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THE USD VISTA

Increased fentanyl in San Diego County

USD repeatedly warns toreros of the dangers of drug use

ABIGAIL CAVIZO
NEWS EDITOR

Beginning last semester, USD Student Affairs sent out emails warning about fentanyl increases in the San Diego community. Fentanyl is a highly addictive narcotic used to treat patients with extreme pain. If the drug is taken in high dosages, especially when combined with other substances, it can cause someone to overdose. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), there has been an increase of fentanyl in the Southern California area. In San Diego County alone, the CBP found that fentanyl-caused seizures increased by approximately 323% from 2019 to 2022. Although 2022 is not over yet, CBP also predict that these seizures will either match 2021's numbers or surpass it.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) warns that young people are targets for the deadly trend, coined online as "rainbow fentanyl." Drug cartels are making fentanyl look like colorful candy to spark addiction, appealing to children



Drug cartels are lacing colorful pills with fentanyl to target younger users; this is known as "rainbow fentanyl."

and young adults. If someone were to get their hands on any drug laced with fentanyl, it would most likely be deadly. Only two milligrams of fentanyl is enough to kill. While USD's emails from Student Affairs are meant to

spread awareness about fentanyl in the San Diego community, the Department of Public Safety does not have all the resources to accurately test how much fentanyl is in the area because it's hard to detect in other drugs on the street,

such as cocaine or marijuana.

Quinton Kawahara, Captain in the Public Safety Department, explained that laboratory testing is needed to tell how much fentanyl is laced within a different drug. "Fentanyl, as you know

from all the warnings, includes ingredients in other types of opioids, so it's really unknown if there actually is fentanyl around, but most likely there is," Kawahara said. "We won't know unless it's properly tested, which we don't have the capability of doing unless, unfortunately, there's an overdose situation."

There are devices that measure if there are traces of fentanyl in other pills and powders, but it's hard to tell how much fentanyl is contained within it. Not knowing how much fentanyl is in something is a leading factor in overdose situations.

In the emails, Student Affairs affirmed that USD is taking precautions to ensure students' safety against fentanyl exposure, such as carrying Narcan.

Narcan is a prescribed medical nasal spray used to assist in respiratory issues when someone is unresponsive during a possible overdose. Residential housing also recommends that Public Safety carry Narcan on them at all times as a preemptive measure for student safety in case there is an overdose within on-campus residential

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FAMA performs for Univisión

USD's Folklórico and Mariachi Association performs on television

SARAH FAHEY
ASST. A&C EDITOR

The USD Folklorico and Mariachi Association (FAMA) had the opportunity to perform for Univisión, a popular American television station for Spanish-speakers, on Oct. 5. In big, colorful dresses, the dancers of FAMA whirled across Colachis Plaza while the mariachi played in the background.

Folklorico is a traditional folk dance that originated primarily in Mexico. Known for its vibrant dresses and flashy dancing, folklorico holds a special place in the hearts of many Latinos.

FAMA dancer Alexa Watson expressed her love for the dance.

"I like dancing folklorico, because it allows me to connect



Folklorico and Mariachi Association dancers performing in colorful dresses on Univisión at Colachis Plaza.

more with my culture," Watson said. "It's a privilege to be able to share this part of my culture

with other people, spread awareness and contribute to the diversity of USD."

FAMA prides itself on educating the USD community on Mexican culture through music and dance. It spreads cultural awareness and creates a space on campus for all to feel welcome, as stated on their website. USD sophomore Gabby

Gonzalez discusses how, though she is not Mexican herself, FAMA has helped her find a cultural space to express her Latina identity.

"Folklorico means Hispanic culture—Latinos, Latinas, todos," Gonzalez said. "Having folklorico really helps add some culture [to] USD and makes me feel like I'm at home." **See FAMA, Page 9**

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NEWS

Students receive emails about fentanyl

Public Safety takes precautions against fentanyl increase

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areas. Public Safety has not yet used Narcan on campus.

Kawahara stated how each officer carries Narcan as one of the precautions.

“All of our Public Safety officers are trained on the use of Narcan,” Kawahara said. “We’ve all attended our first aid and CPR certifications, and so first aid is a part of the recovery process during an overdose situation, as well as Narcan.”

In 2007, California passed a “911 Good Samaritan Law,” which states that if someone is in need of medical attention due to opioids or is calling on the behalf of someone else, they are provided some protection from arrest, charge and prosecution. In the USD community, something was not yet created until 2020.

USD’s similar policy is called the “Responsible Torero Harm Reduction Practice (RTHRP),” located in “The Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities.” It states that USD’s first priority is to care for student health, emphasizing that students should call for help in dire situations.

“It is determined that the

practice applies to a situation by the Office of the Dean of Students, the students involved may not be subject to a violation of the rules of conduct,” the RTHRP reads. “Although this practice does not relieve any student or organization from responsibility for other policy violations that may have occurred prior to seeking medical attention, the effort to seek help for the affected student (or person) may be a mitigating factor in sanctioning.”

USD senior Ebony Orozco appreciates the 2020 policy change at USD.

“It’s kind of crazy that we didn’t have something that protects students from asking for help until two years ago,” Orozco said. “I remember my first year at USD hearing about similar programs at other colleges, but not here, so I’m glad that’s changed now.”

First-year Koa Cruz is from out of state and did not have previous knowledge of California’s “Good Samaritan” law, nor USD’s somewhat equivalent practice.

“I think it’s really good that USD enforces these rules, because I think if there were to be a serious situation like an

overdose, students are more likely to call,” Cruz said. “Fentanyl is a scary, serious thing.”

For students to be as safe as possible, Public Safety advises being careful both on and off

campus, and to not take anything unless it’s prescribed. Fentanyl comes in various colors, forms and sizes, the most important precaution a student can take is to be fully aware of what

they’re putting in their system.

For more information, contact the Office of Ethical Development and Restorative Practices at studentconduct@sandiego.edu or visit www.sandiego.edu/conduct.



The Drug Enforcement Administration cites the increase in fentanyl in Southern California from across the border.

Photo Courtesy of @sandiegopd/Instagram

How to check registration status before midterms

College students’ voter turnout increased in past three elections

ABIGAIL CAVIZO
NEWS EDITOR

People from all over the U.S. come out to vote. For the recent general elections, in both the midterm and the presidential elections, college students’ percentage of voter turnout increased.

According to the Washington Post, the 2020 election had an “increase of 14 percentage points over the 2016 presidential election” and “in the 2018 midterms, college students’ voter turnout doubled from 19 percent in 2014 to 40 percent.”

If the trend continues to increase, college students will turn up for this upcoming election.

The 2022 Midterm Elections are coming up on Nov. 8, but registering to vote closes on Oct. 24 in CA. Before showing up to cast

a ballot, confirming one’s voter registration status is essential.

USD sophomore Sara Zouiten is registered as a voter in Colorado, but she would consider voting in California if she knew the different impacts the states could have on policy changes.

“I need to register and see how to do that [in California] because I’m from Colorado, but it’s definitely important to know all the rules and regulations,” Zouiten said. “Voting is important and a lot of people don’t have that right, so we should express that.”

In California, <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/> is a link that will help individuals check their voter registration status. By ensuring the address linked to the name is correct, a ballot will be mailed to that residency. The website also helps people if they need their address to be updated. Using USD as a current residency

also works for those who want their ballot to come to them on campus.

If someone from out of state wants to vote in California, they can register for it even if they are not a California resident. College students have the unique opportunity to vote in either the state they attend school in or their home state. Since not all college students live where they want to vote, absentee ballots (the ballots received by mail) are an option many can utilize.

Different states have different voter registration requirements and laws, but it is essential to note that voting in two different locations is voter fraud. Every registered voter has only one vote, but being registered in more than one state to vote is not a crime. Since the state government oversees elections, the federal government does not know if someone is on multiple registration lists.

If students choose to vote in their home state, absentee ballots can be mailed to their San Diego address. The rules surrounding these types of ballots vary, but by checking the state government’s website, people can ensure they know the various rules.

USD junior Shiara Mateo is pursuing a double major in political science and sociology.



College students can request an absentee ballot if they live away from home.

Photo Courtesy of @obionyeader/Unsplash

She asserts that people should be educated about voting, according to policies within that state.

“I think that voting is essential and registering is important, but college students who are from out of state should see where they can make the biggest difference in what they believe in,” Mateo said. “It’s super important to know, especially in the swing states where these things matter and policies can change.”

San Diego County reached

out to USD because they needed somewhere for ballots to be dropped off for voters in the area. This year, USD students have the opportunity to vote on campus. Other locations that are available for in-person voting can be found on San Diego’s Registrar of Voters’ location page, according to proximity. By learning the rules of the states’ registration laws, students can be prepared to vote for the midterm elections on Nov. 8.

“I think that voting is essential and registering is important, but college students who are from out of state should see where they can make the biggest difference in what they believe in.”

- Shiara Mateo

Gas prices hit record highs in San Diego

Prices pressure students to re-evaluate their driving habits

SALENA CHACON
ASST. NEWS EDITOR

Gas prices in San Diego hit a record high this month. According to AAA gas prices, the highest gas price recorded in San Diego occurred on Oct. 5, when gas reached an average of \$6.43 per gallon. This time last year, gas prices were reported at an average of \$4.37 per gallon, which is over \$2 less.

USD sophomore commuter Arissa Lelevier is aware of the increase in gas prices and changed some of her driving habits to reduce gas use.

"I try to carpool more with friends to try to save up on gas. I'm definitely conscious of it and I try not to drive as much," Lelevier said. "I don't go back home in the middle of the day because of the gas prices. It just makes more sense to stay here."

Gov. Gavin Newsom placed the blame for high prices on oil companies.

"Oil companies are ripping you off," Newsom wrote in a Tweet. "Their record profits are coming at your expense at the pump."

In a short video message attached to the Tweet, Newsom emphasized how California gas prices are much higher compared to the rest of the U.S. He also mentioned taking measures to reduce the prices, such as a windfall tax, or higher tax, on oil companies and an early start to using cheaper winter blend gas. According to GasBuddy, winter blend gas is used during the winter months to help during the cold weather, and its production is less expensive than the summer gasoline.

Another potential cause for the increase in gas prices is the shutdown of several oil refineries, due to unpredictable circumstances, financial troubles or maintenance. These refineries convert crude oil into the gas put into cars. With fewer refineries, the demand for gas cannot always be met, which raises the price of gas. According to the New York Times, however, these shutdowns should be temporary.

Newsom announced a plan in late August of this year to push toward electric car use, negating the need for gas altogether. The Office of the



Governor Gavin Newsom wants California to switch to 100 percent zero-emission vehicles sales by 2035.

Photo courtesy of @michaelfousert/Unsplash



USD offers electric car charging stations, but for other cars, gas prices are skyrocketing in the San Diego area.

Salena Chacon/The USD Vista

Governor wrote, "We can solve this climate crisis if we focus on the big, bold steps necessary to cut pollution. California now has a groundbreaking, world-leading plan to achieve 100 percent zero-emission vehicle sales by 2035."

The primary appeal for

electric cars is because it's meant to save gas money for California residents, but another factor is its sustainability.

Magali Rodriguez, a USD sophomore commuter, drives a hybrid car. She noticed that she is not as concerned about

gas prices as other students.

"Having a hybrid does totally lower the cost. I haven't been really feeling the brunt of the increase in gas prices," Rodriguez said.

For students who don't drive an electric car, the idea of switching is a big decision. USD sophomore

Katie Temple recognizes that electric vehicles are more environmentally friendly than a regular gas-run car, but the cost of buying a new car is not feasible.

"I would consider it. It's not financially in the realm of things, but I definitely think electric cars are making more of a statement now and are definitely a smarter decision," Temple said.

Lelevier holds the same sentiment.

"I definitely would [switch to an electric car], it's just expensive to get a new car. Right now I drive an old car that I inherited," Lelevier said. "Because I have to pay for my own expenses, I wouldn't do it right now. I'm literally going to drive this car till it dies."

Rodriguez questions the safety concerns that come with driving an electric vehicle.

"I think a part of being a woman is always being hyper aware of your safety," Rodriguez expressed. "The only reason I wouldn't switch is because, in the case of an emergency, putting in gas is so much easier than waiting a few hours to recharge. Maybe if it becomes that there's more charging outlets in more locations, but I just wouldn't want to be in a vulnerable situation and not know where I can charge my car nearby."

Female students, such as Rodriguez and Lelevier, mentioned that alternatives to gas cars can be unsafe. Lelevier is also wary of public transportation, as it can be dangerous at night. Even though using public transportation or switching to an electric vehicle are more environmentally responsible options, safety is a concern for many USD students.

Students like Temple feel that the benefits of having a car on campus, like the accessibility and safety it ensures, outweigh the cost.

"I'm happy to have [my car] here," Temple said. But definitely the cost factor is a bummer."

USD students continue to hope that gas prices will decrease, but for now use carpooling and reduce the amount they drive to save on gas. If gas prices remain high, commuters and those with a car on campus may have to consider another mode of transportation, such as riding a bus or train. By making the switch, it would be cost beneficial and sustainable.

The USD Vista

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OPINION

USD sustainability efforts lack clarity

The institution must be held accountable for 'green' claims

MARIA SIMPSON
OPINION EDITOR

The Student Life Pavilion (SLP) is a place that all USD students know well. Thanks to several large signs on display, students are aware that their food scraps can be left on plates when finished eating, as USD has a functioning compost machine that will reduce the waste from the hundreds of students who go through Pavilion Dining each day. At least, that is what USD claims.

I recently learned that this is not currently the case. After hearing rumors that the SLP compost machine is out of order from students and SLP employees alike, I decided to investigate myself. I began asking SLP employees about the situation, starting with a supervisor for Pavilion Dining, Judy Carmenas.

"We don't currently have [a compost machine] because it is being worked on, but we do have it," Carmenas stated. She also said that the machine had been broken for "maybe three weeks" at the time of the interview, which was conducted Sept. 15.

Julio Hernandez, an SLP employee of 31 years, also affirmed that the compost machine is currently undergoing repairs.

"The machine we used to have broke. We're planning to get another one, but we don't know when." However, when asked how long that machine has been out of order, his answer was very different from Carmenas'. Hernandez stated that it has been broken for "six months to a year."

I was shocked and confused. This whole time I left all my food waste on my dishes, thinking that I was making an effort to reduce waste, when really I was unknowingly leaving an extra mess for SLP employees to deal with. And so have hundreds of other students, due to the fact that apparently no one is being made aware of this situation.

The next step was to approach the administrative level with these same questions. USD public relations connected me with Loryn Johnson, the Marketing and Licensing Director for Auxiliary Services, who provided me with an in-depth statement on the current compost machine situation. This statement only made the story more inconsistent and confusing.

"The former Biohitech Digester machine utilized by the SLP no longer met the City of San Diego's new waste

processing requirements, so a new 'dry' digester was ordered this past spring (the Harp CX2). It is being manufactured, and we anticipate it to be in place by November. In the interim, we utilize food waste services by Waste Management of San Diego. They come and pick up the food scraps (that come from the campus dining locations) and the scraps are composted."

The lack of clarity about composting in the SLP is only the tip of the iceberg.

USD made a number of claims focused on the university's efforts to create a more sustainable campus, but I am afraid that many of those

"There seems to be an overall confusion and lack of clear vision in sustainability efforts within campus dining. I find this very problematic. If workers aren't aware of composting policies, that is just as bad as having no compost machine at all, since it is not being carried out."

claims currently lie in murky waters. If USD is going to talk the talk, they also need to walk the walk, transparently. Otherwise, we are witnessing a blatant disregard of our obligations toward the environment.

Arguably, the most grandiose display of USD's sustainability plan is the Climate Action Plan (CAP) developed in November 2016. CAP builds a vague framework of areas to focus on and goals to meet by 2020 and 2035. Unfortunately, we (as students, at least) cannot be certain that USD is staying true to these set goals. As previously stated, CAP was drawn up in 2016 and has not been updated since. The framework within the plan is also incredibly vague. No concrete action items are listed as solutions to meet the university's desired goals.

On page 41, CAP states, "To monitor progress of the CAP, it is necessary to collect data on a regular basis, typically every one to two years." After digging through USD's sustainability website, no such standardized data collection was found, save the pointless trivia facts that decorate the website.

This lack of tracking includes data on food waste. USD does not keep any record of the food waste being produced on campus. At least none that is accessible to students or members of the public. Johnson stated, "I am unaware of any tracking that is done elsewhere on campus. The former Biohitech machine

utilized in SLP Dining did have reports on how much food it processed. The new digester will also have those capabilities."

John Alejandro, the Director of Sustainability, did offer some explanation of the lack of follow up with CAP. "Since coming on board as USD's new Sustainability Director this past August, one of my priorities is to bring the Climate Action Plan up to date, given that many programs and projects came to a standstill during COVID-19. I'll be working with Dr. Michel Boudrias [Chair of the university's Sustainability Task Force] and others throughout the campus to reinvigorate

after walking around the entire premise. Alejandro responded to my inquiry about where this community composting can be located. "Dining are the only ones doing composting on campus at this time," he stated briefly.

Da'Keith Howard, a custodial employee at Bert's Bistro who I discussed recycling with, answered bluntly, "I don't believe so," when I asked if there was a compost machine within the facility. I also asked him if the dining location currently takes place in any form of waste recycling or composting, to which he responded, "not to my knowledge."

At Aromas, student worker

Aimee Barraza said, "I don't think there's a compost machine in this facility, but we do take the compost separately and make sure it goes somewhere else." This answer showed a more promising effort than the previous one. I inquired more about the specific process Aromas follows. Barraza explained, "I just make sure that all of our coffee grinds go in this bucket and paper towels can go in there, too. Maybe banana peels. But there's only one person that takes it out... before they transfer it somewhere else." At least some pre-consumer composting seems to be taking place on campus.

However, when I moved on to speak to Tu Mercado clerk, Miguel Zamora, I was met with uncertainty once again. "I think so. I'm not sure," Zamora said about Tu Mercado composting.

There seems to be an overall confusion and lack of clear vision in sustainability efforts within campus dining. I find this very problematic. If workers aren't aware of composting policies, that is just as bad as having no compost machine at all, since it is not being carried out.

There are claims about community composting, waste recycling in every dining facility and the reasons for no current composting in the SLP, but the answers to each question are all over the place. There should be clarity in USD's green activity and better communication for employees

and students, so we can all participate in sustainability to the best of our ability.

USD's peer universities seem to be ahead of USD in their effort to recycle waste. Gonzaga University's "Rethink Waste" page has a Waste Collection Report which is updated by year and indicates how much of each kind of waste (trash, recycling and compost) was collected each month and from what locations, something that Johnson confirmed USD does not do. This is the kind of transparency I believe USD should have with their students and even the general public. I also believe that more effort from USD is desired by many students. There is an active petition on change.org with just over 500 signatures to add a composting facility to USD's campus. Clearly true effort toward sustainability is a student want that is not being realized right now.

What is USD actively doing to promote sustainability on campus? There is some effort to be environmentally conscious. The reusable to-go containers in the SLP known as Ozzi boxes, Sustain-a-bottle (a push for students to use reusable water bottles when dining on campus), Disabled Veterans of America collection bins, a variety of online resources educating students on personal sustainability, and a multitude of student organizations focused on helping the environment all prove that USD is dedicated to doing their part for the environment.

Alejandro shared that the "grounds crew composts virtually 100% of organic waste generated on campus, the only exception being palm fronds, which are not compostable (as we understand it)." However, the key factor is that almost all of these efforts rely on students to take responsibility, or they are initiated by students in the first place, which is a great look for USD students but not so much for the institution itself.

This should not only be a student effort, but an institutional effort. Sustainability is an ongoing effort to reduce waste, recycle and watch the impact you are making on the environment. In order to accomplish this, USD needs to reinvigorate its efforts and communicate to faculty, staff and students what procedures are in place and the current stats and conditions of sustainability efforts on campus. Otherwise, USD's movement toward a greener campus feels dishonest and lackluster.

The views expressed in the opinion section are not necessarily those of *The USD Vista* staff, the University of San Diego, or its student body.

OPINION

Where is the love for CAS?

USD should consider renovating their largest college's facilities ASAP

SPENCER BISPHAM
ASST. OPINION EDITOR

In case you haven't visited the new Knauss Center for Business Education, you should make time to see it as soon as possible. It's a beautiful facility with a \$50+ million price tag, and it's open to all students. There's also air conditioning, a mediterranean cafe called "Olivas," and more study rooms than you can count.

With all of those bells and whistles, it's hard not to feel neglected as a student in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). As the largest college at the university with 3,600 students (more than twice the size of the business school), it sure would be nice to have a shiny, new facility that catered to our needs.

For instance, the Ethnic Studies Department is located on the second floor of Maher Hall. It sits to the left of the main foyer at the edge of a dimly-lit hallway, with the "Department of Ethnic Studies" paint slowly fading beside the door. Inside is a collage of beiges constituting the carpet, furniture and walls. The building was originally constructed in 1954, and though the technology in most rooms has been updated, the original structure remains.

Across the Plaza de San Diego is another example of graceful aging: Saints Tekakwitha and Serra Hall (Saints). This



Buildings that host CAS departments such as Maher are in need of renovation.
Photo courtesy of Jackson Tahmoush/The USD Vista

building is not only home to a wide range of CAS courses, but it also houses the International Center, Counseling Center, the Disability and Learning Difference Resource Center and the Humanities Center. The latter is probably the closest thing we humanities students have to a centralized hub, despite the courses for our majors being spread throughout the rest of campus.

An exception to CAS' outdated facilities is the Belanich Engineering Center, which is hidden underneath Guadalupe Hall. The first floor definitely underwent some renovations — glass doors, computer lab, the whole works. Its classrooms are devoted entirely to engineering courses. When it comes to the second and third stories of the building, though, they are in similar physical condition to Maher and Saints. Curiously,

these two floors also host a variety of non-engineering classes, many of which fall within other areas of CAS. Even within a building supposedly dedicated to engineering, there are still areas that do not serve this purpose and would benefit from renovation.

The inconsistency of these CAS facilities is by no means a put-down to the new Center for Business Education.

Jealousy notwithstanding, it's an incredible building that will be cherished and renowned on this campus for years to come. It was also arguably well-deserved, as the old business school building was similar to much of the CAS facilities in its current age. This begs the question: when will CAS buildings get an upgrade like the School of Business?

For the answer to that question, we must turn to the

university's current outline for campus maintenance: the Renaissance Plan. According to their website, the plan is designed to address deferred maintenance projects in some of the older buildings and add new construction projects when appropriate.

Since 2017, it has resulted in the restoration of the Founders and Camino residential halls, the new Center for Business Education, the Learning Commons and other buildings as well. It was also responsible for renovating the bottom floor of the Belanich, fixing the pipes at Copley Library and replacing the "original systems" in Camino, Founders, Sacred Heart, and Maher Hall(s). While there is no explicit timeline for the expansion of CAS mentioned, the recent success of the Renaissance Plan among a myriad of other projects suggests it's not out of the question.

Assistant Vice President for Facilities Management, Andre Hutchinson, explained that plans for future renovation are being discussed.

"It is very early in the process to begin thinking about USD's next major phase of capital construction," Hutchinson said. "The buildings that are being considered for future deferred maintenance and other capital improvements include Maher Hall, Saints Hall, and Warren Hall. As all of these buildings are occupied and/or currently

in use, the planning for work of this magnitude typically takes several years before the actual work takes place, and then the work itself will likely be phased over a multi-year schedule."

Just like with the Knauss Center for Business Education, following through on these renovations would benefit more than just CAS students. Especially in Maher, the countless number of first-years who live and go to classes in the building would find the renovation of these spaces a welcome addition. It might even draw prospective students to our social science/humanities programs: tenants of the liberal-arts curriculum here at USD.

It's important that we uplift all of the USD community together. We're already the No. 1 most beautiful campus in the nation, with a business school that ranks in the top 50 in the country for both graduate and MBA programs. The Knauss School of Business deserves its flowers, and so do the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Law and other buildings here on campus.

We should all be excited about where we pay to live, work and learn; that excitement should be reflected in the visual quality of these spaces as well.

For those of us enrolled in CAS, hopefully that will mean renovations for more of our facilities sometime in the near future.

Is the pandemic over? I'm not Biden it Biden claims the pandemic is over, but what does 'over' really mean?

RONNIE SAENZ
CONTRIBUTOR

At the beginning of the semester, one of my classes required masks. Since then, that rule has been lifted, putting an unofficial end to the mask era. Even though masks have had their fond farewell, the story of the pandemic is not over yet, and President Biden wants to cut this story short.

President Biden's "60 Minutes" interview on Sept. 18 covered many bases — from Ukraine, to Mar-a-lago, to Uvalde — but one topic that came up, surprisingly briefly, was the COVID-19 pandemic.

When President Biden was asked about the state of the pandemic, he gave his opinion on the issue.

"The pandemic is over. We still have a problem with COVID. We're still doing a lot

of work on it. But the pandemic is over. If you notice, no one's wearing masks. Everybody seems to be in pretty good shape. And so I think it's changing. And I think this is a perfect example of it," Biden stated.

This may make sense in theory, as masks and even social distancing requirements are being lifted across the country, but the Merriam-Webster definition of a pandemic is "an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area (such as multiple countries or continents) and typically affects a significant proportion of the population." I'm no scientist, but nowhere does that definition mention mask and social distancing requirements as a part of defining a pandemic, or when it's over.

We know COVID-19 cases are still high, as Dr. Michael T. Osterholm, an infectious-disease specialist at the

University of Minnesota, points out in a Sept. 19 interview for the New York Times about President Biden's comments.

"We've had two million cases reported over the last 28 days, and we know underreporting is substantial. [COVID-19] continues to be the Number four cause of death in the country," said Dr. Osterholm.

Two million cases in the U.S. means there is still an outbreak of COVID-19 here, and there are still outbreaks and spikes in COVID-19 cases in other countries such as China, which continues to tighten restrictions as a result. So we need to do more to stop COVID-19 across the world as much as we do in the U.S.

The World Health Organization (WHO) actually outlines the procedures that need to be followed in order to stop the pandemic, such as distributing vaccines globally,

building trust in preventative COVID-19 treatment and reducing the spread of COVID-19 in clinics. Once these measures are in place, outbreaks across the world will decrease dramatically. The end of the pandemic is marked by the end of outbreaks globally.

My family did not let our guard down; we have been very good about following all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines since the beginning of the pandemic. Wash your hands, wear a mask, self isolate and get vaccinated. We even cleaned our groceries toward the beginning, when no one knew how COVID-19 was transmitted.

We took precautions for two years and no one ever got COVID-19. We saw friends and extended family get sick, but not us. We were one of the few to hold out.

That was until late this

August. My dad contracted COVID-19 and was sick for two weeks. He had both boosters but was still miserably bed-ridden for two weeks, as he has a compromised immune system. My dad believes he would have died if he wasn't vaccinated, and I believe him.

I'm not saying COVID-19 is as dangerous as it was a year ago, but it certainly is still prevalent enough that we can't say the pandemic is over. It's still all over the country and the world, and the USD waste water report confirms new cases right here on campus, weekly.

COVID-19 cases have declined dramatically in the past year, but as it's still the number four cause of death in the country, it's too early to keep our guard down.

In the meantime, wash your hands, social distance, get tested if you're sick, and most importantly, get vaccinated.

The views expressed in the opinion section are not necessarily those of *The USD Vista* staff, the University of San Diego, or its student body.

JACOB WEIL (JUNIOR)

"I LOVE BEING IN SAN DIEGO DURING THE FALL, ESPECIALLY IF THE PADRES MAKE THE PLAYOFFS LIKE THEY DID THIS SEASON. MY FRIENDS AND I ALWAYS HAVE A GOOD TIME WHEN WE GO."



Photo courtesy of Jacob Weil



Photo courtesy of Teagan Sheffield

TEAGAN SHEFFIELD (JUNIOR)

"IN THE FALL, I ENJOY GOING ON HIKES IN SAN DIEGO. THE WEATHER IS PERFECT FOR IT, NOT TOO HOT OR COLD. THERE ARE SOME HIKES I ALWAYS FIND MYSELF GOING BACK TO, SUCH AS TORREY PINES. I'M FROM OREGON, SO FALL IN SAN DIEGO DEFINITELY LOOKS A LOT DIFFERENT HERE THAN BACK HOME, BUT BEING ABLE TO GET OUTSIDE WITH SUCH GREAT WEATHER IN THE FALL HERE IN SD IS SUCH A BLESSING."

ZOEY DELGADO (JUNIOR)

"WHEN I WAS BACK HOME, I USED TO DO A LOT OF FALL ACTIVITIES WITH MY PARENTS, AND DECORATING FOR HALLOWEEN IS MY WAY OF CELEBRATING THE SEASON CHANGING. WHERE I'M FROM IN ARIZONA AND IN CALIFORNIA, TOO WE DON'T HAVE ANY DISTINCT SEASONS, AND WE CAN'T WATCH THE LEAVES CHANGE, SO WE DECORATE INSTEAD. PUMPKIN CARVING IS REALLY FUN AND CREATIVE, PLUS WE'RE THINKING OF MAKING PUMPKIN PIE WITH THE INSIDES AND ROASTING THE SEEDS. WE DON'T DO ENOUGH CREATIVE THINGS WHERE YOU CAN USE YOUR HANDS AND JUST FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING ELSE FOR A WHILE."



Photo courtesy of Zoey Delgado

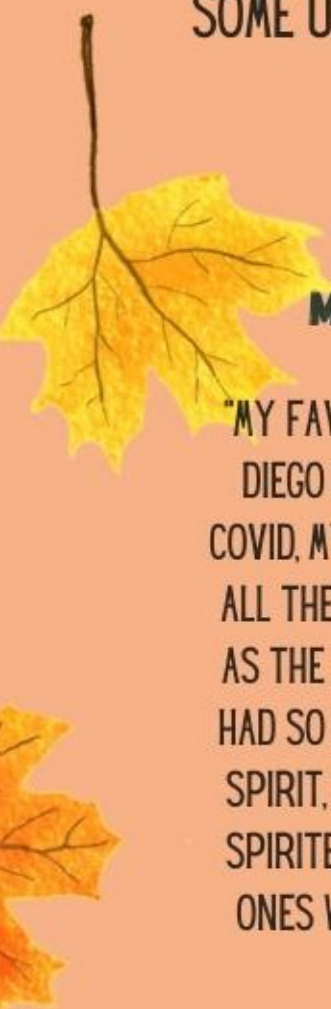


FALLING FOR FALL

STUDENTS SHARE THEIR FAVORITE FALL ACTIVITIES IN SAN DIEGO



THE FALL SEASON LOOKS A LOT DIFFERENT IN SAN DIEGO THAN IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, WITH CONSISTENT SUN AND BLUE SKIES ALL SEASON LONG. HOWEVER, THIS DOESN'T MEAN THERE AREN'T ANY FUN FALL ACTIVITIES TO DO. TOREROS STILL MANAGE TO HAVE A FUN FALL SEASON BY PARTAKING IN VARIOUS ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT SAN DIEGO. WE ASKED SOME UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO STUDENTS TO SHARE THEIR FAVORITE ACTIVITIES DURING THIS TIME OF YEAR.



MARADE VESEY (SENIOR)

"MY FAVORITE THING TO DO IN THE FALL IN SAN DIEGO IS GOING TO HAUNTED HOUSES. DURING COVID, MY ROOMMATES AND I WOULD GO TEST OUT ALL THE DRIVE-THROUGH HAUNTED MAZES, SUCH AS THE DEL-MAR SCREAM ZONE, AND WE ALWAYS HAD SO MUCH FUN. IT BRINGS IN THE HALLOWEEN SPIRIT, AND IT'S A CHEAP, EASY WAY TO HAVE A SPIRITED THRILL. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE ONES WE FIND THIS YEAR NOW THAT WE'RE NO LONGER IN LOCKDOWN!"



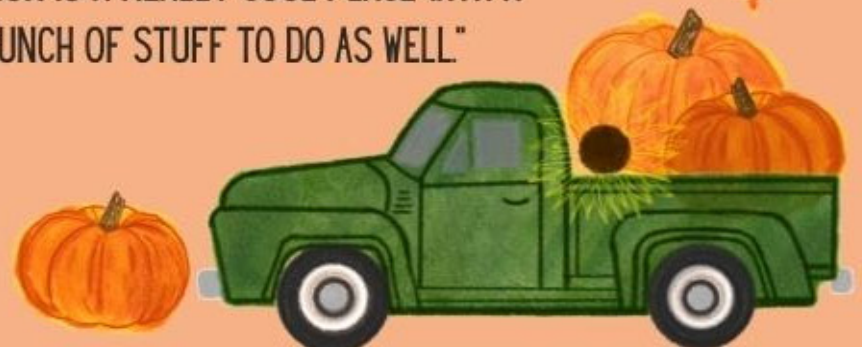
Photo courtesy of @thescreamzone/Instagram

REESE BURKE (FIRST-YEAR)

"MY FAVORITE FALL ACTIVITY IN SAN DIEGO WOULD PROBABLY BE GOING TO THE PUMPKIN PATCH AT LIBERTY STATION. THE PUMPKIN PATCH IS SO CUTE AND A GREAT PLACE TO GO WITH YOUR FRIENDS. LIBERTY STATION IS A REALLY COOL PLACE WITH A BUNCH OF STUFF TO DO AS WELL"



Photo courtesy of @gofffamilypumpkinpatch/Instagram



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FEATURE

A peek into ‘Heroes of the Fourth Turning’

Cast and crew discuss the powerful yet controversial upcoming play

HALEY JACOB
FEATURE EDITOR

Every year, the University of San Diego’s Department of Theatre puts on an undergraduate fall production. This year, the department is performing “Heroes of the Fourth Turning,” a modern play written by playwright Will Arbery in 2019. The story is controversial and addresses many hot-button topics prevalent in society today, including topics relevant to Catholic ideologies and conservative-Catholic views. Performances will run from Nov. 4 to Nov. 6 in the Studio Theatre in Sacred Heart Hall, and the cast and crew are eager to see the audiences’ reactions.

The department emphasizes critical thinking, creative engagement and other progressive standards that echo the values of a Changemaker Campus. According to the department’s website, its mission is to “embrace theatre as a means to inspire humanity and engage a diverse society.” Last year, the fall undergraduate play portrayed the experience of a gay woman at a Catholic institution facing homophobic bullying and harassment. It brought attention to the traditional Catholic views of homosexuality and the harm that alienation and unacceptance causes.

However, this year’s play covers more ground and invites the audience to experience bigotry and hatred up close.

The play takes place in 2017 in a small town in Wyoming. Four Catholic alumni — Kevin, Teresa, Emily, Justin — from the Transfiguration College of Wyoming, a Christian institution, return to the college town in celebration of their professor Gina’s promotion to president of the college. Now seven years out of college and in their late twenties, the students reunite, leading to heated conversations and debates around their differing political views and values, despite most characters identifying as conservative.

Gina experiences a loss of recognition for each student, as the intensity and closed-mindedness of their values are opposite to the growth mindset Gina taught her students to carry through life. This play focuses on dialogue and stresses the importance of conversation in understanding one another and discovering what it means to show humanity and open-mindedness when approaching political and religious differences.

Assistant Professor of Theatre and Director of the play Jersten Seraile believes it’s important to put on this play now, amid the current

political climate in the country.

“We’re in the most divided time we have ever been, and it’s a strange time because personally, I find myself only sticking with a certain group, and other folks are only sticking with a certain group,” Seraile said. “It’s like we’re not talking to one another. How are we going to have progress if we only disagree and don’t come to solutions, if we can’t have a human-to-human conversation? There are some trigger warnings because it covers some heavy topics regarding abortion, Black Lives Matter, regarding a lot of things that are at the forefront of today’s discussion. But, the agenda is to get folks to see themselves and realize, ‘Okay, I don’t like that side of me. How can I change? How can I do better?’”

USD senior and actor portraying the character “Kevin,” James Carroll, also discussed the relevance of putting on this performance now, connecting the relevance to the recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

“That is a huge landmark event that is a reversal of progress I thought we were making as a society,” Carroll said. “That is one of the topics in this play, but of course there are a lot of different conversations. We talk about race and segregation, and it grapples with social media and sort of the dual-edged sword of technology, where social media can be addictive but also helps us communicate in tremendous ways; it certainly speaks to our current political climate. It’s a lot, and it’s dicey, and it’s in your face and there’s a lot of sensitive content, but I think this is a great play to do at this time.”

Audience members will hear and experience conversations around heavy subjects. However, cast and crew members believe this approach will allow viewers to understand the alarming nature of the views held by the characters, as well as how these conversations are mere reflections of the real-life values and perspectives some people in society have toward marginalized groups and political issues.

USD senior and scenic designer Arlene Gil discussed the intense dialogue.

“People are going to hear things they don’t want to hear, and they won’t like,” Gil said. “It’s about learning or having people be aware that there are people that actually think like this, and it’s completely normal for them to come up with a statement that’s as outrageous as anything the characters might say. It’s going to be challenging; it’s going to be hard to listen and hard to watch both for liberals and conservatives because I don’t know even if someone aligns in thought with the characters would like to hear or like to watch



Showings of “Heroes of the Fourth Turning” will be in the Studio Theatre in Sacred Heart Hall.

Haley Jacob/The USD Vista



Cast and crew members prepare for the play at a read-through in the Black Box Theatre.

Photo courtesy of Robin Roberts

from an audience perspective.”

Despite the play bringing attention to harmful ideologies, the broader theme and purpose of the piece is to teach people the importance of open-mindedness, whether audience members adhere to the views of the characters or find themselves on the opposite side of the spectrum, looking in with a critical eye. A message of humanity and openness to change is at the forefront of this story, and thoughtful, introspective reflection is the goal for everyone who attends the performances.

“It’s more about dialogue and what happens when you don’t lead with love,” Seraile said. “It is also about humanity, how we’re all capable of changing for the good. That’s sort of the agenda of our story, to be able to lead with love and to be able to have conversations with one another without harming one another. In this play, we see the effects of when we don’t lead with love and when we choose to push our own agenda on other folks and how that can lead to harm. I believe firmly that we can’t make progress if we’re only talking to folks that already hold the values we [ourselves] hold.”

Gil shared similar sentiments on the value of engaging

with opposing viewpoints.

“On the liberal and progressive side, people are so caught up in protesting and putting their voices out there that sometimes we forget what we’re fighting for because we don’t see it firsthand, and this is kind of giving us an opportunity to understand the roots of where all of this is coming from on the other side and understand the other perspective,” Gil said. “Because, even if you don’t align with someone or agree with them, once you understand where it’s all coming from, some sort of empathy might arise, and even the playwright talks about that in the beginning of the script.”

Carroll discussed the play’s ability to unite people across the political spectrum.

“I think that will be the mark of this play — forcing two sides that haven’t come together for anything in years to just at least begin to understand and sympathize and put yourself in the thoughts and perspective of the other side, put yourself in their shoes,” Carroll said.

Finally, Seraile hopes audience members walk away with a stronger understanding of their influence and ability to create a community centered around civility, not division.

“This community is a place where I think we have a lot of forward thinkers and innovators and folks who are often quicker to act on things much more than the older folks, and I really appreciate that,” Seraile said. “I think this is the perfect place to have this play for self-reflection, and I’m hoping folks walk out of here thinking, ‘What can I do to contribute to the community, to change, to make things better, to be an ally, and to not lead with hate but to leave with love and be a servant of the community and make more friends and talk to more people?’”

While putting on productions addressing political and religious ideologies and values is nothing new for the Department of Theatre, the upcoming fall production and its controversial, gripping storyline crosses into new and unexplored territory.

The themes and ideas presented in the play touch on the country’s divided, tense political climate and the loss of humanity and unity that has struck the country over the last few years. The cast and crew are excited to put on the performances next month and are hopeful that audiences will leave showings with a deeper understanding of themselves, others and the spaces we share with one another.

FAMA's live performance

Traditional dresses and dances highlight Latinx culture

SARAH FAHEY
ASST. A&C EDITOR

FAMA from page 1

Though folklórico originates particularly from Central America, the dance is popularly connected with Latino culture.

FAMA seeks to include those from all backgrounds to appreciate the beauty of folklórico.

The dance plays a huge role in the representation of Latinx culture, with the lively performances being unmistakably associated with the community.

USD junior and USD TV lead editor Emily Leyva considered this as she expressed her fascination with the performance.

"The whole performance of it, the music, the mariachi has become such a big representation of Hispanic culture," Leyva said. "The bright colors, the big skirts that take up space — it's kind of symbolic."

USD is commonly referred to as a predominantly white institution (PWI), meaning there tends to be a lack of students with diverse cultural backgrounds on campus. This can lead to underrepresentation and a lack of space on campus for minority communities.

Gonzalez comments on the pertinence for USD to host more



USD sophomore Gabby Gonzalez poses in her folklórico dress.

Sarah Fahey/The USD Vista

cultural events such as this.

"Here at USD, it's predominantly white and I don't see a lot of Latino culture, so having folklórico really helps add that culture that's missing and makes me feel like I'm at home," Gonzalez said.

The wide garments indeed

take up a lot of space — especially when in motion — and the rich mariachi music is difficult to ignore. It is an exemplary representation of the Latino culture at work on USD's campus.

Gonzalez playfully adds to the importance of FAMA's presence on campus.

"Folklórico adds more flavor and more culture here at USD," she quipped.

The event was definitely a captivating experience, with many students stopping to gawk on their way to and from class. Those who set aside time for the occasion waited with

anticipation and excitement for the performance to begin.

Overall, FAMA delivered a successful performance — demonstrating the beauty and grace of the dance and culture. FAMA offers the opportunity for all to participate in traditional Mexican culture.

It Starts and Ends With Us

The ongoing Colleen Hoover book craze

SATVIKA NITYA
CONTRIBUTOR

Six years after its publication, Colleen Hoover's novel "It Ends With Us" became a viral must-have book. After its original release in August 2016, the book achieved good reviews and praise.

However, the recent surge in the book's popularity is credited to Hoover's fans and attention from the BookTok community on TikTok. Videos about Hoover's work went viral in 2021, garnering more than a million views on each video.

This led to a sudden increase in the overall popularity of Hoover's books, specifically propelling "It Ends With Us" to debut at No. 1 on the New York Times bestsellers list in January 2022. The book continues its 67th week on the list as the release date for its sequel "It Starts With Us" nears, leading fans to excitedly mark Oct. 18 on their calendars.

The synopsis of "It Ends With Us" describes the book as a contemporary romance, following 23-year-old Lily Bloom and her two love interests: Ryle Kincaid and Atlas Corrigan. However, Hoover's inclusion of plot twists in the story changes the premise of the whole book, diving into serious topics of domestic



Many readers have marked their calendars for the release of "It Starts With Us."

Photo courtesy of @Colleenhoover/Instagram

violence, toxic generational cycles and emotional and sexual abuse, which came as a shock to many readers.

USD first-year and avid book reader Chloe Obeyesekere expressed her feelings to the story's surprising turn of events.

"I was on BookTok a lot, and people were raving about how 'It Ends With Us' is really good but kind of sad," Obeyesekere said. "But I didn't think they were talking about this kind of sadness. I went into it thinking

it's gonna be a cute little love story, and that's not what it really was. The majority of the book deals with abuse, and I was shocked when I read that because it's not the direction I thought the story was gonna go in. But I really enjoyed reading it."

After the introduction of the theme of abuse, the book focuses on the effects and the journey of breaking generational cycles of domestic violence. The story ends on a hopeful note of finding the strength to get out of abusive

relationships. However, in true Hoover plot-twist fashion, the epilogue introduced cliffhangers and left fans eagerly awaiting the release of the sequel since its announcement in February.

The release of "It Starts With Us" also falls in the middle of October, the month dedicated to Domestic Violence Awareness, fueling fan speculation about the possibility of a continuing theme of relationship abuse in the sequel.

USD sophomore Lauren Williams has joined the bandwagon of anticipating fans.

"I'm very excited for the sequel to come out because I want to see what happens next in the story," Williams said. "Without spoiling anything, I'm excited to see whether the survivor finds the love they deserve and how they try to recover from the trauma of abuse. The ending of the last book left us with so many unanswered questions and gists of what we can look forward to, so I'm just super pumped for Oct. 18."

While there are readers looking forward to the new book, there are others who do not like Hoover's style of storytelling. Critics on several social media platforms are calling her stories "trauma porn," suggesting that she overly romanticizes aggressive and predatory behavior.

Among these criticisms, allegations that Hoover knowingly dismissed a teenager who reached out to her about being sexually harassed by the writer's son have recently surfaced. This information has taken over platforms such as Twitter, TikTok and Reddit, with people going as far as saying that Hoover used her son as an inspiration behind the story of "It Ends With Us."

USD sophomore Soniya Malla reacted to these critiques.

"I think it would be extremely ironic if the rumors about her and her son are true," Malla said. "But there is no evidence yet, and I don't wanna assume something based on gossip. What I do know for sure is that 'It Ends With Us' was based on Colleen's parents' relationship. And I don't think I ever felt like the domestic violence or abuse shown in the book was glamorized. But having read other Colleen Hoover books, I do think romanticizing toxic assertiveness and actions when you find someone attractive is a common trend in her books."

Regardless of personal opinions on Hoover and her work, "It Starts With Us" is a highly anticipated fall read coming out on Oct. 18, with reviews, speculations, comments and critiques storming all social media platforms.

David O. Russell's 'Amsterdam' hits theaters

The star-studded film receives mixed reviews

STELLA SCHNEIDER
CONTRIBUTOR

"Amsterdam," written and directed by five-time-Oscar-nominated David O. Russell, hit theaters this past weekend. Set in the 1930s, the film follows three friends who not only witness a murder, but become suspects themselves and uncover one of the most outrageous plots in American history. Margot Robbie, Christian Bale and John David Washington are the leads of the film, with a trail of A-list actors and actresses alongside them. From Anya Taylor Joy to Robert De Niro and singer Taylor Swift, the star-studded cast of "Amsterdam" garnered significant attention.

Whenever a film with such a stacked cast hits theaters, many ponder if it will enhance the quality of the movie. USD professor and Film Studies minor co-director, Dr. Eric Pierson believes a movie must have more than an A-list cast.

"The film still has to resonate with people, I don't think you can stack your cast to success. If the film stinks, it stinks," Pierson said.

Even if these actors have had ample success in other films, the film itself must rely on its own merit rather than the success of the people acting in it, and



The A-list cast of "Amsterdam" intrigued many viewers.

there's some debate on how "Amsterdam" fits into this logic.

With a rotten tomatoes score of 33%, "Amsterdam" wasn't looking at a promising opening weekend. The crew working on the film were hopeful that the appearance of singer Taylor Swift would gather her fans for some box office sales, but this did not greatly affect the turnout.

Pierson expressed doubts that Swift's appearance would attract the brand of moviegoers interested in the film.

"I don't know if the people

who would go to see the film because Taylor Swift is in it will understand the film they are going to see," Pierson said. "They may end up profoundly disappointed."

"Amsterdam" opened with only \$6.5 million in the box office and has many mixed reviews already, with some moviegoers concerned the cast's talent wasn't taken advantage of enough. USD Sophomore Aoibheann Murphy has a similar worry.

"The cast raises peoples' expectations going into the movie

Photo courtesy of @Amsterdammovie/Instagram and the cast doesn't make up for how good the movie could be and may leave people disappointed."

"Amsterdam" seems to have comedic writing and an ambitious plot, but there are aspects that many aren't interested in. Another concern for students is the watchability of the many popular actors and actresses in the film.

USD junior Michael Fagan commented on "Amsterdam." "The ratings may go down if someone's favorite actor or actress is in 'Amsterdam' and

doesn't get enough screen time, but other than that, I can only see the cast helping the success of the film."

Director David O. Russell is known for his previous movies he directed, such as "American Hustle", "Silver Linings Playbook" and others. He hasn't written and directed a movie since "Joy" in 2015. Coming back to the scene, Russell may catch the attention of some movie lovers or individuals looking to see what he's up to, but his work, as with many other directors, can be an acquired taste.

USD Junior Jana Dulcich saw "Amsterdam" opening weekend. "I expected more action and excitement; I think [the movie] had such talented actors they could have taken [better] advantage of."

"Amsterdam's" trailer insinuates a suspenseful film, but most of the screen time years to establish the plot through heavy dialogue. With the end of the year approaching, fall is when movies are released more often if they are looking to earn awards. "Amsterdam" may have a stacked cast, but Pierson argues, "the film will have to fail or succeed on its own."

Despite the casting and big budget, "Amsterdam" had a quiet opening weekend in the box office and mostly negative reviews so far.

The second annual Arts and Culture Festival

USD united by culture, food and live performances

JESSICA MILLS
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

The second annual USD Arts and Culture Festival will commence this Saturday, Oct. 15 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in the Studio Theater Courtyard. Presented by the College of Arts and Sciences, the event is free and offers live performances, breakfast treats and mingling opportunities.

USD senior Melissa Joy Tumlos (she/they) is among the artists performing on the east stage and offers a preview into her act.

"I am going to be singing a cover of a song by one of my favorite funk bands, Vulfpeck, titled 'Love Is a Beautiful Thing,'" Tumlos said. "It's [a] joyful, calming song that talks about the possessiveness of love - we want our lovers to be happy, but we want it to be because of us, and not someone else."

They are excited for the upcoming festival and see it as a great opportunity for the USD community to explore the culture and talent that thrives on this campus.

"I am most excited to be singing with the USD Concert Choir—we'll be sharing some vastly different, complicated and beautiful pieces that we've been working hard

on since the beginning of the semester," Tumlos said.

Many performances and events are collaborative, creative work from students, faculty, professors and staff from varying departments and backgrounds.

Operations Manager for USD's Music Department, Nicole Houghton (she/her) explains that many of the same musical ensembles that performed in last year's festival

will be back this year as well.

"Students can expect a wide variety of performances from various USD Music Department ensembles such as the Choral Scholars, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band," Houghton said.

USD lecturer Soroya Rowley (they/she) is presenting two original songs by a character they created named Max Boppins.

"Max is a non-binary person who uses singular they

pronouns," Rowley said. "If Jason Mraz and Mary Poppins had a baby, that would be Max. They love to sing songs for the kids. The first song is titled 'I Love That I'm Non-Binary,' the second song is called 'Singular They is Fun to Say.'" In between the songs, Max tells the audience about their own story and how they learned about two-spirit people in American Indian cultures, and how that

helped them to understand their own gender identity."

This is Rowley's first time performing for the Arts and Culture Festival and she feels both nervous and excited at the prospect.

"I know that some people are uneducated about the complexity of gender, and when you are unfamiliar with something, it can seem scary," Rowley said. "So I hope to be a force to help change that through my fun and silly songs. I also hope to empower people in the queer community through the joy and confidence of my character Max Boppins."

Students can also expect breakfast and coffee to be served as well as sculpture installations, dances from People of the Islands and spoken word from the Black Student Union.

Senior Program Coordinator Kevin Garrie (he/him) has put together a 10-minute production of music covers from various video games like "Studiopolis" from Sonic Mania.

"I play the Japanese bamboo flute and beatbox at the same time and move and play all together," Garrie said. "Essentially I am a 'rapper' for the flute."

With an abundance of culture, food and live performances present at this year's Arts and Culture Festival, the USD community can celebrate all forms of art this Saturday.



Musical performers from the 2021 Arts and Culture Festival.

Photo courtesy of Michelle Kennedy

ARTS & CULTURE

The rise of low-impact workouts

Yoga, swimming and 'hot girl walks' move away from toxic gym culture

JESSICA MILLS

ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

Like fashion, music and celebrity drama, personal fitness has a habit of following trends. Many individuals have recently shifted from the once popular high-intensity interval training (HIIT) toward intentional movements that engage both the mind and muscles equally.

Low-impact exercises such as walking, swimming, pilates and yoga can improve strength, reduce stress and lower risk of injury. Several exercises are specifically tailored to each individual's flexibility, mental state and strength, for maximum personal benefit.

On the other hand, many find that gym spaces often turn fitness into an unhealthy competition. When it comes to ability, weight, clothing and equipment use, there's commonly an uninviting and dismissive attitude toward anyone outside of what society deems "acceptable" in these categories. Gym culture regularly pushes the narrative that a productive workout requires "maxing": lifting weight until one reaches their maximal limit and must stop completely.

Maxing places excessive stress on joints, tendons and muscles. FitBod, an app with personal HIIT workouts, explains that maxing produces a stress response by inducing a threat to one's survival. When done incorrectly, it can also lead to injury and hinder personal progress. But, maxing isn't necessary to deem a workout as successful.

"Hot girl walk" (HGW), a term coined in 2021 by fitness influencer and college student, Mia Lind, became the latest rave on TikTok. By uniting positive thinking and walking, Healthline says HGWs are instrumental in boosting mental and physical health.

The #hotgirlwalk hashtag has garnered millions of views and recognition from media outlets such as the New York Times, Cosmopolitan and The Cut. Although the word "hot" is in the title, HGW's have nothing to do with attaining society's "ideal" body type. They're about tackling one's goals, gratitude and confidence – through mindful and positive thinking.

USD senior Megan Cardiff (she/her) appreciates the simplicity of this workout.

"I like rallying my friends to go on a walk and get outside," Cardiff said. "Or I'll go solo and listen to a podcast. Walks are relaxing for me."

Lind notes that including an inspirational podcast or motivational podcast are key aspects of a HGW.

USD Director of Sports



While yoga is often held in groups, there is still a focus on one's own spiritual journey.

Photo courtesy of Colby Crispeno



"Dancer's Pose" requires patience and focus to achieve the deep backbend stretch.

Photo courtesy of Colby Crispeno

Medicine and Head Athletic Trainer Eli Bisnett-Cobb (he/him) explains that low-impact workouts have various benefits.

"[They] get the body moving and can help build self-esteem by doing something good for your body," Bisnett-Cobb said. "It can also help with recovery from injury or help decrease pain associated with physical ailments by activating and strengthening muscle groups. Movement is medicine and the better the body feels, the better individuals tend to feel about themselves."

Like HGWs, swimming provides both an outlet for building endurance and creating mental clarity.

USD junior Elsie Harrison (she/her) engages in both low and high intensity training as a member of USD's swimming and diving team.

"On days that I don't have swim practice I still like to be active in some way but at a lower-impact, usually walking," Harrison said. "I still love working out super hard, but when I get the chance to, I'd rather go on a walk. I think it's better for your mind to have a day or a few days to de-stress."

USD junior Colby Crispeno (they/them) is a yoga instructor and participant at Grotto Climbing, a studio located in Mission Valley. They view the practice as a bridge between their body and soul.

"Yoga for me is about

connecting and calming my nervous system," Crispeno said. "How you're feeling emotionally and physically guides your workout. That's not the case in the gym."

Yoga sessions consistently begin and end with meditation to balance and energize participants.

Oppositely, meditation, or any form of self-grounding, is not a common practice in gym spaces.

Founded by Lord Shiva, the Ministry of External Affairs of India explains in its mission statement that self-realization and liberation are among the original teachings in yoga. Today, these facets are still present in yoga sessions around the world.

"When instructing, I always say that what I teach and say are all suggestions," Crispeno said. "If you're doing something different than me, I praise that because you're acknowledging yourself."

Showing up on your mat, regardless of physical participation, is the most crucial part of yoga. Conversely, the gym prioritizes the intensity, repetition and length of one's workout.

"If you're just lying down on your mat throughout the entire class, you're still doing yoga," Crispeno said. "You showed up and did just as well as someone following the entire class routine."

Yoga strives for inclusion.

diverse ages and backgrounds, modified poses and judgment-free language generate a safe space for attendees.

Because gyms fabricate both unrealistic appearance and workout expectations, Crispeno finds the space is rarely inclusive.

"No one judges you [in yoga], because it's such a personal practice, everyone is focused on themselves," Crispeno said. "If I go to the gym, I feel like people look at one another for comparison."

These unhealthy comparisons are further normalized by social media. From influencers sharing unrealistic workout plans, health advice, diets and before-and-after pictures, many feel judged in the fitness world. It detracts from the dominant reason most start working out: to better themselves.

USD junior Teagan Sheffield (she/her) has gone to the gym for most of her life. Recently, her feelings toward the environment have changed drastically.

"Recently I felt like that environment wasn't the best for my body or mind," Sheffield said. "I would never openly stretch at a gym, but I'm completely comfortable doing so in a yoga studio."

There are many misconceptions surrounding yoga's effectiveness as an exercise. But, Sheffield found the slow movements, balance work and deep breathing

to be optimal for exercise.

"It pushed me to workout in ways I never had before," Sheffield said. "I'm exerting the same amount of energy as I would while running, without overexerting myself."

Gyms can still be utilized for low-impact workouts. Walking on the treadmill, elliptical, cycling and rowing are among the numerous options to choose from. Incorporating mindful practices like breathwork and meditation can increase relaxation and focus in this environment.

Bisnett-Cobb believes that both HIIT and low-impact training both have advantages.

"Low-impact workouts will still allow you to receive the benefits of exercise without the wear and tear of your body [or] creating a state that your body gets sore and uncomfortable," Bisnett-Cobb said. "Vice versa, HIIT workouts will allow for greater gains in the body and energy systems as the body adapts to the increasing load."

Low-impact exercises like yoga, swimming and HGWs emphasize that movement can be healing and effective. Many can even be done without an expensive gym membership or equipment and in the comfort of one's home or neighborhood. This allows individuals to personalize their movements – putting the "personal" back in personal fitness.

SPORTS

Toreros lose to Portland

Women's soccer seeks new momentum with young team



Junior Maronne Suzuki (left) and first-year Daniella Guerrero (right) are both midfielders for the women's soccer team.

Photo courtesy of @usdwsoccer/Instagram

SAVANNAH ALARCON
CONTRIBUTOR

The San Diego women's soccer team has been competing with ranked opponents the past few weeks. They battled against No. 17 Pepperdine but ultimately fell 3-0.

The Toreros have a young program this year with 11 first-years, two graduate transfers and only 17 returners. Having a young program will need time to develop.

Maronne Suzuki, a junior midfielder on the team explains her thoughts on the team's young players.

"One thing I love about the team this year is how quickly we became so connected both on and off the field. We had a total of 13 new players this year but despite being such a new and young team we were able to form a very strong chemistry so quickly," Suzuki said. "It's exciting too, because the past three years we've been very low on numbers, and this year we finally get to compete with a full squad. I feel so grateful to

be able to practice and compete with my closest friends every day, and I'm looking forward to the rest of the season."

Last Wednesday the team took on No. 15 Portland. It was a dog fight in the opening frame of the game. Portland got their first shot in at the 47th minute of the game.

Essentially, Portland had 16 shots against the Toreros

compared to USD's three shots against Portland. It was difficult for the Toreros to defend the Pilots, but their saves helped them stay in the game. San Diego had four saves in the game to stop the Pilots' momentum and lead. After going back and forth, San Diego lost 2-0.

Suzuki acknowledged the difficulty but also the resilience of the women's team.

"The WCC is one of the toughest conferences in women's soccer," Suzuki said "Because of this, we need to go into every game with a strong mindset and be ready to fight til the last whistle. No game is an easy game, but I believe that this team has shown so much resilience and will continue to overcome anything that is put in front of us this season."

This season will be a tough one, but the Toreros continue to fight every step of the way. It has been a very competitive season for San Diego, but according to Suzuki, they know exactly how they plan to succeed.

Suzuki described the dynamics of a young team and what that means for women's soccer.

"Since we are such a young team, I believe that the most important thing that will help this team succeed is experience," Suzuki said. "The more we practice together and play together our team becomes more confident and cohesive. I have already seen such a huge improvement since the very first game and I am excited to keep working and show everyone what we can do."

Competing against some of the most competitive women's soccer schools is difficult but this is no obstacle to the women's soccer team. Their resilience and grit helps them continue to fight on. The Toreros will be back in action on Oct. 15 against Loyola Marymount University (LMU) at 7p.m.



Women's soccer is made up of a particularly young team this season.

Photo courtesy of @usdwsoccer/Instagram

**COMING UP
THIS WEEK**

USD MSOC vs SDSU
Saturday, Oct. 15
7 p.m.
San Diego State

USD WVB vs Saint Mary's
Saturday, Oct. 15
1 p.m.
Moraga, CA

USD FB vs Presbyterian
Saturday, Oct. 15
2 p.m.
Torero Stadium