



MARIACHI, P. 4
Photo-feature of Humboldt's
new student mariachi group

VOLLEYBALL, P. 6
Lumberjacks finish season
at home, celebrate seniors



STUDENTS SERVING THE HUMBOLDT STATE CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY SINCE 1929

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LUMBERJACK

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CHANGE ON THE HORIZON

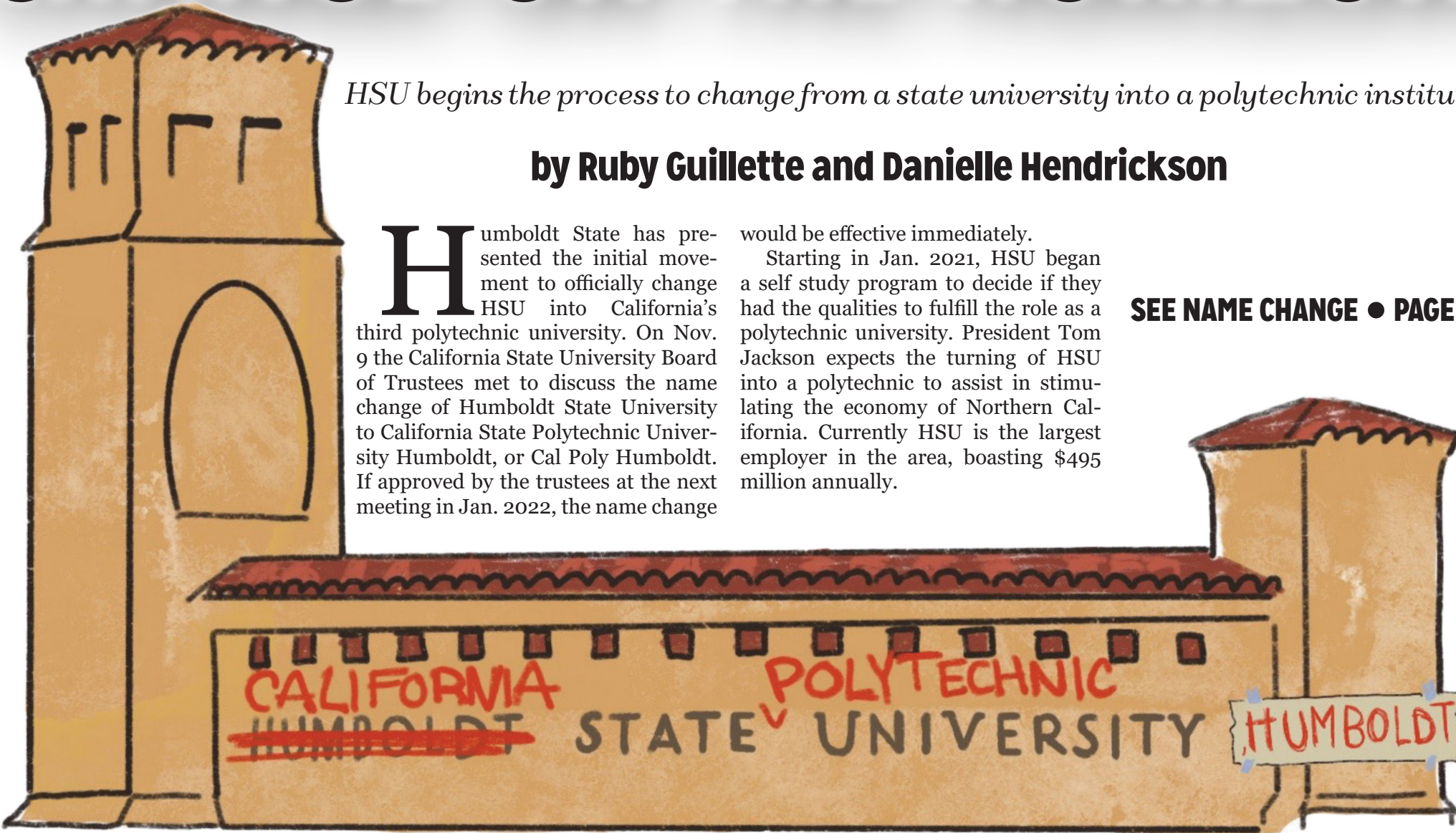
HSU begins the process to change from a state university into a polytechnic institute

by Ruby Guillette and Danielle Hendrickson

Humboldt State has presented the initial movement to officially change HSU into California's third polytechnic university. On Nov. 9 the California State University Board of Trustees met to discuss the name change of Humboldt State University to California State Polytechnic University Humboldt, or Cal Poly Humboldt. If approved by the trustees at the next meeting in Jan. 2022, the name change

would be effective immediately. Starting in Jan. 2021, HSU began a self study program to decide if they had the qualities to fulfill the role as a polytechnic university. President Tom Jackson expects the turning of HSU into a polytechnic to assist in stimulating the economy of Northern California. Currently HSU is the largest employer in the area, boasting \$495 million annually.

SEE NAME CHANGE • PAGE 3



Graphic by Morgan Hancock

Students feel uninformed about incoming polytechnic changes



File photos by Elliott Portillo | With a looming polytechnic designation on the horizon, many faculty and students feel confused by what this designation may mean for them.

by Morgan Hancock

As HSU makes its transition to a polytechnic university, several new undergraduates and graduate programs are being proposed. The courses are majority STEM-based with interdisciplinary elements. The polytechnic has the potential to bring new opportunities to Northern California. New programs are being introduced as soon as Fall 2023. Some students have concerns about the polytechnic change. For many students, there is a lack of communication and uncertainty about what the transition to a polytechnic means. Madeleine Fisher is a fine arts student feeling confused about the process.

“I don’t know what it means, is it gonna change tuition, when is it gonna happen?” Fisher said. “I feel like there is not a lot of communication to current students.”

Another large concern for many students is housing. Arcata already faces a stressed housing situation. The prospectus estimates that Humboldt State University would expect to see an enrollment increase of 50% within three years and 100% within seven years. The student body would be somewhere over 11,000 with these numbers. Art student Emily Rune feels like there is no space for new enrollees to move to Arcata.

“It feels like 99% of everyone I know here struggles to find housing,” Rune said. “There is no space here, nowhere to live. The housing is getting so much more expensive.”

Vivian Spear is a senior working on her bachelor’s in studio arts. Spear feels that arts are already being pushed to the side as it is, and seeing the polytechnic transition also brings concerns about how it might impact Arcata’s artsy community.

SEE STUDENTS • PAGE 3

Index

- News.....3
- L&A.....4
- Sports.....6
- Opinion.....7



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Name Change

FROM PAGE 1

On June 25 Governor Newsom and the state legislature designated \$433 million in one time funding for facilities as well as \$25 million in recurring operating costs to help transform HSU into a polytechnic university. At the November board of trustees meeting Provost Jenn Capps, President Tom Jackson, and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Sylvia Alva presented an item to officially request the name change of Humboldt State University. The action will be taken in the January 2022 Board of Trustees meeting.

A polytechnic university is one that embraces a learn-by-doing approach. This allows students to apply learned concepts in preparation for careers. It includes natural and applied sciences, technology, engineering, and also focuses on liberal arts curriculum. According to Jen Capps, HSU will be a different kind of polytechnic university.

“We don’t deem to replicate the ex-

cellence at Pomona and San Luis Obispo,” Capps said. “But strengthen our expertise in sustainability and traditional ecological knowledge, and social justice and who we include and not who we exclude.”

Within the first seven years of becoming a polytechnic, HSU projects to bring up the enrollment to 11,000 students, nearly doubling the current enrollment numbers. This has been a key goal since the recent years have seen steadily declining enrollment numbers.

HSU plans on hiring more diverse staff and faculty to increase inclusion. Another objective for the university is increasing tribal partnership with the thirteen tribes in the surrounding areas. The university offers education to the tribal populations to help them grow and flourish. Both the university and the tribes will work together to fuse their knowledge of science and the environment to help support the community.

The board of trustees seemed generally supportive of the HSU name change, although they did have key questions for the presenters. Questions posed addressed student housing concerns, giving back to tribes, supporting higher education in tribal communities, as well as strategies to improve enrollment.

Although many questions are yet to be answered, trustees were overall supportive. One trustee, Adam Day, voiced his support of the polytechnic change.

“It just makes so much sense for so many reasons,” Day said. “The special place this campus holds in that physical geographical location. Historical issues, the economic issues, social economic issues, environmental and ecological. Your campus is so unique.”

With the incredible amount of money designated to the school and the immense pressure to properly create a new polytechnic, HSU president Tom Jackson seems up for the challenge.

“This is a huge responsibility,” Jackson said. “HSU will be deliberate and respectful and responsible and forthright as we accept the investment by the people of California in this incredible university and the emerging region. This is our moment.”

There will be a virtual open forum held by Provost Jen Capps and Chief of Staff Sherie C. Gordon on November 19th at 10:00AM. This is an opportunity for students, staff, faculty and members of the community to share their thoughts and ask questions about the upcoming changes. Register for the Zoom meeting in advance, online. If you have further questions call or email poly@humboldt.edu or 707-826-3300.

Students

FROM PAGE 1

Arts students have always been involved in the community and organizing events.

“The painting department is just one teacher right now,” Spear said. “There are no studio classes for painting. I feel like the artists who are here are connecting to the community, but the school isn’t helping with that.”

According to an announcement from Humboldt State Now, the timeline for implementing these programs has been accelerated based on proposed state funding by Governor Newsom. At this time the funding is being considered by legislature. The programs still need to be approved by the CSU Chancellor’s Office, CSU Board of Trustees, and receive accreditation before they can be implemented.

The new programs are Cannabis Studies, Applied Fire Science & Management, Data Science, Energy Systems Engineering, Engineering & Community Practice, Geospatial Information Science & Technology, Marine Biology, Mechanical Engineering, and Software Engineering. The goal is to see them in course catalogs by Fall 2023.

“In the workforce, the arts and humanities play a crucial role in helping companies and organizations understand these complex discourse and attitudes, and their insights will increasingly shape decisions made by politicians, entrepreneurs, civil society activists, consumers, and citizens,” it said in the prospectus, highlighting the need for arts and humanities in STEM.

The transition has the potential to make great strides for Humboldt students and communities. There is however the risk of losing part of what makes this school so special, our quirky art space and integrated communities. Students feel left out of this conversation and powerless against the changes to be faced. Maintaining identity is a major concern that students have.

SCIENCE

Extreme weather challenges Humboldt power grid

Climate change complicates power outages in Humboldt

by Morgan Hancock

Increased extreme weather is stressing power grids throughout the United States, and Humboldt is no exception. Recent weather saw many Arcata residents without power during a storm. Though it is not uncommon for the weather to impact power, it is happening more often and for longer periods of time. A PG&E electric reliability report saw increasing trends in power outages for Humboldt county since 2017.

Power outages are becoming more common nationally. According to the US Energy Information Association, outages have been on the rise in frequency and duration. California saw frequent public safety power shutoffs in the fire season. Texas and Oklahoma saw a power grid collapse in response to a cold snap. East coast grids faced stressors from a pronounced increase in Category 4-5 hurricanes according to NOAA.

A 2018 National Climate Assessment mandated by the USGCRP summarized what continual extreme climate and weather patterns might mean for US power grids.

“Climate change and extreme weather events are expected to increasingly disrupt our Nation’s energy and transportation systems, threatening more frequent and longer-lasting power outages, fuel shortages, and service disruptions,” the report said.

The three main transmission lines importing power to Humboldt County

are all located in wildfire hazard areas. This complicates hazards as power infrastructure ages over time. Aging powerlines coupled with drought conditions create extreme fire hazards. It’s these exact factors that led to the Camp fire in 2018 and a fire in Blue Lake in 2017. Jeremy Ward, a Fire Captain with the California Forest Service de-

termined the cause of the Blue Lake fire was a faulty connector on a PG&E transmission line.

“[A PG&E troubleman] said they were not supposed to use those anymore, and now use a different style connector,” Ward said in an investigation report. Since 2018 PG&E has created a Community Wildfire Safety Program

all intersections of disaster that could impact the area. Amanda Admire is an instructor at HSU teaching preparedness in her classes. She specializes in physical and geological oceanography, specifically tsunami current dynamics and hazard mitigation.

“It’s very unique to live here geologically,” Admire said. “In terms of pre-



Graphic by Poppy Cartledge

and plans to upgrade powerlines. Currently, up to one-third of PG&E powerlines are in high fire-threat divisions.

Power outages are an inconvenience on their own, but living in Humboldt means that a power outage may coincide with other disasters. Humboldt is located on a triple junction fault, home to the Pacific plate, North American plate, and Gorda plate. Proximity to the ocean also introduces tsunami risk. All of this coupled with a deactivated nuclear power plant built on a fault create a precarious situation.

Given any seismic activity, there is a good chance that a power outage could soon follow. When preparing a “go bag,” don’t count on reliable electricity. Emergency kits should account for

paredness, the same rules apply. Creating an emergency kit in your home is very important in this area. Power outages are a great time to consider your emergency kit.”

Living in the Humboldt area means you should have a well rounded go-bag. Always make sure to have flashlights and extra batteries. The best place to store extra batteries is in an extra flashlight. Be sure to have shelf-stable food and water. Due to the nature of Humboldt’s geography, access to water can rely on pumps. When the power is out, water is not guaranteed. It is also important to carry first aid kits and rechargeable batteries for phones in case you need to contact emergency services.

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Life & Arts

Photo feature

Mariachi de Humboldt strings and strums

Humboldt State's new mariachi music group played their first performance on Friday, Nov. 12

Photos by Abraham Navarro



Mariachi de Humboldt.



Olivia Horne.



Luis Rodriguez



Sheet music.



Jennifer Trowbridge, guitar instructor and co-director of Mariachi de Humboldt.



Christopher Antolin-Wilczek.



Christopher Antolin-Wilczek and Jennifer Trowbridge bow to the audience.

Bands

Masked moshers fill Humboldt’s music venues

Hardcore and punk sounds dominate the Humboldt Music scene

by Morgan Hancock

This weekend Humboldt’s punk scene was alive and well. Punk shows hosted new wave art-punk, psy rock jammin’, metallic hardcore, and western post-punk sounds. Masked moshers packed the house at The Goat on Sunday night.

The music scene is doing its best to stay right in the face of covid challenges. Venues continue to recommend the use of masks. Some organizers plan to move coming shows outdoors to keep shows safe going forward. Karrissa Haff organized the Manic Monday show to bring out Arcata’s staple artists. The show was postponed to accommodate covid concerns.

“I’m happy the community is able to come together and connect,” Haff said. “In the face of the pandemic and everything it’s just nice to overcome that disconnected feeling. Everyone just comes out to listen to and play music and has fun”.

Despite these challenges, Siren’s Song opened the weekend with Icarus and the Suns. Along with them, Flower Crown, Kind Eyes, and Cut Throat shook the stage. This show was for all ages and saw a solid turnout. Music maven Nathan Sano, who runs the @HumboldtMusicScene Instagram page, witnessed the show.

“Before the intensity of the leather jackets and tight jeans took to the mosh pit, Icarus and the Suns put on a set that really set the tone of the night,” Sano said. “If you haven’t had the chance already you have got to go to one of their shows. This three-man band will go far if they keep the energy from the past few shows.”

Humboldt’s own KRFH DJs also checked out the Saturday show. Nat Cardos, aka DJ Deadbeat, took to the mosh. Cardos enjoyed the local stoke of the Humboldt shows. Chants of “707”



Photo courtesy of Nathan Sano | Arcata punk band Horse plays at Richards Goat on Sunday Nov. 14.

showed the audience’s support for the local scene.

“Going in, I didn’t have super high hopes because the last ‘metal’ show here was garage rock at best, but no, it was a hardcore show, it was really great,” Cardos said. “There was karate in the pit. Towards the end, the mosh went off for the Cut Throats.” The Cut Throats came in from Solano county to play for the Humboldt music scene.

“In all honesty, we were kinda blown away by the turnout,” the band said. “Super happy with the way the locals treated us. Can’t wait to tell more of our band friends about Eureka.

On Sunday The Goat hosted Crack Cloud and Horse. Horse gets better with every show establishing their Humboldt beat. They delivered an Arcata-core punk sound that keeps locals coming back for more. Heads were bargin’ for their song Midnight Cowboy. Horse finished their set in true Humboldt fashion with Jellyfish Jam, an homage to a sponge-based local legend. According to Sano, Horse is living up to their ‘1 billion horse power’ claim.

“How can I even describe the sound that Horse has galloped into our lives,” Sano said. “Cowboy post-punk? Spaghetti rock? I’m living in anticipation for their next show and I hope you are



Photo courtesy of Nathan Sano | Canadian band Crack Cloud plays at Richards Goat.

too. With bands like these, we will never go hungry”.

Vancouver-based band Crack Cloud brought on the Mosh. They repped a new wave interdisciplinary post-punk sound that enveloped the room. Seeing them live is an experience almost beyond words. The room was as packed as the stage with the seven-membered Canadian band. The night finished in

a joyful pit to Drab Measure, a nearly nostalgic experience of a song, a great sound Arcata won’t soon forget. Sano did his best to describe this band’s sound, but how can anyone put such a sound collective into words?

“One second it’s all guitar, heavy rifts and all, but you blink and suddenly the sweet sound of a saxophone is storming up the hill,” Sano said.

Student submission

Artist feature: Vivian Spear

Samples of work from ART 250: Darkroom



Words by Morgan Hancock

These photos were shot, developed, and printed by Vivian Spear through the dark room photo lab on campus. Spear has learned these techniques through ART 250: Darkroom I. Tucked in the corner of the Art A building is the Darkroom, a space that is defined by meticulous processes dedicated to making images. It smells somewhere between a pickle and formaldehyde thanks to the film developing chemicals. Students can be found shuffling between doors to keep the light out. They perform an awkward ritual to sequester light from the amber-lit printmaking room. The

tension of impatience is in the air as students anxiously wait for images to reveal themselves. They hunch over a tub full of trays, and the trays full of developer, stop, and fix. Each tray has a time requirement that waits like a watched pot. Clocks can be found on every wall and timers at every station. It’s never quite quiet in any room. It sounds of low humming from dryers, chemicals dripping down drains, and clicks on light timers and clocks. The students dance around each other in the dark to avoid spills. The darkroom is just one of the many artsy corners that embellish our campus.



Volleyball

Lumberjacks celebrate seniors

by Elliott Portillo

Humboldt State Volleyball concluded the 2021 campaign this past weekend with a pair of home matches on Thursday, Nov. 11 and Saturday, Nov. 13. The team dropped both matches, losing in four sets on Thursday to Cal State Dominguez Hills and in three straight sets on Saturday to Cal State Los Angeles.

Saturday’s final home match also stood as Senior Day, as the Lumberjacks celebrated their five graduating seniors before the game: outside hitter Christa Pilgrim, middle blocker Jasmine McNeal, libero Carla Crespo, outside hitter Lenox Loving and outside hitter Hannah Cantrell.

For head coach Kelly Wood, it was good to be able to send her seniors off after a difficult year on the court.

“It’s always one of the most challenging days of the year, your final day of season,” Wood said. “No matter how it ends, it’s just so emotional and difficult because you’ve had so many of these girls in your program for so many years and you just develop strong relationships with these kids.”

Coach Wood also said she was proud of the resilience her team showed throughout a long, tough season.

“I was just so impressed with the resiliency of our older girls,” the coach said. “They stay positive. They kept working hard. We all stayed unified as a group and I was just really impressed with the way they handled this season.”

For senior Ibero Carla Crespo, the memories she made at Humboldt on and off the court will remain.

“I’ve definitely made some of the best friends in my life,” Crespo said. “I’ve learned so much, just from the community and volleyball, and I’ve met just so many amazing people. I would never ever ever take it back.”

Senior transfer Hannah Cantrell also said how rewarding the experience at Humboldt was.

“I went to the University of Montana before this,” Cantrell said. “But Humboldt was always the dream. I love it here. When I was a kid, I used to come up here and visit, and in high school I was always like, ‘Oh I wanna go to Humboldt State!’ I ended up transferring here and I don’t regret it one single bit.”

For many of the seniors, having the opportunity to compete and finish their career at home in front of fans after so much Covid uncertainty made the moment extra special.

“With the Covid year, it was kinda



Photos by Thomas Lal/HSU Athletics | From left to right: assistant coach Paul Castillo, Hannah Cantrell, Christa Pilgrim, Lenox Loving, Carla Crespo, Jasmine McNeal and head coach Kelly Wood during senior day at Lumberjack Arena on Saturday, Nov. 13.



Lenox Loving goes for a dig during a match against Cal State Los Angeles.

like, ‘ok, maybe that was the last one,’” Cantrell said. “It’s kinda been touch and go for a minute there. I’m just so grateful I got one last season with the crowd, with the fans, with the girls and with our coaches. We weren’t really expecting at the beginning of the year



The team huddles up prior to the match.

to even have a crowd. It was kind of a surprise, and it wouldn’t have been the same environment without them at all.”

The team finished the 2021 campaign with a final record of 3-18 and 2-16 in conference play.



Players, coaches and family gather prior to the volleyball team’s match against Cal State Los Angeles to celebrate the team’s seniors.

Lumberjack sports rundown

by Elliott Portillo

Men’s Basketball

The Lumberjacks opened their season with a pair of non-conference victories over Western Washington University and Simon Fraser University as part of the CCAA/GNAC Challenge on the campus of Cal State Dominguez Hills this past weekend.

The squad started things off on Friday by squeaking past Western Washington 70-69 off a pair of late free throws by junior Jaden Edwards with three seconds remaining in regulation. The 6’4” guard scored 16 points and grabbed 14 rebounds to record his first double-double in a Lumberjack uniform. AJ Sims scored a team high 17 points off the bench to lead a balanced offense that saw four ‘Jacks score in double digits.

Head coach Tae Norwood talked about the team’s effort in a postgame press release and described how excited he was with the season start.

“I thought our guys were resilient down the stretch,” the coach said. “We overcame a five-point deficit with less two-minutes to go in the game. Their effort was a microcosm of who we are as a unit. We preach toughness, selflessness and a commitment to excellence. Tonight, I learned a lot about this young team. They refused to quit!”

Norwood’s squad capped the weekend with another close victory on Saturday, overcoming a small halftime deficit to defeat Simon Fraser University 63-59.

A stout Lumberjack defense headlined the victory, with the team hold-

ing Simon Fraser to just a 38.6% field goal percentage and a measly 22% from beyond the 3-point line. Edwards recorded another double-double with 15 points and 10 rebounds to lead the ‘Jacks in both statistical categories.

“I thought the key to tonight’s win was our resiliency and depth,” Norwood said. “John (Riddick), Amari (Green) and Alonzo (Washington) gave us a much-needed spark off the bench.”

The Lumberjacks (2-0, 0-0 CCAA) return home for their first official game at Lumberjack Arena in nearly two years with another non-conference match against Lincoln University on Saturday, Nov. 20.

Women’s Basketball

Michelle Bento-Jackson’s squad traveled to Seattle to play a pair of non-conference games on the campus of Seattle Pacific University this past weekend. The Lumberjacks dropped both contests, losing to Western Washington 56-68 on Friday, Nov. 12 and dropping a nailbiter to Seattle Pacific, 52-54 on Saturday, Nov. 13.

Coach Bento-Jackson attributed Friday’s loss to a lapse of defensive concentration.

“There were pockets of time where our defense was fairly solid,” Bento-Jackson said. “However, it is a 40 minute game. We need to fully understand the importance of each and every possession and can not afford mental lapses in our defensive execution. Overall, we had too many careless turnovers and our offensive execution struggled.”

Citlaly Davalos scored 16 off the bench to lead the Lumberjack offense.

Saturday’s game saw the ‘Jacks go on a 10-2 run to take the lead 52-51 with two minutes remaining. However, Seattle Pacific’s Hailey Marlow nailed a jumper to put the Falcons back up 52-53. The Lumberjack’s next possession came up short and the team was forced to foul. A free-throw by Kaprice Boston sealed the loss for the green and gold.

Once again, Coach Bento-Jackson preached execution as part of the team loss.

“We put ourselves in a position

to win the game,” the coach said. “Unfortunately, we had quite a few mistakes with execution down the stretch. It is the first time this team has experienced end of game situations and we will absolutely learn from this.”

The team (0-2, 0-0 CCAA) remains on the road with a midweek match-up against Dominican University on Wednesday, Nov. 17 in San Rafael, CA.

Women’s Crew

The Lumberjacks traveled to Foster City, CA to participate against strong Division I competition at the Head of the Lagoon. The squad raced in four different categories: Collegiate 4+, Novice 4+, Collegiate 8+ and Novice 8+. For many on the roster, it was their first taste of collegiate rowing competition.

Head coach Matt Weise said he was impressed with the race results, and stressed the importance of getting out aggressive early on.

“Stepping on the gas at the beginning of the race was the goal of ours heading into this race,” Weise said. “The experience piece is what we’re missing as for most of our rowers this is the first time being in this environment. I am extremely pleased with how we performed this afternoon.”

Both collegiate teams finished 8th in their respective categories, while the Novice 4+ squad placed third. The highest placing Lumberjack team of the weekend was the Novice 8+ team who placed second behind UC Davis.

“Tonight, I learned a lot about this young team. They refused to quit!”

-Tae Norwood, men’s basketball head coach

Peace in solitude

Being alone is okay and you should do it more often

by Alana Hackman

COVID-19 made its way into the United States in January of 2020 and quickly snowballed into seven long months of isolated hell in your very own bedroom. We still haven’t recovered from the pandemic, nor is it over, but as restrictions have eased and the opportunities to enter public spaces and attend events are laid out in front of you I ask you to consider one thing: Do more things alone.

I know that may come as a shock to some considering many of you probably have spent a chunk of the last two years of your life pent up in your childhood bedroom deciding which TikTok trend to succumb to this week or what new craft you can attempt for a month before you lose interest but I’m serious, make the choice to do more things alone. In my nineteen years on Earth, I’ve noticed a trend of young adults fearing being seen in public by themselves. I myself have even avoided sitting at restaurant tables with an empty booth accompanying me or going into shopping malls just to mingle with myself. For some reason, choosing to be alone in daily activities usually comes with a feeling of shame and embarrassment with thoughts like, “Everyone is gonna think I have no friends” or “God, I really hope I don’t see anybody I know.” Your comfort doesn’t always have to rely upon companionship and it shouldn’t. Be content with yourself.

Being decisive with your own wants and desires rather than reliance on others to make the decision for you is a true choice of maturity. I know it may seem silly to gauge your maturity by whether you choose to invite a friend on a



walk rather than go by yourself, but finding comfort in isolation and your own thoughts truly gives you a better understanding of yourself and a sense of self-awareness you cannot get from being in social settings all the time. It’s okay to be scared and fear how you may be perceived once you begin to start doing things by yourself, but I promise you’ll see the benefits once you continue.

So next time you’re itching to leave the house, gather your things and take the journey by yourself instead of searching for someone to take along with you. Sit alone and enjoy a meal

you chose instead of relying on a group decision for what to get for lunch. Read a book or journal about your greatest dreams and goals. Have a good cry or just enjoy this time you have to yourself. Loneliness and being alone are not synonymous to me. I choose to be alone to better understand myself and reward myself for all I accomplish. On the other hand, I believe loneliness can only affect you if you fear being alone with yourself to begin with. I no longer fear myself and being alone with my mind but rather embrace the fear and find peace in solitude. Who knows you better than yourself?

We are not okay

by Sophia Escudero

This pandemic and its associated challenges have been going on for almost two academic years now and it shows little sign of slowing. Despite this, enough time has passed that we’re expected to have moved past it and be ready to return to business as usual. Being too mentally exhausted to give school my full effort is seen as a lack of accountability on my part, rather than a symptom of an insane few years that are currently robbing me of a typical college experience and my ability to focus.

I am exhausted on every possible level. Every day is a battle just to get out of bed, and in every class I can feel my eyes glazing over as I struggle to absorb what’s being spoken. I go home, throw some pizza rolls in the microwave, scroll through the news, chip away at my homework, and pass out only to repeat the cycle in the morning.

Of course I’m burnt out. I can’t relax with the specter of upcoming assignments looming over me, and I can’t even feel satisfied at a job well done knowing that there’s yet more work to be done and work I’ve forgotten to do. Even the upcoming break is just a week to work on larger projects and catch up on missed work in the eyes of my professors. This would be stressful enough in a regular year, but we haven’t had a normal year in quite some time. Now, on top of all of this, we have to handle this while avoiding contact with a deadly virus, navigating a partially online/partially physical curriculum, coping with the emotional impacts of isolation, and keeping up with friends and family who may be at higher risk.

Yes, I’ve missed assignments. Yes, I’ve turned in half-assed attempts at discussion posts. I take full responsibility for this, but I do not believe academic burnout should be treated as a moral failing. There is so much going on. We are, despite the efforts to return to normalcy, still in the midst of a global pandemic and many of us are already struggling with our mental health. For this to be thrown on top of the ordinary stresses of being a human being with a personal life? It’s absurd to have such a focus on productivity at the expense of our emotional and mental health at a time like this.

Productivity is not everything. One look at the growing amount of people leaving mediocre jobs will show you that quite a few people are realizing this, and the growing disaffection with coursework is not unrelated. What is interpreted as laziness or burnout from an outside perspective is rarely as simple as “no one wants to work anymore.” The truth is that no one wants to tolerate unending pressure without time for themselves. Constant pressure, believe it or not, is not good for the human mind.

We’re people first, not students. We need time to rest and recuperate, and it is not easy to find that in the constant grind that is university even without the outside challenges that everyone on Earth is dealing with right now. The school needs to have a greater amount of flexibility for students even now. The pandemic and its ongoing effects is not over just because it would be convenient for it to be over by now, and even full-time students are struggling with things beyond homework right now. Everyone would prefer for it to be over, I assure you.

Living with ADHD

by Patrick Maravelias

I have Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), which means at the time I am writing this I have a stereo playing, a half-dealt game of solitaire to my right and a TV silently playing cartoons to my left. I was supposed to turn this story in two days ago, but I decided it was more pressing to watch an hour and a half long conversation with John Mulaney and Bill Hader instead.

I say decided, but it often feels like I don’t actually choose these things. I am subject to very conflicting and chaotic whims when it comes to what I find interesting enough to pursue on any given day. If it doesn’t interest me, I simply cannot accomplish it. It started with homework and chores as a child but as an adult it often looks like forgetting to brush my teeth, missing appointments, being late to funerals, and so on. The only caveat is, if I’m interested in something, I can focus on it for hours on end, but the moment it becomes work, I show myself the door. This means that 90 percent of all the teachers and bosses I’ve ever had have hated me like poison, and for good reason.

ADHD is, in layman’s terms, a lack of dopamine. Dopamine is the conductor to the orchestra that is our brains, or at least that’s what one guy on YouTube told me. A healthy functioning brain has these different pathways in your brain for productivity, rest, etc. Dopamine is supposed to hit these different pathways to help guide the brain and body based on the outside stimuli it is

experiencing. In people with ADHD, they either have no dopamine being released or it gets released into the wrong pathway. So for me, this means when I’m supposed to be relaxing I have an unyielding urge from hell to be productive and vice versa.

ADHD is often overlooked in our national discourse about mental health, and it really shouldn’t be. It can be very severe and can manifest itself in many different ways. It’s actually very difficult to diagnose because it often causes other disorders like anxiety and depression, so most clinicians are hesitant to even treat it.

For me, my inability to accomplish things I was supposed to, coupled with a high IQ and poor impulse control ended disastrously in my early 20’s. Without going into too much detail, chronically letting myself and everyone else in my life down led to calamitous life decisions, horrible self-esteem, anxiety, depression and ultimately crippling drug addiction.

It’s also more than just the inability to focus. I’ve heard ADHD described as being a chronically overwhelmed perfectionist. I will often overcommit myself to things and then, when I find myself overwhelmed and paralyzed by inaction, I go into shutdown mode. I withdraw from everything and start to snap at people for nothing, sometimes for days or weeks on end. Sometimes it feels like there is a giant brick wall between my brain and the outside world that I just have to (figuratively) pound my head against until something breaks.

When in this state I act very impulsively and often irrationally. I’ve left jobs I shouldn’t have left, I’ve moved hundreds of miles away on a whim almost once a year on the dot. One time after a bad breakup I actually decided it would be a good idea to move into an old camper van to work on a pot farm in the middle of winter. I stayed for six months, made absolutely no money, and unknowingly had drinks with a man who was later accused of human trafficking.

It took four different therapists, three different psychiatrists, three years clean and about 100 extremely arduous phone calls before I was diagnosed and as much as I want to complain about how disgraceful mental health care is in this country, that isn’t very helpful thinking. I’m just glad I finally have some idea of why I’m such a basket case and I encourage other people to really work with doctors and do their own research at the same time. It can be very empowering just to have the right information.

We know so little about mental health other than that an overwhelming number of Americans are suffering from some form of a disorder. In my thoroughly uneducated opinion, it can’t just be up to the doctors to figure these things out. Pay attention to your minds and bodies, meditate, keep a journal, watch your diet, Google things, and if you can’t make it through a day without having a panic attack over losing the only good pen you keep in the house, maybe ask your doctor if you have ADHD.

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