able to make a return to in-person classes for the fall semester, it was made impossible due to the rapidly rising death toll.



Photo courtesy of Elverr Barnes

# Resurgence of the BLM Movement

Following the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery on May 6 and George Floyd on May 25, Black Lives Matter protests began popping up all across the globe in protest of police brutality, racism in all its forms, and calling for justice for all the victims of these tragic incidents. The @blackatusd Instagram page was created to highlight the voices of Black students and on July 10, Black faculty at USD wrote a joint letter to the administration calling for institutional and cultural changes on campus.



Photo courtesy of Office of Senator Kamala Harris

# Biden Picks Harris as Running Mate

On Aug. 11, Democratic presidential nominee Biden chose California Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate, which marked the first time in history a Black and Asian woman appeared on a major party's presidential ticket. Biden was officially chosen as the party's presidential nominee on Aug. 18, the second night of the Democratic National Convention.



Photo courtesy of bswise/flickr

# The Death of RBG

On Sept. 18, the powerhouse and feminist icon that was Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG) died from pancreatic cancer. RBG had served on the Supreme Court since 1993. Ginsburg was officially replaced by Amy Coney Barrett on Oct. 27, whose nomination sparked much controversy in the government and across the nation.



Photo courtesy of Executive office of the president of the United States

# Joe Biden Announced as President-Elect

On Nov. 7, Biden was officially announced to become the 46th president of the U.S. after a tumultuous election. Results were certified on Dec. 7 with West Virginia being the last state to confirm. The election had the highest voter turnout record since 1900 — around 160 million votes were cast.

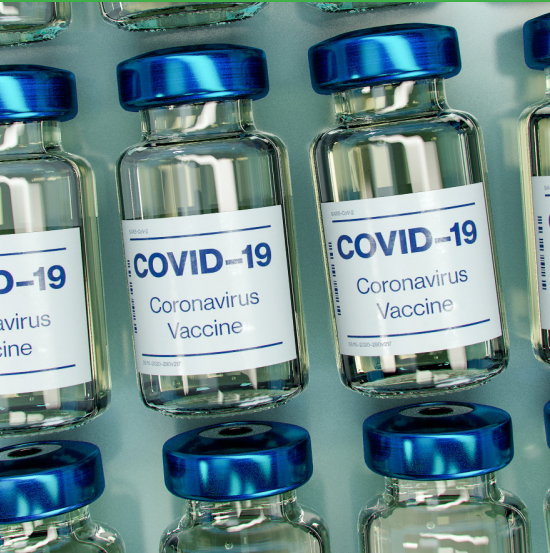


Photo courtesy of Daniel Schludi/Unsplash

# Light at the End of the Tunnel: Coronavirus Vaccines

On Dec. 11, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued the first-emergency-use authorization for a vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19. There are currently two FDA-approved vaccines being distributed in phases across the country that have granted us the hope of a return to normalcy in the future, where students at USD can return to in-person learning and the vibrant campus life we once had.

# FEATURE

## Marvelous Marni, lemur lover

*Animal enthusiast, biological anthropologist, and social justice activist Marni LaFleur Ph.D. has an extraordinary quality list*

**SYDNEY FRIGERIO**  
CONTRIBUTOR

From overcoming challenges during her unique upbringing to creating her own non-profit organization based on her passion, Marni LaFleur has dedicated much of her life to making a positive impact on society. She has lived in various countries, built her education from the ground up, become a university professor, and unwaveringly upheld her intention to make the world a better place.

“I value kindness over anything,” she said. “I think if we were all a little bit kinder, it would truly go a long way.”

LaFleur is a gem within the USD community. She encourages and celebrates empathy, diversity, education, and loves to share her passion for science and animals. A noteworthy endeavor of LaFleur’s is her (pre-coronavirus) annual research in Madagascar. She hopes to someday bring students along with her on these excursions to study lemurs. Not only does LaFleur make USD a brighter place, but she also has a magnificent story to tell behind her many achievements.

LaFleur traces her youth back to Victoria, Canada. She was an only child raised by her fundamentalist Jehovah’s Witness parents who never instilled values of education within her, which made her schooling experience bleak. At the end of middle school, LaFleur entered into difficult times with her parents, as she simply stopped listening to them. This resulted in them pulling LaFleur out of school in the eighth grade and leaving her home by herself for a year straight.

She recalled the extremely desolate year rich with isolation, loneliness, boredom, and lots of rain that reflected her inner condition. LaFleur shared that on top of the emotional strain of being cut off socially and educationally, she also endured an eating disorder that she ties back to the lack of control over her life.

Although LaFleur faced rather unique circumstances in her youth, she made the decision to reclaim ownership of her life around the time of her 18th birthday. LaFleur began to pave the pathway that would get her education back on track by taking placement tests, working various jobs to provide for herself, and enrolling in community college.

Her persistence landed her at the University of Victoria where she pursued a degree in biology and fell in love with learning about primates.

LaFleur discovered an inherent, unwavering love for animals, and the opportunity to learn about them in an educational setting was the light that illuminated her career path. She finished her master’s degree in Canada before moving to the states to pursue her education even further.

After being accepted to University of Colorado, Boulder, LaFleur began her new life in the United States in pursuit of her Ph.D. in anthropology. Moving to a new country inevitably brought forth cultural shifts and new observations for LaFleur, one being her awareness of the perception of race. In the midst of the 2008 elections, LaFleur recalls the confusion that struck her after viewing statistics for the Black, White, and Latino votes, asking herself, “Isn’t a vote just a vote?”

In Canada there is freedom of information, she shared, which means that your information belongs solely to you. There is no census nor open disclosure of racial identity, so LaFleur was quite shocked by this political focus on disparities within groups of people. It was this realization on top of questioning her complex religious upbringing that furthered LaFleur’s passion for creating a more just society.

Facing the difficult task of reconciling what she had been taught and what she felt, LaFleur chose to trust her emotions and acknowledge the prejudices within the religious teachings she had grown up amongst. LaFleur shared how deeply she dislikes unfairness, especially when based on something that is a part of who an individual is. This principle has assuredly fueled her activism.

“In the small ways that I can contribute to initiatives on campus and in society, I absolutely will, because I truly want the world to be more fair,” she said.

Another key quality that makes LaFleur who she is is her love for all animals, especially lemurs. In fact, she adores them so much that she built her own nonprofit organization entitled Lemur Love. Her passion for these lively little creatures evolved as she spent time in Madagascar observing and analyzing their behaviors. Something unique about the ring-tailed lemur that LaFleur is drawn to is their matriarchal social structure, which is rather uncommon in the animal world.

LaFleur’s Madagascar experience consisted of lengthy travel days, a sinkhole for bathing, temperatures up to 130 degrees, no electricity, and various neighborhoods of bugs and



LaFleur started her own nonprofit organization called Lemur Love in 2012.

critters. Still, she feels honored to have spent time in her favorite animal’s home in its rawest state.

“I love being out in the forest. It is such a privilege to be completely accepted by these animal groups,” she said. “At this point, they know who I am, they know when I come back. I’m out in the middle of nothing and get to hang out with these awesome creatures.”

It was about a decade ago that LaFleur recalls a particular visit in Madagascar where she noticed that aspects of the field were missing. She saw gaps in their habitat, recognizing clearly that the lemurs’ favorite spots to relax, including their favorite naptime trees, had disappeared.

“I was the only one working with these animals and if I didn’t do something, they would disappear and nobody would even notice,” she said. LaFleur felt responsible and inclined to protect them, which led to the birth of her organization.

LaFleur started Lemur Love in 2012 with the mission to “ensure lemurs thrive in

their forest homes through the power of women, science, and an extended global ‘troop.’”

Through this new endeavor LaFleur has been able to work with communities in southwest Madagascar near the Tsminanampesote National Park, build relationships with these communities, and promote conservation of these areas and the life that they behold. Lemur Love has combated illegal lemur pet ownership, advocated for local Madagascar inclusion in the science realm, and helped further research and preservation of lemurs.

During the past few months in the midst of the pandemic, Lemur Love has been able to focus their efforts on humanitarian aid. In these times of need, they have made payments and food deliveries to poor communities across Madagascar, which LaFleur feels proud to have coordinated. During her time within these communities, LaFleur makes a point to figure out what they want, not what she and her

Photo courtesy of Marni LaFleur  
fellow volunteers want for them.

LaFleur began teaching at the University of San Diego just three years ago, previously teaching at the University of California, San Diego. She loves USD because of how she is appreciated not only intellectually, but as a person. She teaches classes on biological anthropology, primate behavior, ecology, and conservation, and also seeks to instill inspiration within her students.

“I like to stress to students that they are in control of their own life,” she said. “We get lost in depression and the grading system and all of these pressures, but if you really hate what you are doing, you don’t have to do it. It feels like nobody will understand, but they will. We can’t forget that we are in charge of what we do.”

Outside of school and lemurs, LaFleur loves her husband, her pets, going to the beach, and making homemade salsa straight from her garden. Marni LaFleur, in all her essence, is a lover — lover of animals, lover of people, and lover of making the world a better place.

# ARTS & CULTURE

## “Drivers License:” from crying through the suburbs to debuting at No. 1

*How 17-year-old Olivia Rodrigo turned her breakup into the world’s most-listened-to song*

**TAYLOR DEGUZMAN**  
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

Everyone knows the all-too-familiar feeling of what it was like to finally get our driver’s license. The liberation that came with this new chapter of life was unmatched. Many can recall very fond memories of what they did after receiving their license. Some remember driving alone down the Pacific Coast Highway, blasting the song of the year, while others think back to finally driving to school without their parents.

However, for one particular person, getting her driver’s license brings back a not-so-fond memory: driving through the suburbs crying over an ex, and wishing she could drive home to them. Namely, overnight teen sensation Olivia Rodrigo turned this heartbreaking experience into what would be acclaimed the “song of the year,” by Rolling Stones, who predict that Rodrigo and the power ballad will “completely dominate 2021.”

Rodrigo’s debut single, “Drivers License,” currently sits at No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot 100 for the third week in a row. “Drivers License” holds the spot for biggest single-day streams of any song by a female artist on Spotify in the U.S. (5.688 million) over Ariana Grande’s “thank u, next” (4.19 million) at the time of publication.

Rodrigo first appeared in the spotlight starring in Disney Channel’s “Bizaardvark” and Disney+’s “High School Musical: The Musical: The Series” (HSMTMTS). Hailed as the “next Taylor Swift,” this 17-year-old actress, singer, songwriter, and rising star first caught fans’ attention with her original song “All I Want,” which premiered on “HSMTMTS” in 2019. “All I Want” boasts over 200 million streams on Spotify.

Huge fan of “HSMTMTS” and USD junior, Lauren Smith, exclaimed that she was a fan of Rodrigo before the entire world knew about her, and how interesting it was to see “Drivers License” rise to the top.

“It’s almost like those who knew her before her debut single blew up, fully understood the background of the song and maybe even who it’s about,” Smith said. “Her ability to be so vulnerable and so open about heartbreak really helps individuals cope with maybe their own heartbreak or what they’re going through too.”

While her Disney background helped grow a large fan base and platform for her debut single’s success, it is

the intriguing story “Drivers License’s” lyrics paint that is sparking much conversation.

Much like any gossip that follows a popular heartbreak anthem, synonymous with a Taylor Swift ballad, people always point a finger at who the song is about.

“I just can’t imagine how you could be so okay now that I’m gone,” Rodrigo sings. “I guess you didn’t mean what you wrote in that song about me. ‘Cause you said forever now I drive alone past your street.”

Several rumors point toward Rodrigo’s co-star and love interest in “HSMTMTS,” Joshua Bassett. Bassett is a singer, songwriter, and actor as well, who was closely linked to Rodrigo after many believed that their chemistry on the Disney+ show felt a little too real. In an interview by Vogue, Rodrigo addressed the rumors surrounding her song.

“I completely understand why people are curious about the specifics of the song but, to me, who and what the song is about is not important,” Rodrigo said. “People are resonating with the song because it’s so honest, raw, and emotional.”

Rumors aside, Rodrigo hits it on the nail when she says that people are resonating with her song. “Drivers License” remains

the “Gen Z heartbreak anthem,” namely on the most popular social media platform, TikTok, which seems to be driving Rodrigo’s record-breaking number of streams. Amassing over three billion views on TikTok, users under the hashtag “Drivers License” continue to post their raw reactions to the song, their own version of the song, and their own remixes.

Several fans of “Drivers License” note the similarity in lyricism to that of Taylor Swift and Swift’s ability to encapsulate a myriad of authentic, real emotions, and relatable stories into her songs. Several comments under the “Drivers License” music video hail Rodrigo as the “next Taylor Swift,” while many exclaim that the young songwriter is the “next Olivia Rodrigo.” A huge Swiftie, or Taylor Swift stan, Rodrigo herself “nearly died” when Swift commented, “I say that’s my baby and I’m really proud,” underneath Rodrigo’s Instagram post of “Drivers License” previously sitting right under two “Evermore” bonus tracks on the iTunes chart.

In an Apple Music interview with Rodrigo, interviewer Zane Lowe explained to Rodrigo that “Taylor Swift doesn’t extend out her support unless she feels it.”

Rodrigo gushed and said,

“It was so sweet of her. I’ve looked up to her for as long as I can remember, so it was really sweet of her to do that.”

Fellow Swiftie and USD senior Kaitlin Solis shared how her love for Swift makes her love and relate to Rodrigo even more.

“I love how, similar to Taylor Swift, Olivia Rodrigo uses metaphors in her songs in order to draw such an impactful story for listeners to relate to,” Solis said. “When Taylor Swift rose to fame and her music started getting recognized, she was so young. I see that similarity in how young Olivia Rodrigo is, and it makes me even more excited for her future.”

Although Rodrigo is a multitasking star and the biggest Taylor Swift fan, what many might not know about Rodrigo is her Filipino heritage. Rodrigo is part Filipina on her dad’s side. With Asian representation slowly continuing to permeate mainstream entertainment, from “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” and “Crazy Rich Asians,” there still seems to be minimal Asian representation in mainstream music. However, “Drivers License” debuting at No. 1 is a gigantic stride in this direction.

As a fellow Filipino-American, Solis explained what Rodrigo’s success means

for Asian representation and what it means to her.

“Growing up I never saw someone on the screen that looked like me, or really knew a singer who represented my culture,” Solis said. “Knowing that kids get to grow up with at least one more face that looks like them and especially a young person who is achieving her dreams, makes me so excited for representation in the future.”

Solis believes that Rodrigo could be “the start of something new” for more Asian representation.

“I truly believe that Olivia Rodrigo’s success is just the beginning of more and more Asian representation within the entertainment industry,” Solis said. “Maybe Asians who see Olivia, or young, aspiring songwriters will feel compelled to put themselves out there too.”

The 17-year-old star with Disney success, a record-breaking first single, attention from Taylor Swift, and a very bright future may inspire many people to follow their own dreams, no matter how big or small.

Perhaps now, when getting one’s driver’s license, they’ll remember the incredibly liberating feeling of driving through the suburbs and blasting the song of the year: “Drivers License.”



The cast of HSMTMTS promoting their show at D23, the biggest Disney fan expo, in 2019 (from left to right: Joshua Bassett, Olivia Rodrigo, Sofia Wyllie, Matt Cornett).

Photo courtesy of Walt Disney Television/flickr

# Back to school playlist

*The soundtrack to the best Zoom playlist curated  
by The USD Vista staff*

ANNA VALAIK  
ASST. A&C EDITOR

For many college students, music carries them through their day-to-day activities. Whether it be driving to the grocery store or simply running along Mission Bay, students are always tuned into their devices, allowing someone else’s voice to flood their minds. It’s an emotional release, an uplifting motivator, and even a welcome distraction to never-ending Zoom lectures posted on Blackboard.

For this reason, The USD Vista created a back to school playlist for the spring semester. There is a little something here for everyone, no matter the mood, setting, or musical preference. Enjoy!

If you are driving down Linda Vista Road thinking about your ex...

Driver’s License — Olivia Rodrigo

If you can’t stop thinking about long beach days on

Mission Beach and are stuck at home...

California — The Lagoons

If your professor won’t email you back, the essay is due at midnight, and you need some positivity...

GUD VIBRATIONS — NGHTMRE, SLANDER

If you can still taste those La Paloma pancakes on a Saturday....

Banana Pancakes — Jack Johnson

If the Starbucks Triple-Shot Latte isn’t hitting hard enough...

September — Throttle x Earth, Wind, & Fire

If you miss laying on the lawn with friends before class...

Good Morning — Ralph Castelli

If your biology exam is tomorrow...

Gymnopédie No. 1 — Erik Satie, Phillippe Entremont

If you miss the old Taylor Swift...

Fifteen — Taylor Swift

If you just want to feel like pure sunshine...

Throwaway — SG Lewis, Clairo

If you are in need of a good throwback...

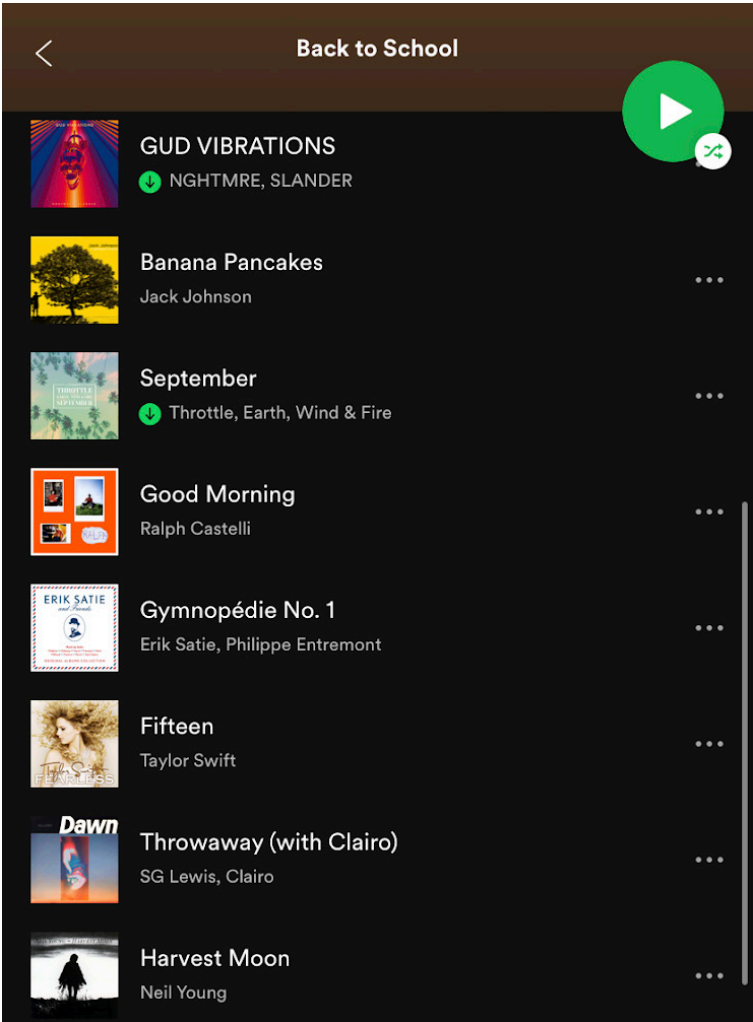
Harvest Moon — Neil Young

If you are dreaming up the most romantic Valentine’s Day this year...

Movie — Tom Misch

If you live in Southern California and feel like no one appreciates country music...

7 Summers — Morgan Wallen



Anna Valaik/The USD Vista

## 5 good outcomes of the worst year ever: why 2020 wasn’t all bad

*A look back on the best things that happened in 2020*

OLIVIA HUNT  
ASST. A&C EDITOR

There’s no debate that 2020 was a unique year to say the least. Uniquely terrible, actually. But it wasn’t all that bad. In fact, it came with plenty of silver linings — ones that will leave a positive legacy for years to come. Below are five of the good things that came out of 2020:

1. The Environment Got a Breather

At least the environment had a good year! Due to the economic recession caused by COVID-19, partnered with the cheaper cost of renewable energy sources like solar and wind power, carbon dioxide emissions dramatically declined, according to CNN. Furthermore, 2020 had another driving force reducing the U.S. carbon footprint: meat alternatives. Since the pandemic began, sales of plant-based proteins and veggie burgers, such as the “Impossible Burger” and “Beyond” meat, have been on the rise.

Matt Ball, a senior communications specialist at the Good Food Institute, explained the public’s newfound interest in alternative meat in a Forbes article. “There’s a greater concern

2. Online Mental Health Resources Improved & Increased

The pandemic has undoubtedly worsened the state of people’s mental health on a global scale. This sharp decline sparked an increased demand for mental health services, directly spurring the launch of numerous online resources. Several companies even offered their services for free. In 2020, more people than ever took advantage of digital mental health resources, from video counseling to text-based therapy services.

USD’s Counseling Program was also awarded a \$3.2 million grant in June of 2020. Joi Spencer, Ph.D.,

3. TikTok Didn’t Get Banned

Luckily, one of the best cures for boredom didn’t get taken away from us in 2020. With its gold mine of filters, reaction videos, and memes, the app TikTok keeps millions of people entertained and laughing every day — no small feat during one of the most

4. Female Leaders Stepped Up to the Plate

The same year that Vice President Kamala Harris was elected to office, female leaders around the world have made major progress in the fight against coronavirus. In a study from Business Insider, research showed that countries with a female leader were able to respond more effectively to the pandemic.

Such countries include Germany, Denmark, New Zealand, Taiwan, Iceland, and Finland; each having experienced fewer deaths than their male-led counterparts, such as the U.K., Spain, Italy, and Brazil. The policies enacted by these women

5. Animal Shelters Were Emptied Across the Country

As it turns out, dogs and cats were the big winners of 2020. With more people than ever working from home, pets certainly got far more attention from their owners, and new pets were brought home too. Shelters and nonprofit breeders alike reported that demand for a pandemic pet skyrocketed as people abided by stay-at-home orders.

The increased ability for virtual adoption meetings also made it easier for people to adopt pets and rescue animals. With all the current craziness of the world, furry friends relieve an immense amount of anxiety, so increased pet adoption has really been a win-win.

# SPORTS

## Plenty of lessons for San Diego in GU defeat

*Head coach Scholl looks to build on positives, reduce mistakes from loss to Bulldogs*



Despite a good start, USD could not contain Jalen Suggs (left) and the GU offense forever. Suggs finished with 19 points. Photo courtesy of Chad Cushing/USD Athletics

### Gonzaga From Page 1

goal was to hold them to 80, and you're handing them nine points, that makes it a real challenge."

Those nine given away points helped the Zags to an 11-point lead at halftime. Facing

a double-digit deficit, Scholl said his message in the locker room was focused on trying "not to make the same mistake twice" and "starting the first four minutes of the second half how we started the first four minutes

of the game."

But the Toreros could not repeat their strong performance from the first half, and Gonzaga rolled, scoring 50 points in the second half on their way to victory. However, despite

the loss, Scholl saw multiple positives to take and build on for the rest of the season. Junior guard Finn Sullivan put in an impressive performance, leading the Toreros with 16 points. And, while the 16 points stick out on the box score, it was the understated aspects of Sullivan's performance that stuck out to his coach.

"The number one thing that I was excited about was six assists to one turnover," Scholl said. "The second thing I was most excited about was his defense, was how he competed against a lottery pick in Jalen Suggs. And then the third thing was his shooting percentage. I want Finn taking good shots, and if Finn is out playing to be a point guard and to be the leader on the floor of our team, he's going to take good shots."

Sullivan shot 6-8 from the field, and 4-5 from three-point range, but perhaps his best play of the night was swiping the ball from Suggs, a projected top-ten pick in the upcoming NBA draft, and throwing down a slam dunk in the game's early stages. Scholl also praised forward Ben Pyle and center Vladimir Pinchuk, who both scored in the double digits, as well as forward Yavus Gultekin, who scored nine points and hauled in five rebounds in his first game since Dec. 9.

But where there were positives, Scholl also saw room

for improvement.

"I think it was our worst game, or one of our worst games in terms of turning the ball over, so obviously we didn't feel great about that," he said. "You can't have empty possessions against a team like Gonzaga."

The Toreros turned the ball over 17 times on Thursday night, their highest total of the season. Turnovers aside, Scholl was pleased with how his team executed the game plan, praising his team's transition defense and rebounding, as well as their ability to create good shots on offense. Where a nearly 30-point loss could easily drain a team's confidence, Scholl figured his team's self-belief had only grown thanks to the competitive opening minutes.

That confidence will be tested, as the Toreros face two weeks without basketball, shortly followed by their second face-off with the Zags. Due to a positive COVID-19 test within the program, USD began a two-week long pause in basketball activities on Tuesday, which will end four days before they are scheduled to travel to Spokane and play the Bulldogs. The Toreros will have one game to get ready for the rematch with GU; their next scheduled game is a Feb. 18 date with the Santa Clara Broncos in the Bay Area. That game's start time is yet to be announced.



## The USD Vista

### Come write for us!

Zoom meetings every Tuesday at  
12:30 p.m.

Zoom link on Instagram @theusdvista



# SPORTS

## Winter break recap

USD golf, men's and women's basketball, and swimming all competed over the months-long break

### Golf

- Finished second out of a field of five teams at Rustic Collegiate Classic Nov. 5-6
- Finished seventh of 17 teams at Arizona Intercollegiate tourney Jan. 25-27

### Women's Basketball

- Played 10 games, winning six
- Engineered fourth-quarter comeback to beat BYU, 58-56
- Exacted revenge on Portland, who beat the Toreros in last year's WCC title game

### Men's Basketball

- Played nine games, winning a pair
- Kicked off season with a trip to play UCLA
- Beat Cal Poly and Portland
- Came up just short against LMU, losing by only three in overtime

### Swimming and Diving

- Came up short in season opener against cross-town rivals San Diego State
- Beat LMU, but couldn't get past Pepperdine at the Pepperdine Invitational