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THE USD VISTA

Rex Orange County charged with sexual assault

USD students discuss the allegations and Rex's impact on Generation Z

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24-year-old Alexander O'Connor, commonly known as the singer/songwriter Rex Orange County, has been charged with six counts of sexual assault. Since the break in his career, he has amassed 21 million monthly listeners on Spotify. Due to his previously 'unproblematic nature' and 'unthreatening persona,' these sexual assault allegations have shocked both fans and casual listeners of his music alike.

According to the Southwark Crown Court, O'Connor allegedly assaulted the unidentified woman twice in the West End neighborhood of London: once while riding in a taxi and three times at his home in the Notting Hill neighborhood of London, on June 1 and 2 of 2021. The age of consent in the United Kingdom is 16 years old. The woman is stated to be over the age of 16.

In July 2022, O'Connor



An unidentified woman claims to have been sexually assaulted by popular artist, Rex Orange County.

Abigail Cavizo/The USD Vista

coincidentally canceled the remainder of his tour. In a post on his social media, he credited the cancellation to "unforeseen personal circumstances."

On Oct. 10, he denied the assault allegations after appearing at London's Southwark Crown Court. The musician was released on unconditional bail, meaning O'Connor has a clean criminal record and isn't considered a flight risk by the court, after pleading not guilty to all six allegations. A preliminary trial is scheduled for Jan. 3, 2023.

O'Connor originally started his career at 17 years old by releasing his debut record, "Bcos U Will Never B Free" on SoundCloud. Due to starting at such a young age, a lot of Generation Z associates their developmental years as teenagers with O'Connor's emotional relatability.

USD senior Ely Redoble cited Rex Orange County as her No. 1 artist on Spotify. She explained her insight into why O'Connor may impact Generation Z more than other alleged assaults.

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A healthy, wealthy and happy Diwali

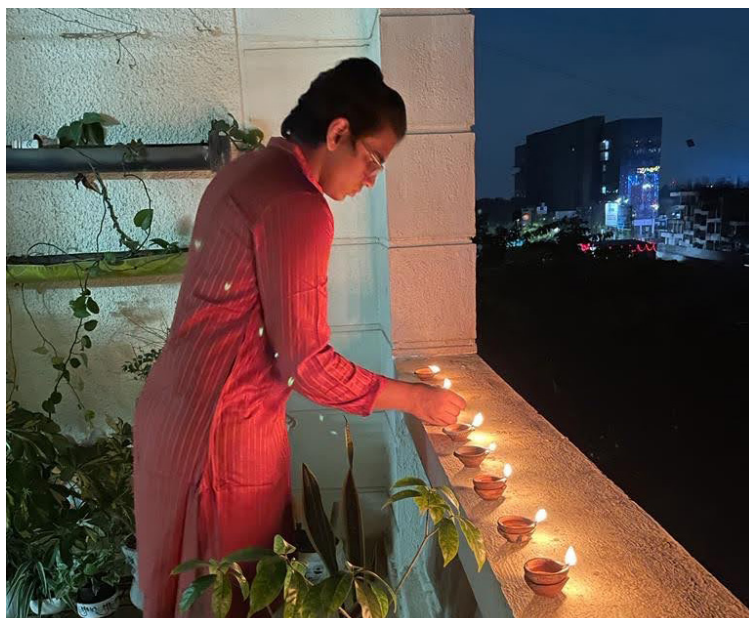
Celebrating the Festival of Lights

SATVIKA NITYA
CONTRIBUTOR

Diwali is one of the biggest festivals celebrated by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs around the world. With a wide spectrum of jovial traditions, this festival is enjoyed in different ways by millions across various countries.

Diwali occurs during the lunisolar month of Kartika. In the Gregorian calendar, this falls between late October and November. The festival lasts five days, with the third day being the main Diwali celebration.

Though the stories and myths that serve as the reason for honoring this festival differ from



The lighting of the diyas is a tradition for celebrating Diwali at night.

Satvika Nitya/The USD Vista

region to region, the basic premise remains the same — Diwali commemorates the triumph of good over evil. This year, the auspicious day falls on Oct. 24.

The biggest tradition followed by those who celebrate the

festival is the lighting of diyas, small earthen lamps filled with oil, during Diwali night. The warm and bright flame emitted from the diya is a sign of purity, prosperity and virtue. Apart from diyas, any light source ranging from fairy lights to lanterns are lit during nighttime to impart the emotion of light taking over darkness, good taking over evil. Diwali is thus famously called the "Festival of Lights."

Among Hindus, the most widespread custom is to invite Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, into their home by lighting diyas. In South India, Diwali is celebrated by Hindus to mark Lord Krishna's defeat over the demon Narakasura, while in Bengal it is celebrated to worship the goddess of death, Kali.

The more popular mythological story originates in North India, where Diwali is celebrated to honor the

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NEWS

Alexander O'Connor denies sexual assault allegations

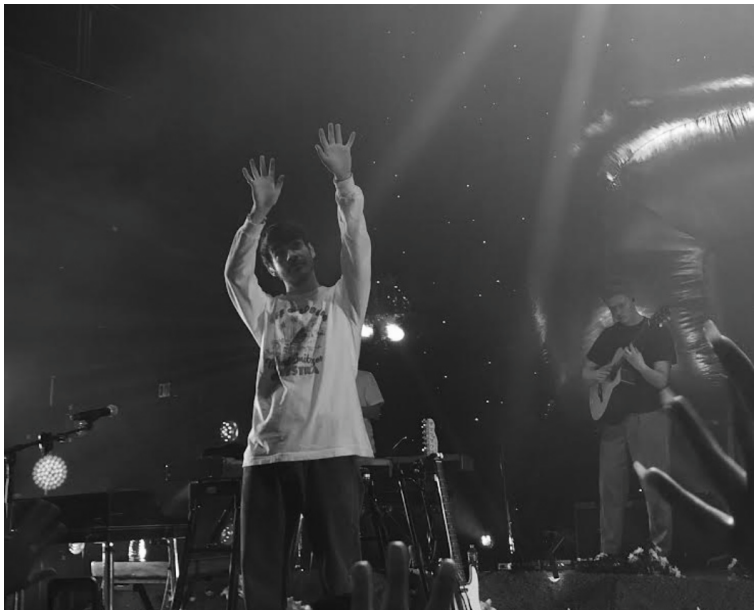
Separating the art from the artist is a common debate

From O'Connor, Page 1

"I think that he has impacted our generation through introducing his genre of music to a new group of listeners, and that the alternative/indie genre isn't as well-listened to as pop music and when people discovered it through his music they wanted more," Redoble said. "I think it's more surprising that a person like Rex participated in the act, especially since he doesn't fit the category of 'statistically stereotypical people' that would. It's more informative, even if you think he wouldn't do it, there are people with 'his aesthetics' that could."

O'Connor unofficially stepped into the spotlight in 2017 when he was featured on Tyler the Creator's "Flower Boy" album, playing into popular culture's aesthetic of the 'soft loverboy.' This refers to male-identifying people embracing traits that are typically labeled as feminine, such as the way one dresses or a soft-spoken voice. Typically, people would not see this persona as a threat, further echoing the surprise that many experienced when the news of the alleged assault reached the internet.

USD junior Jack Anthony



Details of O'Connor's case are vague, but the preliminary trial begins Jan. 3, 2023.
Abigail Cavizo/The USD Vista

mentioned his own phases of listening to Rex Orange County since high school and his perceived reality that comes with discussing the current situation.

"I feel like this thing happens with an artist, it's a big deal for a while but then it blows over with people still listening to them. Obviously it sucks, but if you keep releasing music, it kinda goes away," Anthony said.

The arrival of these allegations bring forth the common

argument among many listeners — separating the music from the artist — which many have analyzed for quite some time.

USD junior Sage Grove expressed her feelings on the debate about separating the art from the artist.

"I think people should care about the creations more than the author. I absolutely think you can generally separate the music from the artist," Grove said. "[However,] I would not

listen to the music [of someone with allegations], because I wouldn't want to support their artistic work or income further."

Considering the popularity of this debate, there have been some well-received claims. Some argue that engaging critically with a work of art is completely different from endorsing the morality of the artist.

This argument insinuates that one can always separate the art and the intentions behind the work. Some believe that people don't necessarily need to know why the artist made their art to understand the piece. Yet for O'Connor, there is a possibility that he may lose many followers in the coming months.

"My morals matter when I support people and artists, and I wouldn't listen to more of his music, because he doesn't deserve my support or the royalties from playing his music," Grove said.

With the looming preliminary trial in January, many listeners and non-listeners wonder if people will continue to stream O'Connor's music. There could be a surge of people who stop listening, for fear of indirectly supporting O'Connor.

An instance of fans who stop listening occurred in August 2021, when R. Kelly was on trial and he was ultimately convicted after years of allegations regarding his inappropriate behavior with women and minors. At the beginning of that August, Kelly's Spotify artist page had approximately 5.2 million Spotify listeners; after the conviction, there was a rapid decline by roughly 330,000 listeners by the end of the month.

This activity is extremely common when it comes to this sort of circumstance in the music industry.

"Generally, I think a lot of people will continue to listen to [Rex's] music," Anthony said. "Cancel culture gets someone new every month, but... if you make a good song, you'll get your listeners back."

The public details of the case are vague, but O'Connor's music is likely to be received and listened to in a variety of ways. These allegations shocked many students and fans, raising important questions related to O'Connor's music, the impact certain artists have generationally and art in general.

Severe Flu season strikes San Diego

Toreros discuss Influenza on campus

KARISA KAMPBELL
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ABIGAIL CAVIZO
NEWS EDITOR

Amid the stress of midterms, students have yet another looming factor to be concerned about: the upcoming flu season. This flu season is already in full swing, and San Diego is making headlines nationally due to the severe consequences of this flu season.

According to CBS News, Patrick Henry Highschool, a local San Diego Highschool in Del Cero, reportedly had 1,400 absences on a single day last week. This amounted to over half of the roughly 2,500 student population.

With this scary stat in mind, USD students are concerned for what this could mean for the spread of influenza on campus this flu season.

USD first-year Zadie Nguyen would not want the flu to impact the beginning of her college experience.

"I definitely don't want the flu," Nguyen expressed. "I feel like if I got it, I'd be out and in my first semester of college, a flu outbreak would not be ideal."

Additionally, some professors on campus are taking preventative

measures to ensure the health and well-being of those in their classrooms. For the first three weeks of the fall semester, the Political Science Department required all students to be masked as a COVID-19 precaution.

Dr. Karen Shelby, a professor in the Political Science department at USD, continues to require masks in her classroom in wake of the coming flu season.

"In one of my classes, a couple of students e-mailed and suggested that staying masked to keep everyone safe was a good idea. In my other class, I had two students who had tested positive for Covid over the first three weeks. I decided we would stay masked for a couple more weeks," Dr. Shelby said. "At the same time, I was hearing about flu cases from students. Finally, late last week, a student let me know they had strep and that it was going around in some areas of campus. With Covid, the flu and strep all still happening in my population of students, I decided it is a good idea to remain masked for the time being. If these factors change, I am open to not masking, but for the moment, 'better safe than sorry,' in terms of shared classroom time, is the guide I am following."

While some may still be annoyed by the usage of masks

in class still, many students in Dr. Shelby's class support this decision to keep their peers safe.

USD junior Shiara Mateo is a student of Dr. Shelby's, and respects the decision.

"I think it's super important to stay safe if we have the means to do it," Mateo said. "The flu is something that I wouldn't think many people would want, so if we can mask up for other people, I agree with it."

Flu season is something that affects the lives of many in the late fall/early winter months. Luckily, there are many things that can be done to stop the spread of this illness. Standard health aware practices that have become second nature due to COVID-19 such as avoiding touching one's face, washing hands often, and staying at home when sick are good practices to maintain despite any illness. According to the CDC, getting the flu vaccination is one of the best ways to prevent the flu. By getting the influenza vaccine, risk of infection is decreased by 40 to 60 percent. This could be very beneficial when it comes to a large community of people, such as the campus community of USD.

Kimberly Woodruff, Director of the Student Health Center, explained the resources offered for Influenza.



The USD Student Health Center is offering flu shots to students at no cost.
Photo Courtesy of Unsplash/@CDC

"We do offer flu shots at the health center and they are offered at no cost to students (in part with funding by ASG)," Woodruff said. "Additionally we will be doing Flu clinics on the Plaza de San Diego (between Maher and Saints) on Oct. 20 10a.m.-12p.m., 24 10a.m.-1p.m. and 27th between 10a.m.-12p.m. Faculty and staff can also get a flu vaccine for \$20."

Currently, USD is offering free flu shots for all students on campus. To request the vaccination, go to the student health portal to schedule an

appointment. Additionally, pharmacies such as Walgreens and CVS often offer walk in flu shot appointments, which may be more convenient for students living off-campus, as these pharmacies can be found across San Diego.

While the Flu vaccination is not a requirement for students, it may help Toreros stay healthy in the middle of a busy midterm schedule. What's most important, however, is ensuring that students are taking preventative measures and remaining home if they are feeling sick.

Religion is declining in America and at USD

Generation Z is the least religious generation yet

MARIANA COMBARIZA
CONTRIBUTOR

American religious affiliation has been on a decline for the past 30 years. According to the Survey Center on American Life, a non-partisan organization dedicated to research on the socioeconomic and cultural changes in American society, Generation Z is the least religious generation yet. In a research article published by the Survey Center on American Life, earlier this year, they discovered that more than one-third (34 percent) of Generation Z does not identify with any religion. In contrast, 29 percent of Millennials, 25 percent of Generation X, less than 18 percent of Baby Boomers and less than five percent of the Silent Generation considered themselves to be religiously unaffiliated.

USD, as a Catholic university, witnesses these generational differences with every incoming class of undergraduate students. USD's Institutional Research and Planning Data, available on the university's website, holds records of enrollment demographics over the past 14 years, including undergraduate student religious affiliations.

In the fall of 2008, over half of the undergraduate student body identified as Catholic at 52.7 percent. In fall 2022, only 37.7 percent are Catholic-identifying. Other Christian denominations (Lutheran, Methodist, Non-Denominational, Orthodox, Presbyterian and Protestant) experienced the same decline. In the fall of 2008, 13.9 percent of students identified with one of the Christian traditions previously stated, whereas this year, just six percent do – a percentage change of -56.8 percent in Christian religious affiliation.

However, Christianity is not the only religion represented on campus. There are students who identify as Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or Hindu; however these religious affiliations have not experienced significant change in their enrollment rates in the past 14 years. Most vary with a slight rate increase or decrease of 0.3-0.8 percent. The most notable change among non-Christian students was that the Muslim student population has nearly doubled proportionally



While USD is a Catholic university, there are no requirements for students to identify as Catholic.
Photo courtesy of www.sandiego.edu/news/detail.php?_focus=71883

speaking from 2008 at 1.4 percent to 2022 at 2.6 percent.

The only other group of students who had a significant shift in enrollment rates are those who decline to state their religion. Though the institutional data includes the demographic of those students who have “no preference” when it comes to religion (showing no significant changes throughout the years), those who “declined to state” increased over 270 percent of undergraduate enrollment from 2008 (5.2 percent) to 2022 (19.4 percent). It is unclear why these students chose not to state their religious affiliation, but it remains possible that they don't subscribe to one.

Dr. Russell Fuller, Chair of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at USD, shares his insight as to why he speculates America, as well as USD, is experiencing a generational decline in religious affiliation.

“It could be that people are disenchanted with these existing religious traditions,” Dr. Fuller stated. “Though religion affiliation is down, that doesn't mean religiosity is down: the peoples' need for faiths or beliefs of some sort. God knows there are a lot of beliefs out there, not all of them religious, but nevertheless, very important and very strong.”

Some USD students prove Dr. Fuller's point. USD first-year Fiona Smith did not grow up with a religious background.

“I am slightly spiritual, in the way that I like to think about sometimes in the idea of there being a higher being, but I do not consider myself as practicing any religion,” Smith

said. “I haven't found something I can connect with and identify with at this exact moment.”

She further shares that, although she hasn't found a strong desire to start practicing religion, she does love learning about different faiths. In her Exploring Religious Meaning class at USD, she learned about many world religions and the impact they've had on society.

Smith's comments support The Survey Center on American Life, since they found that those who never practiced a religion growing up are less likely to pursue and affiliate with one in adulthood. Additionally, the Survey Center also stated that people who did grow up with a religious background but weren't too involved in religious activities, such as going to church, were more likely to drift away from their faith as they entered adulthood.

USD sophomore Kaiya Panomvana witnessed that pattern in her own religious life. She grew up Catholic, and currently identifies as Catholic, but she admits that she is not really practicing Catholicism.

“During high school, my family would go to church a lot on Sundays, but eventually I kind of just stopped going, and here [at USD], I've been to one Mass maybe. I'll go to the Immaculata once in a while but am not a super religious, practicing Catholic,” Panomvana said. Before USD, she wasn't too involved either in her Catholic faith but notes that nothing is holding her back from pursuing it. Nonetheless, she did mention how, even

as a Catholic, she appreciates that USD does not impose its Catholicism on its students.

As an example, Panomvana shared her experience in her World Religions in San Diego class.

“It is very helpful because it helps us understand and think about different religions besides Catholicism, so I think USD is very good on giving us a broader scope on different religions,” Panomvana said.

Regardless of one's religious affiliation, Dr. Fuller reminds all students of why he views religion to be important not just in the U.S., but worldwide.

“Without understanding religion as a component of culture and society, you cannot understand other people. So that means it's absolutely essential for business, for government and for any sort of interaction – it is just absolutely essential,” Dr. Fuller said.

Interestingly, Dr. Rob Whitley, the Principal Investigator of the Social Psychiatry Research and Interest Group at the Douglas Hospital Research Center in Quebec, seems to agree with Dr. Fuller on religion's essentiality by focusing on its implications on mental health. In his Psychology Today article titled “The Mental Health of Atheists and the “Nones,” Whitley argues that those who identify themselves as non-religious, or “nones” (lapsed, non-affiliated, agnostics, the “spiritual but not religious,” and atheists), tend to have higher rates of rates of depression, anxiety, suicide, self-harm and substance use when compared to those who identify as religious.

“The protective mental health effects of religiosity have been attributed to various factors,” Whitley states. “This could be due to a variety of factors, such as the religious having social support in religious congregations, a sense of purpose and meaning offered by religions, and moral codes commanding certain behaviors (e.g. abstinence) within religions.”

USD senior Aya Kawkab, a Muslim student leader who has represented her Islamic faith in the All Faith Service last year, weighs in on the positive impact she sees in having a religion.

“In my opinion, people who have a religious background are more mature, more faithful,” Kawkab says. “They're people who have more hope, who do not lose themselves in any way in life compared to those who say they are not religious.”

She encourages people who grew up without a religious background to “get educated on religion and learn more about them.” She chimes in about USD's core requirement of two theology courses. “There are courses in Christianity, in Islam, in any religion you want, there's a course for it! And I think this is the perfect opportunity for students to learn more about the importance of religion and of having a religion, it doesn't matter which religion it would be.”

Although the two religions courses are mandatory for all undergraduate students, the Department of Theology and Religious Studies has noticed a steep decline in its Theology majors. Though never the most popular major in the College of Arts and Sciences, Theology majors in the past ten years have ranged from 11 to 15 students. Last year, that number dropped to eight. This year, there are only three.

USD students — religious and nonreligious — have the opportunity to learn more about faith traditions not just in the classroom, but in daily conversations with each other. Despite Generation Z being the least religious generation thus far, the influence of religion is woven into society, whether students identify with a religion or not.

Only future generations will tell how strong the threads of religious affiliation remain, or if eventually, they're all going to break.

The USD Vista

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OPINION

Lower the legal drinking age back to 18

Once again, paternalism has gone too far

COLIN MULLANEY
COPY EDITOR

The most common refrain about the drinking age is undoubtedly: “If 18-year-olds can vote and die for this country, then they should be allowed to drink a beer.” Although this argument is certainly reasonable, the rationale for lowering the drinking age to 18 is actually far deeper than it first appears and would have a wide variety of sociological benefits, besides simply restoring freedom and common sense. The current, standard drinking age of 21 is not only anti-constitutional but also hypocritical and counterproductive to its own professed goals of promoting public welfare and “safety.”

The drinking age being set to 21 is a very recent phenomenon, historically speaking, and it’s far from a settled argument. In the 1970s, the legal drinking age was determined by individual states, most of which set it at 18. Seniors in high school could buy drinks without any issues, and this was standard practice until the mid-1980s.

All of that changed when Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) emerged with concerns about the risk of young people drinking and driving. Lobbying Congress and President Ronald Reagan, MADD convinced politicians to withhold highway funding from states not compliant with their age-21 demands.

As Vox states, the “[pre-existing] Interstate Highway Act of 1956, became a way of bending the states to federal priorities... although it wasn’t technically a nation-wide drinking law, in effect it was.”

Despite his anti-government agenda, President Reagan joined MADD’s cause.

“I’ve decided to support legislation to withhold five percent of a state’s highway funds if it does not enact the 21-year-old drinking age,” Reagan said. “Some may feel that my decision is at odds with my philosophical viewpoint that state problems should involve state solutions... there are some special cases in which overwhelming need can be dealt with by prudent and limited federal action.”

Reagan said it himself. He was being a hypocrite.

No matter how well-intentioned these mothers were, their methodology was undemocratic and authoritarian. Instead of generating grass-roots support with their



The movie “Superbad” captures fake ID culture among American teenagers.

Photo courtesy of @allthebestfilms/Instagram

“stellar” arguments, MADD bypassed state legislatures and the American people by lobbying Congress and the President directly. And instead of raising the drinking age to 21 through the proper, legal process — amendments and legislation at the state level — MADD convinced federal politicians to strongarm the states into obedience. For this reason, “Mothers Against Drunk Drivers” would have been more aptly named “Mothers Against the Tenth Amendment” instead.

This overzealous, interventionist policy started decades before ridesharing services became widely available, which largely mitigated the problem of drunk drivers on the roads today. Even MADD themselves conducted a survey in 2015 and found that “78% of respondents agree that their friends are less likely to drive drunk if rideshare is available, and 93% of respondents recommend ridesharing to friends instead of driving after drinking.”

Given these numbers, younger generations today clearly view drunk driving seriously and usually would not partake. Because of public action campaigns during Gen Z’s childhood, like “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk” and “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” as well as the emergence of ridesharing technology, maintaining the drinking age at 21 is not actually necessary at this point. It is only a punishment, with socially adverse consequences.

Author and social

commentator Camille Paglia believes that the drinking age of 21 is not only a hypocritical violation of our freedoms and constitutional rights, but it is also responsible for a whole host of sociological issues. According to Paglia, the ages of 18-21 are three, very formative years in which young adults could be partying in socially regulated, public settings like bars instead of private residences and frat houses in relative “secret,” where safety and regulation are essentially absent.

“In my period [during the 1960s and 70s] — you could go to a bar and a restaurant [at 18] and hang around with young men in an adult environment, a safe environment. You could drink a cheap glass of beer, learn how to converse, learn how

to flirt and so on, without any consequences. Now, with this stupid law passed— an utterly repressive, tyrannical law — you get the binge [drinking], keg parties at fraternities. Completely removed from any kind of adult or sophisticated setting, no conversation possible in the din going on. People getting fall-down drunk, and all kinds of boorish behavior going on,” stated Paglia.

Young adults who have not been encouraged to find their personal limit of intoxication in an established, public environment are instead required to figure this out at parties that promulgate binge drinking until the point of blackout or memory loss. It has the potential to put young adults in a more vulnerable situation.

As far as putting young adults in risky situations, the drinking age of 21 also encourages young adults to get fake IDs in order to purchase alcohol, which could land them in serious legal trouble or jail. Getting a fake ID as an American teenager today is not only a rite of passage, but something expected by peers in order to thrive socially, epitomized with the film “Superbad” and the character Fogell’s alter-ego: “McLovin.”

A 2007 study in Psychology of Addictive Behaviors found that nearly one-third of college students own a fake ID by their fourth semester, and 66% report having used a fake ID within the last year. Nowadays, a 21-year-old’s birthday is less about having their first drink than it is about saying goodbye to their beloved fake ID.

The age 21 “solution” is an overbearing, heavy-handed approach, far worse than the actual problem itself: a clear indication that paternalism has struck yet again. While paternalism and helicopter parenting have run rampant through society in recent decades, alcohol is perhaps the prime example of older adults imposing arbitrary restrictions on youth that are not only nonsensical, but completely counterproductive to their professed aim. It’s no secret that underage adults drink. However, banning the sale of alcohol to 18-21-year-olds only ensures that these activities go underground, where they are even more difficult to regulate and often require young adults to put themselves in far riskier situations than they would be just drinking at bars and ridesharing home.



MADD’s platform played a huge role in moving the drinking age to 21 years old.

Photo courtesy of @mothersagainstdrunkdriving/Instagram

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OPINION

Jinkies! Velma is officially gay

‘Scooby-Doo’ takes a step in the right direction for LGBTQ+ representation

MARIA SIMPSON
OPINION EDITOR

National Coming Out Day was last week, and in perfect timing, one very beloved character just came out: Velma Dinkley from the classic “Scooby-Doo” franchise. In a new “Scooby-Doo” movie titled “Trick or Treat Scooby-Doo!” a villain by the name of Coco Diablo is introduced, and Velma turns bright red at the sight of her. If that wasn’t proof enough, in a later scene she exclaims “I’m crushing big time, Daphne. What do I do? What do I say?”

This is a huge moment for many fans, and this representation is inexplicably important to the LGBTQ+ community. However, there has also been lots of backlash, mostly from older conservative individuals, arguing that officially deeming Velma as gay is inappropriate and outrageous. In reality, it is their responses that are outrageous, ridiculous and distracting us from an uplifting moment in television history.

“Scooby-Doo” is an American cartoon franchise revolving around four teenagers and their loyal dog, Scooby-Doo, who make up Mystery Inc., more often referred to as simply “the gang.” They take on various hauntings and mysteries, working hard to solve the case amid hilarious antics that get in the way. The original series, “Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!” first aired in 1969, and since then, quite literally dozens of versions of “Scooby-Doo” were made, in the form of spin-off shows, live action movies and short films.

The characters are loved across many generations, which is a part of what makes Velma’s newly confirmed sexuality so special. This is not a newly created character for younger generations to look up to; this is a character that has been loved for a long time, and it is amazing that the creators, director and screenwriter Audie Harrison and screenwriters Laura Pollak and Daniel McLellan, finally decided to display Velma’s long suspected lesbian identity as canon in their new direct-to-video film, “Trick or Treat Scooby Doo!” which is available on various streaming platforms such as HBO Max and Amazon Prime Video.

I say “long suspected,” and it is certainly true. Many LGBTQ+ individuals have held Velma as a queer icon for years, and lots of fans have assumed her to be a lesbian due to hints



In the new movie “Trick or Treat Scooby-Doo!” Velma is smitten by villain Coco Diablo.

Photo courtesy of @impact/Instagram

from the show itself. Velma was never portrayed as “boy-crazy” and, although fitting very much into a stereotype which is not always true by any means, Velma sports a short bob haircut, wears no makeup and dons a shapeless sweater.

This strongly contrasts Daphne, the other female lead in the franchise, with her long red hair, short form-fitting dress, and long-standing romance with Fred, one of the boys in the gang. However, these little hints are not the only evidence. Several writers for various “Scooby-Doo” movies and shows have confirmed that they always pictured Velma as being gay, however it is only now that they were finally able to push that identity into the open.

According to the Washington Post, James Gunn, the screenwriter for two of the live-action adaptations of “Scooby-Doo,” tweeted in 2020 that in his 2001 script, Velma was originally written as openly gay, “But the studio just kept watering it down & watering it down, becoming ambiguous (the version shot), then nothing (the released version) & finally having a boyfriend (the sequel).” Gunn has since deleted that tweet. Also in 2020, Tony Cervone, one of the creators of the Cartoon Network television series “Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated,” posted an image of Velma standing in front

of a pride flag on Instagram and wrote, “I obviously don’t represent every version of Velma Dinkley, but I am one of the key people that represents this one. We made our intentions as clear as we could ten years ago. Most of our fans got it. To those that didn’t, I suggest you look closer. There’s no new news here.”

Revealing Velma as a confirmed lesbian is great for representation for members LGBTQ+ community. It is incredibly important to have this representation in the media, especially for kids to see growing up. It helps normalize relationships other than heterosexual relationships and allows LGBTQ+ individuals (in this particular case, lesbian individuals) to see themselves and their relationships in media, which is empowering as it encourages self acceptance and healthy relationships for those people.

Unfortunately, this long-awaited confirmation was met with ridiculous responses from homophobic individuals. Many are claiming that this is an inappropriate exposure of kids to sexualization, but this is a poor excuse. Daphne and Fred have been allowed to go on dates, kiss and display physical affection towards each other since the franchise’s inception, so why is it inappropriate to simply show Velma blushing at her crush? This case is in

fact, much less “sexual” than the straight relationships in the show, so the argument of sexualization is a poor cover-up for blatant homophobia.

If these people were truly concerned about characters in the show being sexualized then they would be complaining about how Daphne has been sexualized as the ideal woman (long legs, tiny waist, shots panning over her body as she reveals a bikini) for decades. But that fact is, this doesn’t concern those individuals at all. They just don’t want the LGBTQ+ community to have fair representation in the media, due to their own political beliefs.

Several conservative anchors on Fox News have addressed Velma’s newly confirmed sexuality and have made sickening remarks. On the segment, The Ingraham Angle, Fox News contributor Raymond Arroyo stated, “I’m waiting for them to tell us that Scooby and Shaggy shared more than just a Scooby Snack in that Mystery Mobile,” alluding to the utterly disgusting idea that bestiality equates to homosexuality. This comment suggests that LGBTQ+ identity is unnatural and animalistic, and I am appalled that even in 2022, someone can voice such ridiculous and horrific notions on national television. Others such as conservative podcaster Steven Crowder and Fox News commentor Tucker

Carlson have complained that the “woke mob” has “made” Velma gay, as if (as previously discussed) she has not held that identity the whole time.

It is appalling that this hate and homophobia is still tolerated, but I hope “Scooby-Doo” fans and as many individuals as possible can focus on the positives of this situation and celebrate that Velma has finally been deemed undeniably gay after years of trying to open up her sexuality. Children’s shows are making great strides in recent years in representing more sexualities, gender identities and races. Hopefully, this representation will continue, and children and adults can see themselves in the media however they identify. Everyone no matter their sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, etc. should feel seen and heard.

Media like movies and television shows should display various identities so that viewers can have a hero like them to look up to. Velma is smart, witty and a wonderful friend. Lesbian viewers deserve to have that character to look up to, especially young women who want to see themselves as smart and empowered.

This representation is necessary, and the “Scooby-Doo” franchise has taken an important step forward for the LGBTQ+ community.

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.



HOMECOMING AND TAILGATES AND PARENTS AND FLY IN TO CELEBRATE USD

The University of San Diego’s annual Homecoming and Family Weekend runs from Oct. 11 to Oct. 16. To close out the week, USD put on a Homecoming game where the Toreros took on Presbyterian Blue Hose at a football game in Toreros Stadium. The event included food trucks, activities and giveaways for students and families. Additionally, many alums celebrated milestone reunions with the school.

Harrison Seymour (Junior)

“This is the second year that my parents and siblings have come down, and it’s just a great time for them, especially to celebrate Family Weekend. We love the Homecoming game, the tailgate is really fun, and we love the food. It’s just so nice because it’s not an easy drive down here, so it’s a good excuse for them to finally get down and see San Diego and enjoy the nice weather.”



Photo courtesy of Haley Jacob/The USD Vista



Photo courtesy of Haley Jacob/The USD Vista

Emilia Roscoe (Senior)

“I like Homecoming Weekend, because it’s a great time to come out, and we don’t have to go home. We have so many amazing events. It’s just a great time to be at school because one of the reasons I love it is the sense of pride, and it’s nice to have a great time with the school.”

Kylie Burton (Senior)

“I love Homecoming Weekend because it’s a great time for parents involved with the school to be together, and the game is always a great event. The school puts on such fun activities and it’s a great spirit and bring out the best in everyone.”

Paul Sammon (Golden Torero – Alumnus Celebrating 50th Anniversary)

“It’s ‘phantasmagorical,’ rather unsettling to be back and at the same time a reminder of how exhilarating those years were.”

Robyn Fratessa (Alumna Celebrating 30th Anniversary)

“It’s like a walk down memory lane. We graduated 30 years ago, so to be back together, all us girls, and be here on campus and walk through Founders and other places we lived, it’s just so fun. It makes us feel 30 years younger, which is a good thing when you’re our age.”

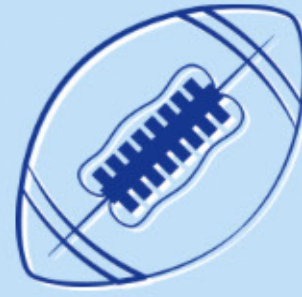


ND FAMILY WEEK:

ND REUNIONS

ND ALUMNI

USD WITH SCHOOL SPIRIT



Family Week took place from Oct. 1-3, featuring a Morning Tailgate before the home game at Torero Stadium. The event was a success with many families in attendance, and students reuniting with their classmates.



Photo courtesy of Haley Jacob/The USD Vista

Rosco (Sophomore)

I love it here, because it's a reason for my parents to come to the school and have fun. It's also nice for them to see the spirit the school has. One of the reasons I chose this school is the sense of community, and I want them to see that and embrace it for themselves."

Murton (Sophomore)

I love it here because it's such a fun time to get my parents to the school. It really brings the community together. It's always fun to watch. I'm so thankful for the activities that allow us to embrace our USD spirit and bring our parents in on the fun."



Photo courtesy of Haley Jacob/The USD Vista

Charlotte Leavitt (Golden Torero – Alumna Celebrating 50th Anniversary)

"It's shocking to see the change in the campus. I'm like, 'Hey, what's that building? What's that one over there?' But, when we were walking through Camino earlier today, I was saying how lucky we were to have spent this time in the most beautiful location."



Photo courtesy of Haley Jacob/The USD Vista

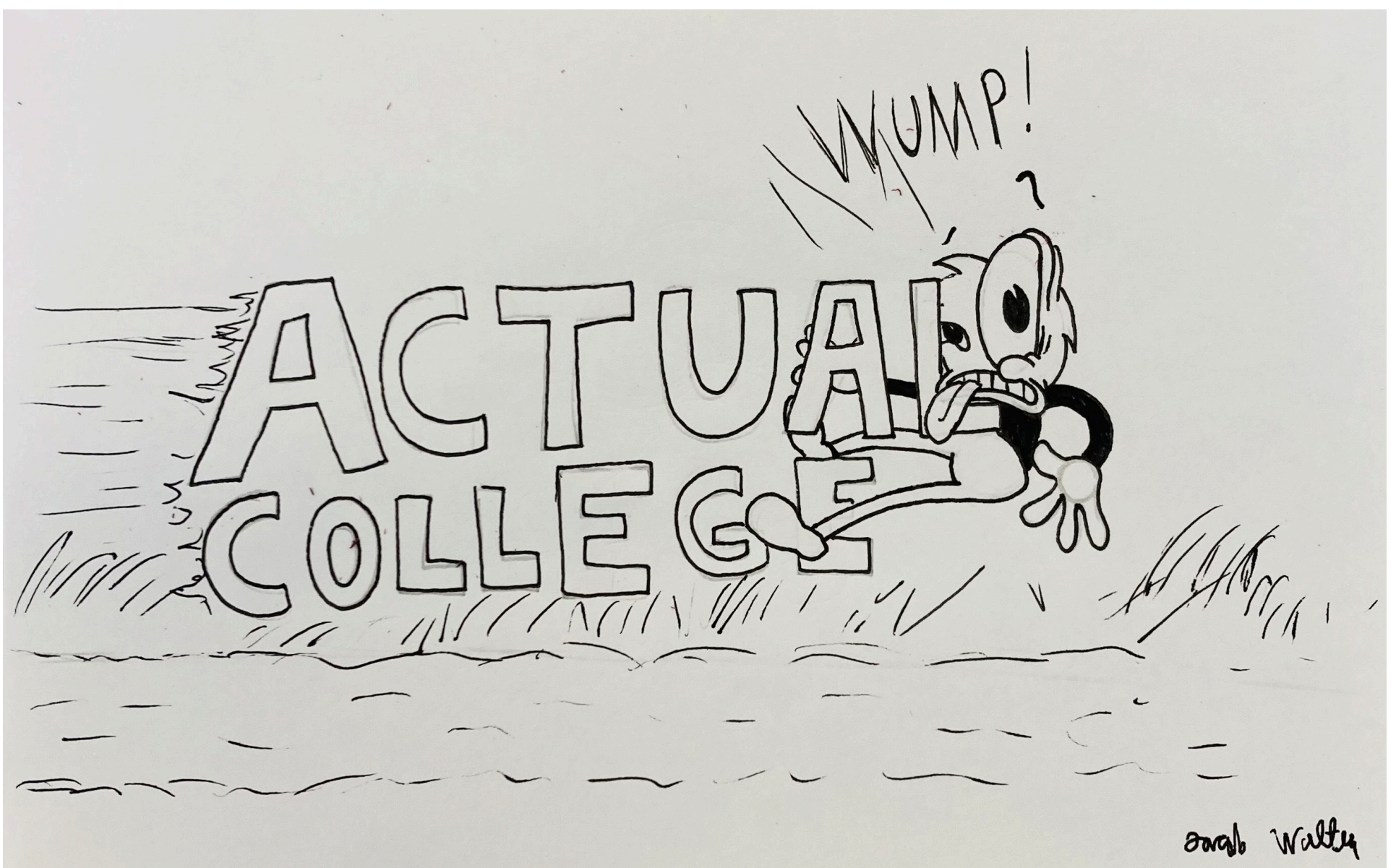
Abby Dohoney (First-year)

"I love having my parents here. I get to show them around the school, which is super fun, and USD planned a lot of great events that allow me to spend time with them while they're here. I'm from Massachusetts, so it was a long trip here for them."

COMICS

First-years getting ready for college

Illustrations by Jacob Walter



ARTS & CULTURE

The Festival of Lights *Celebrating this year's Diwali*

Diwali from Page 1 homecoming of the deity Rama to the city of Ayodhya after defeating the ten-headed king of demons, Ravana. The streets of Ayodhya were overwhelmed with diyas and chants of people to celebrate Lord Rama's win.

USD sophomore and Indian-American Priyal Gupta shared their experiences about Diwali.

"I think it's a time when I feel most in touch with my culture and family," Gupta said. "It's such a happy festival where you get to dress up in new clothes, have great food, receive gifts and just have a lot of fun."

The story of Rama is prominent in celebrations of Diwali in Sri Lanka. The island country located to the south of India was known to be the land where the demon king Ravana resided and was killed.

Hindus in Sri Lanka also observe Diwali for this triumph, with similar customs and traditions.

The other four days of the festival are filled with their

own festivities and significance.

The first day is dedicated to cleaning homes and purchasing small items of gold. The second day is for praying to the souls of ancestors. The fourth day is the beginning of the Hindu New Year, when merchants usually perform religious ceremonies and open new accounts. The fifth and last day, called Bhai Dooj, celebrates the bond between sisters and brothers — where sisters pray for their brothers' well-being and success.

Diwali takes on a slightly different form among Hindus in Nepal and is known as Tihar. Tihar is celebrated because of the God of Death, Yama, and his sister, Yamuna.

Popular renditions of the story state that in an attempt to see her brother after being away from him for a long time, Yamuna sends a crow, dog and cow to Yama.

Ultimately, she visits him herself and worships him with flowers and a colorful tika, a mark made on the

forehead using a powder.

The five days of Tihar are celebrated to honor this story. The first day is dedicated to worshipping crows, the second day to worship dogs, the third day to worship cows and the fourth day is dedicated to worshipping ox.

The Newar community of Nepal spends the night of the fourth day worshipping the self in order to purify the body.

The last day known as Bhai Tikka is dedicated to worshipping brothers. The sisters apply a tika of seven colors on their brother's foreheads and pray to Yama to ensure them a long life full of prosperity.

USD first-year and international student from Nepal, Shreyans Jyoti reminisces over Tihar celebrations back home.

"Making rangolis, bursting firecrackers, and lighting diyas is always so much fun," Jyoti said. "Kids go from house to house singing 'Deusi Bhailo' and people give these kids free food or money. These days, they bring speakers, dress

up and perform dances too."

Apart from Hindus, Diwali is also celebrated by Jains and Sikhs around the world. For the Jain community, the festival commemorates the enlightenment and liberation of their last supreme preacher, Mahavir.

The lighting of diyas represents the light of Mahavir's holy knowledge and some Jains fast to remember the work done by him. For Sikhs, Diwali is celebrated to honor Guru Hargobind's return to Amritsar after captivity in Gwalior, an echo of Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya. Residents of Amritsar lit lamps throughout the city to celebrate the occasion.

Some Buddhists also take part in Diwali to recognize the day Emperor Ashoka converted to Buddhism in the third century B.C.E.

USD graduate student Deepti Thakoor brought the spirit of Diwali to USD last year by conducting an event to celebrate the festival.

"I was kind of homesick and Diwali is an important and grand festival back home in Mauritius," Thakoor said. "I didn't want to just sit in my room, and I know there were others who felt that way. I wanted to bring together a community and family for Diwali. I wanted to share the joy of being different."

With vibrant lighting and decorations, a variety of food and sweets, as well as the activity of writing cards to send well wishes to others, USD's first Diwali celebration included around fifty students from various backgrounds.

After the success of the first Diwali celebration, Thakoor continues her efforts toward bringing the Festival of Lights to USD.

With help from Grad Life, the Multicultural Commons and University Ministry, her endeavor to create a community is coming to life again through the second Diwali celebration at USD, which will be held on Oct. 24 at the UPMC Commons.

Big Blue Bash kicks off Homecoming Weekend *Loud Luxury and Melissa Tumlos perform*

JESSICA MILLS

ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

During last Friday, Oct. 14, students gathered in Paseo de Colachis to sing, dance and celebrate the Torero Program Board's (TPB) homecoming event: the Big Blue Bash. This year, USD senior Melissa Joy Tumlos (she/they) opened for musical duo Loud Luxury.

On Oct. 11, TPB announced the much anticipated headliner for the event: Loud Luxury, a Canadian music production and DJ duo, consisting of artists Andrew Fedyk and Joe Depace. They're most known for their 2018 hit song "Body," which has been listened to over 957 million times on Spotify.

USD junior Maddie Stevens spent the night dancing and singing alongside friends.

"I only know one song," Stevens said. "It's called 'Body,' but regardless, I'm so excited for [Loud Luxury's] performance."

For some students, not knowing many of Loud Luxury's songs was not an issue — the duo is known for remixing popular songs — so many were able to sing along.

USD junior Mia Griffiths is a part of the USD women's swimteam and listens to Loud Luxury at practice frequently.

"We play them a lot at practice," Griffiths said. "It's a lot of good, upbeat music we dance to."

For USD senior Maddy Domingo, the duo's stage presence



Loud Luxury was seen engaging with the audience by jumping on the DJ table.

Karisa Kampbell/The USD Vista



Tumlos' on-stage energy captivated many audience members.

Jessica Mills/The USD Vista

impacted her enjoyment.

"I loved the stage presence of the singers, Domingo said. "Jumping up and down,

throwing gear out into the crowd — I thought they were really engaging and it was really cool for students to get that energy

and vibe on campus." Tumlos' appearance was announced on TPB's Instagram on Oct. 13, leaving many, including Tumlos,

anticipating Friday night. She only had a few days to put together a setlist, prepare and practice.

"It was stressful, but I do really enjoy doing things like this," Tumlos said. "I enjoy being sucked into the music and performance."

Prior to the show, Tumlos was adorned with glittering makeup, completed pre-performance rituals to increase their energy and had an overall positive outlook.

"After running through the sound check I'm pretty confident, and I'm just hoping to have fun," Tumlos said. "Anything that pumps up my energy, like doing jumping jacks and hyping myself and others up, are usually a part of my pre-performance rituals."

Paying tribute to musical artist Olivia Rodrigo, Tumlos sang the crowd-favorite "deja vu." From waving cell phone flashlights to handholding, students joined her performance, with many even commenting that Tumlos' curled hair and high-heeled boots reminded them of Rodrigo herself.

Along with other students, Tumlos sent in numerous singing videos to TPB, which were then reviewed as a team.

Tumlos closed their set with the popular song "Titanium" by David Guetta ft. Sia. Students sang along, danced and matched Tumlos' pumped-up energy.

Overall, students enjoyed both Tumlos' and Loud Luxury's performances, leading to a promising start for USD's Homecoming Weekend.

‘ArtBuilds’ features student work on campus

USD professors & students collaborate on interactive art

JESSICA MILLS
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

SARAH FAHEY
CONTRIBUTOR

For the past couple weeks, USD’s campus showcased ArtBuilds, a coalition of USD professors who create art for exhibits like Burning Man, Maker Faire and public parks, and their interactive art structure, “Reflexion,” at the Law Circle. A collaboration between USD Professors Hoffoss, Choi-Fitzpatrick, Parde and Hoople, this piece represents the concept of taking control and changing perspectives.

The three pillars of rotating mirrors stand tall and encourage student engagement. Turning each segment invites those who interact to consider their perspectives with the different angles and reflections that each mirror provides.

While the piece appears to just be segments of moving mirrors, it also lights up after dark.

Professor Diane Hoffoss explained the intention for this detail, in collaboration with the other artists of ArtBuilds.

“During the day the piece is bright — catching your eye from across campus and pulling you in,” Hoffoss said. “At night, the soft glow of the lights bouncing gently off the mirrors and the slow upward flow of the lighting animation feels very soothing.”

Hoffoss explains these as the “different moods” of the piece that invite students to reflect and interact.

As well as a collaboration from multiple professors, many USD students also contributed to the completion of the art.

USD Integrated Engineering senior Ysabel Yu — one of the student collaborators on “Reflexion” — explained what she loves most about the piece.

“Art is already a beautiful thing, but it becomes beautiful and fun when you combine human interaction with it,” Yu said. “It’s always a good feeling to walk by and see people spinning the columns and taking pictures of them just enjoying it.”

The art is visibly interactive, meant to be used and engaged with. The artists aim for students to enjoy and engage with the piece.

“We hope it helps pull students out of their daily routine of classes, homework and functional moving through campus,” Diane Hoffoss said. “We’d love for them to pause for a second, look at the art, wonder about it or even make up their own meaning.”

Since its inception in 2019, ArtBuilds has involved hundreds of individuals around the world for various art projects. According to ArtBuilds, the artists have notable experience in large format sculpture, design, engineering, lighting, electronics, structural analysis



“Reflexion” during the day.

Photo courtesy of Sarah Fahey



“Reflexion” features colorful lights that can be seen during the night.

Photo courtesy of Sarah Fahey

and other creative practices. Art is typically meant to be appreciated rather than touched, which makes “Reflexion” a unique exception to the preconceived notion.

USD Mechanical Engineering senior Navin Rai explains the originality of the distinctive art work.

“My favorite part about ‘Reflexion’ is how interactive it is,” Rai said. “It was designed to be touched, spun and messed with — within reason — which I think is really unique for a piece like this.”

With multiple shuttle trams and people coming and going throughout the day, the Law Circle is a bustling area that is usually for students to reach their final destinations.

Placed in the middle of campus, the professors of ArtBuilds hope to reimagine the space.

“The placement of our piece in particular could liven up what is generally just a thoroughfare from campus buildings to the shuttle stops,” Hoffoss said.

“We hope that it will brighten up what would ordinarily be a mundane part of their day.”

The piece offers much to ponder, and it is difficult to not be entranced by the simple beauty of the art. USD junior Andrea Ortiz reflects on the art and its meaning to her.

“I love that it shows how we are in control of our lives,” Ortiz said. “It’s our responsibility to change our perspectives; that is our choice and no one else’s.”

“Reflexion” is difficult to miss due to its size and location at one of the busiest spaces on campus, garnering much curiosity. The piece encourages individuals to remember their power: to notice multiple perspectives, especially ones that may have been missed when looking into the various angles and depth of the mirrors.

Students can interact with the piece until Oct. 21, and additional information can be found on the QR code on the base of the art. Students can also see the art in La Jolla Cove from Oct. 22 - Nov. 3.

FEATURE

‘There’s More’ live podcast

USD hosts monthly podcast episodes with community storytellers

ALLIE LONGO

ASST. FEATURE EDITOR

Every month, the University of San Diego’s campus storytelling initiative “There’s More” hosts a live podcast featuring members of the USD community sharing stories that “[explore] the human condition through the practice of changemaking,” according to the initiative’s website. The initiative is a collaboration between the College of Arts & Sciences, the Humanities Center and the Changemaking Hub. Students enrolled in “COMM 333: Podcast Storytelling” produce the podcast’s content. Dr. Diane Keeling, professor of Communication, teaches the course and is also the podcast’s faculty producer.

Anyone part of the USD community can participate as a storyteller on the podcast: students, faculty and staff members. Each month, the podcast has a theme that intends to create meaningful dialogue, and the storyteller can interpret the theme however they feel. Typically, each episode features three storytellers, while a student producer hosts. Following the storytelling, there is an open Q&A forum to encourage more conversation.

The live podcast takes place in the Humanities Center located in Saints Tekakwitha and Serra Hall, room 200. The team uploads recordings of each podcast to the “There’s More” website under their discography of live podcast recordings. The recordings are also on the Apple Podcasts app as well as Spotify.

Dr. Keeling summarized the intentions of the podcast, emphasizing its priority on building unity through hope and humility.

“It’s all about community — to know each other more than just as cogs in the machine,” Dr. Keeling said. “We are human and we are all fallible. At the heart of every good story is a mistake, a challenge or a conflict; we don’t always handle life perfectly. While the podcast is therapeutic, I hope there can always be a healing experience to listen and relieve the stress we have in our own lives, to put it in perspective, and to recognize what we are going through. We are not alone.”

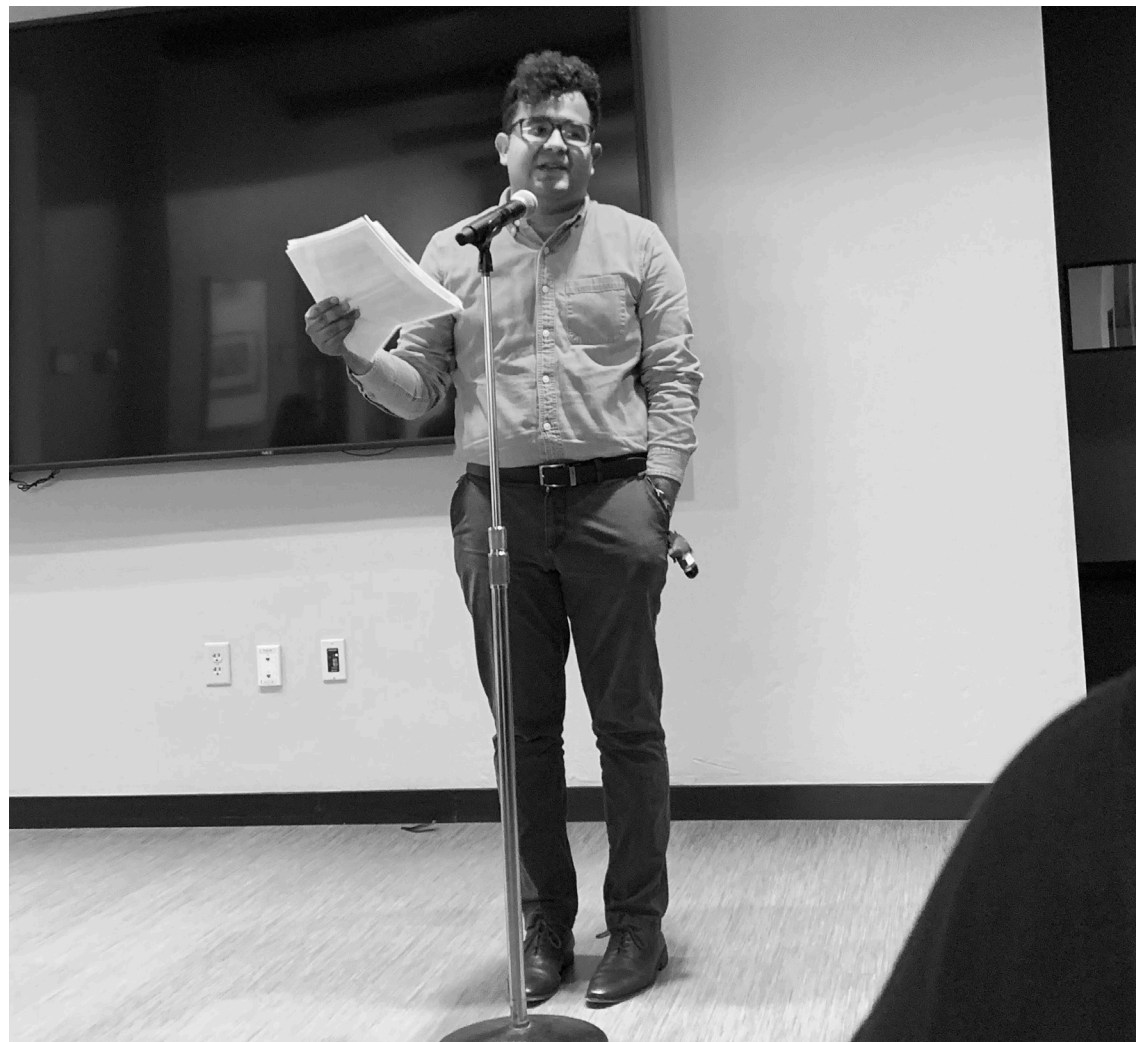
Dr. Keeling and a group of USD students founded the “There’s More” live podcast in 2017. Dr. Keeling had no intention of starting a live podcast until members of the university approached her.

“I was approached by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the director of the Humanities Center and the Director of the Changemaker Hub,” Dr. Keeling said. “They



Professor Evelyn Díaz Cruz talking about her “big move” at the live podcast event on Oct. 12.

Photo courtesy of Jennifer Rios



Students, faculty and staff members are welcome to attend and share in the “There’s More” storytelling events.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Amanda Petersen

wanted a center on campus or a program on campus around storytelling, and they each wanted to sponsor some sort of initiative. Because of my experience in communication, but particularly rhetoric — which is fundamentally about stories, and reasoning at its base — they knew I had a background in storytelling and narrative and asked if I would be willing to help conceive something. They also said they had a big donation

of podcasting equipment they didn’t know what to do with.”

Dr. Keeling had no previous experience in podcasting. Her only experience was working in radio when she was in college. She described creating the podcast as being much harder than she had expected. But with each podcast, she learned more and more. The podcast ran before the start of the pandemic, took a year-long break, then continued online during 2021 before going

back to live events this year.

Campus organizations can sponsor podcast episodes too.

“Student organizations, honors societies or departments can sponsor the podcast events,” Dr. Keeling said. “If they want to host or sponsor a storytelling event, everyone from that program is invited and there is sort of a built-in audience. It is wonderful creating a sense of community within the group.”

For some months, instead

of doing live podcast events, “There’s More” hosts storytelling workshops. At these workshops, attendees learn about the storytelling process and how to write their own stories.

The last live podcast event took place on Oct. 12, and the theme was “Big Move.” The podcast featured three speakers: the first being USD alum Jesus Martinez Saucedo. He is a bilingual educator, poet, translator and interpreter currently working as the Center for Educational Excellence’s (CEE) administrative assistant. Saucedo’s “big move” was moving jobs from being a first-grade immersion teacher to his current job at USD. Saucedo found the experience triggering, as it reminded him of his first big move when his entire family emigrated to the United States, leaving him to finish his schooling alone in Mexico. During his talk, Saucedo discussed the emotional goodbye with his former students.

“Frantically, I began to cry,” Saucedo said. “Memories were swirling around my mind: my students’ faces, their hard work, their joy, how I was quickly and silently removed and the stolen goodbyes.”

Jesus further discussed his experience in this career move, and ended by highlighting his journey of self love.

The second storyteller was Timothy Wyman McCarty, a Political Theory professor at USD. McCarty’s “big move” was moving his child from a neighborhood school to a charter school. Through this experience, he strengthened his belief in a teacher’s ability to positively impact kids.

The final storyteller was Evelyn Díaz Cruz, a professor of Theater and affiliate faculty member of Ethnic Studies at USD. Cruz’s story was about getting into a fight with a bully while growing up in the Bronx, New York. She discussed her experience in facing her fears head-on.

All the storytellers had a unique perspective on the “big move” theme. However, each shared touching stories that resonated with the audience.

The team behind “There’s More” hopes to make a positive impact on the USD community through storytelling. The stories shared can help people find solidarity and community with others who have gone through similar experiences. All students and faculty involved in the podcast are devoted to creating an open, welcoming environment for anyone interested in sharing or hearing members of the community share. The next “There’s More” event is on Nov. 9, and all campus members are welcome.

Filipino American History Month

How FUSO's events promote Filipino pride and tradition

JESSICA MILLS
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

Since 1992, the United States has celebrated Filipino American History Month during the month of October. It marks the anniversary of the first recorded evidence of Filipinos' arrival in America on Oct. 15, 1897, aboard a Spanish ship in modern-day Morro Bay, California.

The Asian Art Museum in San Francisco explains that the official month honors the history, pursuits, accomplishments, heritage and legacy of Filipino Americans and provides a link between Filipinos in the U.S. and Filipinos in the Philippines by showcasing their shared culture and heritage.

As the second largest Asian American group in the U.S. and the third largest ethnic group in California, Filipinos have a prominent role in influencing the culture and history of both the country and California. The Washington Immigrant Network says Filipino Americans are one of the fastest-growing immigrant groups in the U.S.

The Filipino Ugnayan Student Organization (FUSO) hosts various events during October to recognize and commemorate Filipino students, culture and history.

On Saturday, Oct. 22, the 37th annual "Friendship Games," hosted by California State University Fullerton, will take place. Managing Editor of The USD Vista and FUSO Vice President External Mei Flory coordinates the event and maintains relations with Filipino organizations outside of USD to create a sense of community within San Diego.

"[Friendship Games] basically involves 40 plus Filipino organizations coming together and competing in field games, dance performances as well as 'SPUF-ing' — [spirited] chanting toward other schools," Flory said.

SPUF stands for "spirit, pride, unity, friendship" and are the core values of the games. It encourages both school pride and the building of relationships between groups and those in attendance.

For Flory, she found a sense of belonging since joining FUSO during her fall semester as a first-year.

"As a non-Filipino on the [executive] board of a Filipino club, Filipino History Month has taught me a lot about a different culture that I initially had no ties with," Flory said. "Seeing how prideful and happy people were in [FUSO] inspired me to start looking into the club and the culture more."

USD junior and FUSO Co-Commissioner of Cultural Affairs Mia Tabladillo has also been a part of FUSO since the fall semester of her first year. As one of the commissioners, Tabladillo helps with cultural events like



USD students Rachel Fernandez and Maria Angst performing the "Bulaklakan" dance at Kamayan Night in 2021.

Photo courtesy of Ryan Felix



The last in-person "Friendship Games" took place in 2019 at California State University, Fullerton.

Kamayan Night, which is open to the public and hosted on Oct. 29.

"This is our biggest cultural event of the fall semester," Tabladillo said. "It's a night where we can practice traditional Filipino culture like the practice of Kamayan, sharing a meal with our hands with various Filipino foods."

Kamayan night typically includes Lumpia, Lechon (a cooked pig), Ulam (loosely translates to side dishes), Pancit Palabok (a noodle dish) and desserts like Bibingka Malagkit (Filipino rice cake) and Turon (fried banana rolls).

The evening also features student performances.

"They perform whatever they would like to," Tabladillo said. "We also do traditional cultural dances. This year we will be doing Pandango Sa Ilaw, which involves men and women dancing together to emulate the fireflies at night in the Philippines."

USD junior and FUSO Co-Commissioner Caitlyn Parel explained some of the deeper meanings behind the tradition.

"More specifically, 'kamay' means hand, such as when you shake hands with one another to greet one another and bring

each other closer together," Parel explained. "Kamayan eating was the style of eating before the Spanish colonization of the Philippines and was a physical way of connecting with the food and the land that nourishes us. This dinner is a way of embracing unity amongst the Filipino community, as well as feeling more like a family by sharing our food in an intimate way."

This year, FUSO is also bringing in a new dance called Malglalatik, a type of dance where male dancers incorporate coconut shells.

"It's for the guys to show

energy and what Filipino culture is about: just being 'happy-go-lucky' in my opinion," Tabladillo said.

Parel appreciates the community and memories FUSO's events create.

"It's never [just] the food or activities that makes me want to both attend and host these events, but it's about the experiences I create and share as we celebrate the Filipino culture," Parel said.

With events that honor Philippine culture and tradition, FUSO provides many opportunities for all to celebrate FilipinoAmericanHistoryMonth.

Mei Flory/The USD Vista