

# WORD

An underwater photograph of a person swimming, viewed from below. The person is silhouetted against bright sunlight filtering through the water, creating a dramatic lens flare effect. The water is a deep blue, and some seaweed is visible in the lower left corner.

WINTER 2025

ISLA VISTA ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

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free

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# LETTER from the EDITOR

Dear WORD Readers,

As my responsibilities mount and my lack of life experience becomes glaringly obvious, I find myself reckoning with the fact that I have crossed over from adolescence to adulthood—the imperial affliction of every early twenty-something. As I face all of the things “you-don’t-know-until-you-know” (like how to stop a toilet from overflowing), I search for ways to escape the incredible and awful weight of sudden independence.

And so, sometimes, I neglect all of my homework to rewatch “Vampire Diaries” with my roommate on our sagging, secondhand couch. Or, I spend my Friday night at a band show, screaming my heart out to Radiohead covers, even though I have to be up early the next morning for work. On random afternoons, I crochet crude beanies and give them away to my loved ones, refusing to sell them and ruin the magic of my whimsical hobby.

It’s no secret that there are some things we simply cannot escape in Isla Vista: too-close-for-comfort cliff erosion, an infamous party culture, and a debilitating housing crisis.

Yet, we breathe in the salty air, ride our bikes barefoot, and soak up the Southern California sun as if we can photosynthesize.

With stories about local celebrities to escaped zebras, these pages offer their own kind of respite and remind you why you’re here.

WORD Editor-in-Chief,  
Hannah Rott



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UC SANTA BARBARA

# from IV to WONDERLAND

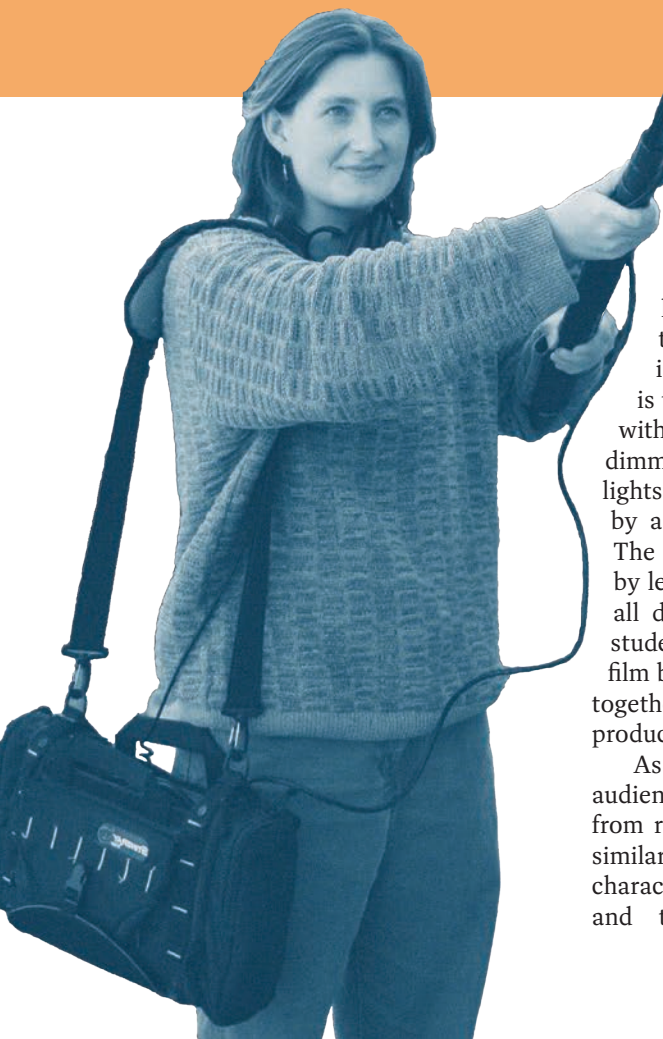
a CINEMATIC ESCAPE from REALITY



WORDS // LEA VAZQUEZ  
PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN //  
BAILEY TURNER-GARNETTE

**EACH SPRING**, a yearly student-led film and arts festival, Reel Loud, takes place in Campbell Hall. What is normally a mundane lecture hall is transformed into a striking theater; with the usual fluorescent lights dimmed, a cool-toned color palette lights up the stage which is inhabited by a plethora of musical instruments. The giant projector, usually occupied by lecture slides, showcases short films all differing in style and genre. From students, family members, faculty, and film buffs, each of these attendees come together to celebrate one thing: student-produced films and art.

As the movies begin to play, the audience collectively takes a break from reality and enter into a new world similar to their own; one in which the characters are identical to their peers and the backgrounds look





indistinguishable from Isla Vista. While movies are a form of entertainment, where characters are simply the creation of their directors, there is a profoundness in these student films that ultimately allows the audience to escape yet connect to their reality simultaneously.

Today, the modern film industry is saturated with movies intended to be blockbuster hits: adaptations, spinoffs, sequels, prequels—most of what's available to watch is often an unoriginal attempt at a cash grab. These films lack personality and use intensity to attract their audience as opposed to intimacy.

Ana Pliego, a fourth-year Environmental Science and English double major at UCSB, stated, "Watching the ones that have crazy budgets, actors, and sets that transports you to a new world. I mean, at least to me, everything is so foreign."

**"There's definitely a lot more of a personal aspect when you see these films."**

Pliego was not only an attendee of Reel Loud, but also cast in a film screen at the festival: "My Dog Fell Down the Rabbit Hole," directed by Sophia Pfitzmann.

"My Dog Fell Down the Rabbit Hole," plays out like the familiar fairy-tale "Alice in Wonderland," which is no surprise, as Pfitzmann was initially inspired to create the short film when she watched the 1988 adaptation of a children's story.

Shot over the entirety of one weekend in a tucked away field on Fortuna Road, Pfitzmann's version of the fairy tale follows a slightly older Alice (played by Pliego), as she travels to Wonderland in search of her beloved dog—Bear.

This version of Wonderland plays out like a fever dream: bone puppets, string cheese potion, BDSM henchmen, and a tech-savvy, cigarette-smoking Red Queen. My Dog Fell Down the Rabbit Hole combines nostalgic elements from our childhood and familiar elements of our emerging adulthood to create a Wonderland that is as wacky as it is refreshing.

"Alice in Wonderland" is interpreted as a fairy tale, and most people know it as a fairy tale, but the version that this one was inspired by took a different approach and tried looking at it as more of a dream—like a nightmare," Pliego recalled.

While most versions of the children's tale offer some moral lesson, My Dog Fell Down the Rabbit Hole is an indulgent film that embraces the pleasures the world has to offer.

"I feel like in our society, we punish pleasure," Pliego stated. "So getting to look at it from the flipped perspective and seeing it in a darker way that I had never seen "Alice in Wonderland" before also helped kind of transport me, and I hope the audience does too," she said.





Apart from starring in the film, Pliego described watching the other selections for the 2024 Reel Loud festival to be an immersive experience in itself.

“It was so cool, because you’re seeing faces you know, and seeing places in IV that people filmed at,” Pliego said. “It felt more engaging. I know that real movies have elements of humor, or there’s sadness or fear that filmmakers want you to feel, but seeing it done by the people you know, and those people being seated next to you makes you way more engaged in the film.”

Student-made cinema often excels at creating a strong connection, as many of the projects are rooted in the personal stories or struggles of its creators. Ellie Olson, a fourth-year Political Science, and Film & Media double major, is a member of Delta Kappa Alpha (DKA), UCSB’s “cinematic society.” Olson, both an avid audience member and producer of films, recounted the productions created by her colleagues. “They also just tend to be really personal stories about things that people can relate to. People draw on their own life and their experience a lot,” she said.

Personal narratives seem to be a recurring theme in local films, with many students taking inspiration from their own life experiences to craft a story that others can relate to; even if some audience members cannot relate to the story at

hand, they are connecting with the stories that are being shared on the screen.

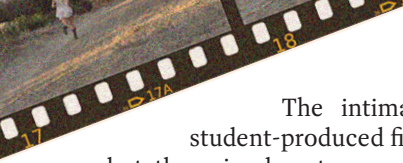
“There’s definitely a lot more of a personal aspect when you see these films, and people are very respectful of that. They’re like, ‘Okay, this is really close to someone’s heart. And this is someone’s personal experience,’” Olson said.

For Alex Yong, a third-year Psych and Brain Sciences and Film & Media double major, personal narrative is something that has deeply impacted the production of his upcoming film “It’s Late.” Following an elderly man on his deathbed, Yong’s film aims to explore unresolved regret and fleeting time, something he was challenged with during a health scare earlier this year.

## **Watching his peers’ films allows him to connect with them in a way that day-to-day life doesn’t allow.**

“Audiences won’t connect exactly to the experience that I felt in the inspiration because everyone has their own life,” Yong said, “But if I know it’s true for me, I can believe that it may have some value for other people too.”

Even as an audience member, Yong finds that watching his peers’ films allows him to connect with them in a way that day-to-day life doesn’t allow. “I see a part of them that I didn’t see before, that they couldn’t explain with words,” he stated.



The intimate nature of student-produced films is evident, but there is almost a communal aspect in both the production and viewing of the films. Chris Jenkins, Head of Production of The Film and Media Studies department, boasts about the work his students have produced during his time as an instructor.

“It’s so collaborative,” Jenkins said. “But each has their own individual experience, both in making and viewing.”

Despite all the good Jenkins stated about student films, he did mention that the acting in these films falls short where Hollywood movies seem to excel, which is a result of the endless resources and budget the professional industry has.

“The magic of movie making is to convince the audience that it’s all real, right? And a lot of the time in the student project, you don’t have the means to do that with your budget for your production value,” Yong said. “So you have to kind of narrow it down to ideas that are cheaper. And in that sense, it’s more grounded. The process of making it is also more real, where you’re not hiring people to work horrible hours. You’re working with friends, and they’re all contributing their whole true selves.”

While movie screenings are popular in Isla Vista, student films are often overlooked. This is attributed

to the fact that a majority of these films go through the film festival route, and many are stored within a database that few have access to. Unless the directors themselves are releasing them online, there’s little chance you’ll see them outside an event like Reel Loud.

When these films light up the screen at Campbell Hall, it’s an experience that one should attend. The profound themes of these films are not only accepted by the audience but celebrated too. As each story is unique, audience members and student filmmakers can find connections in stories that are not their own, as the attendees may find the stories on the screen mirror their own struggles. In a way, student-made films offer escapism, a short break that allows one to focus on a story that isn’t their own to help them forget about the stresses that await them at home.

However, there is a rawness rooted in these films that prohibits us from just labeling them as “media.” They are much more. These films allow their audience to root us in the tangible world in such an intimate way that it doesn’t feel like mere entertainment—but a shared experience for both the audience members and the crew behind the film. **W**



Yong editing a promotional video for “Don’t Cry”



A photograph of a person in silhouette on the left, looking towards a large, glowing, hooded figure on a beach at sunset. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light from the setting sun. The person is standing on a dark surface, possibly a bench or a ledge. The background shows the ocean and a small boat in the distance.

# LOST in Familiarity

PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // DALTON BEELER





# THREADS OF ID EN



# Unraveling Fashion Norms in Isla Vista

WORDS // CAITLIN MAUNG  
PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN //  
ALLY FULLER

**WITH THE BEACH** in such proximity, students often find it hard not to live in beachwear all the time. Coupled with the unpredictable weather—hot in the day, freezing at night—students may feel restricted to only wearing certain things, such as crop tops, sweatpants, or hoodies. Regardless, fashion is still a large aspect of culture around campus, with individuals coming to class in their signature and unique aesthetics.

Second-year Political Science and Biology student Eemaan Wahidullah explains how fashion plays an important role in her

life and advocacy. Wahidullah wears bold and confident patterns to present herself in the same way.

“I’m able to escape the ways I perceive myself, instead of seeing myself as a shy, timid person, now I’m able to be more confident, more outspoken,” she said. Through her clothing, she makes sure to represent her Afghan background, including pieces that were passed down from her family. “Being proud of my own culture, my own heritage,” she said.

Growing up, her mother would make her garments. “She’s taught me everything I know; family has had a big impact in my life,” Wahidullah said her family dresses eccentricly and boldly because they love being themselves. “I definitely learned that from them.”

By actively participating in the Muslim Student Association at UCSB, Wahidullah explained fashion has helped her build confidence in embracing her identity and supporting those in her community. “It’s a way that I can show my identity,” Wahidullah said. She strives to amplify the voices from individuals who share the same background. “Recently, I’ve been doing a lot for Muslim advocacy and Middle Eastern advocacy,” she said. “Right now, I am trying to make Halal grocery food reforms and making a reflection room.” Fashion has helped Eemaan solidify her identity, and in doing so has also helped her uplift those in her community.

Fourth-year Communication student Hadley Whitney-Vasquez says fashion helps her express herself. Whitney-Vasquez explained how she experiments with color, shapes, and textures and how accessorizing is an essential part of her style. “I love adding little details to everything because as you look closer, it’s more fun to look at,” she said, pointing at her gold jewelry.

Through continuously dressing herself in whatever she wanted, no matter the occasion, Whitney-Vasquez was able to







find her confidence through clothing. “If I just wore what I wanted, wherever I went, whether it was the grocery store, a doctor’s appointment, or class, then I could get into the routine of expressing myself freely,” Whitney-Vasquez said. While also being a content creator, she said she enjoys the creative process: “I like that you can make a whole concept, and execute it. You can be the production, the director, the writer—everything.” She often incorporates fashion into her videos, in the form of “Get Ready with Me” and clothing hauls.

Clothing has also supported her journey of finding herself. “I lost my voice, my sense of self,” she said. “But I found that fashion was a way for me to express myself... it gave me an outlet and a way to speak when I wasn’t able to.” With fashion, Whitney-Vasquez found her voice and, through clothing, can express how she is truly feeling.

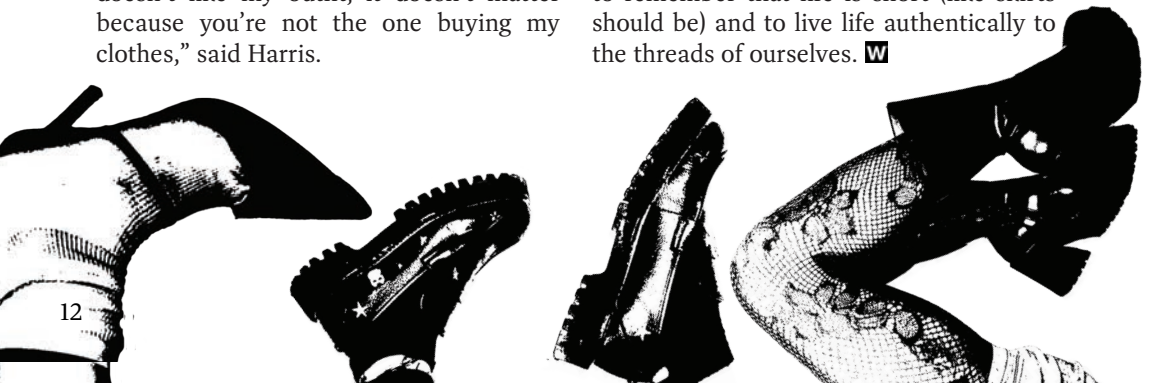
Third-year Art student Elyse Harris said her family is a large inspiration for her style. Harris explained how many of her pieces were passed down from her older siblings, and her best pieces are from her grandmother. Harris credits her family for being a large part of her fashion journey, with her mother explaining that no one’s opinion matters but your own. “If someone doesn’t like my outfit, it doesn’t matter because you’re not the one buying my clothes,” said Harris.

Harris attributes her older siblings to her style inspiration, incorporating styles from the early 70s and the late 2000s. Growing up with MTV, music videos heavily influenced her fashion as well as her music taste. “Linkin Park had that s\*\*\* on, like ‘I need those pants, I need to wear that.’ I wanted my hair dyed, I wanted fingerless gloves,” she said. “I listen to alternative, rock, and metal. But I still listen to the stuff that I grew up on: hip-hop, RNB, and oldies, and all of that became an amalgamation of my style.” Being an Art major also creatively influences her style and artwork. “Just being creative and not having a fear of standing out from people,” Harris said.

To Harris, fashion means more than just the physical; it plays an important role in how she has grown up. “I feel like it represents me in the best way, but also my family comes through a bit.”

Clothes are more than meets the eye. To some, an outfit is practical, but to others, it can influence their personality in more ways than one. Whether you dress it down or up, we can express our true selves through clothing.

The threads of identity can be seen in our fashion choices. When we are nervous about wearing those bright red boots or that boldly patterned jacket, it is important to remember that life is short (like skirts should be) and to live life authentically to the threads of ourselves. **W**





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# IF THE SHOE FITS WRITE A STORY

We want **YOU**  
to tell us a story  
about how this  
shoe ended  
up here.



Scan the QR code to submit for our next issue!

WORDS // HANNAH ROTT  
PHOTOGRAPHY // DALTON BELLER



# QUIET CORNERS

## The Push for Prayer Spaces on Campus

WORDS // ARIANA DUCKETT  
PHOTOGRAPHY // SIMONE MANSELL  
DESIGN // EVA LOZEAU DE GUZMAN

**IT CAN BE RARE** for a campus to feel truly quiet, let alone feel private. Prayer rooms, though, offer both.

Prayer rooms go by a variety of names at universities. UCSB has a “contemplation room” on the third floor of the University Center (UCen), and prayer rooms at other UCs have several similar names: a “prayer/meditation room” at UC Berkeley, a “reflection room” at UC Davis, and a “meditation space” at UC San Diego. The establishment clause of the First Amendment prevents federally-funded institutions from expressing favor of one religion over another in any way, and the variety of names complies with the secularism of public universities.

Prayer rooms are meant for spiritual connectivity and mental wellness. They allow students to privately meditate and pray on campus rather than doing so in public or waiting to do so at home. A Buddhist student could meditate there, a Catholic student could pray the rosary, a Muslim student could conduct several of the five daily prayers of Islam and more.

Muslim students who observe the five daily prayers, or salat, may benefit in particular from prayer spaces. Each prayer involves a variety of physical motions and recitations that can be more comfortable to perform in private. However, with a singular contemplation room and schedules full of classes, jobs, or extracurriculars, students may not have the option to go back to the UCen for every prayer. Instead, they pray surrounded by fellow students.

### Prayer in Public

When Adil Ejaz, a third-year Sociology major who identifies as Muslim, is on the side of campus towards IV, he uses the prayer corner in the Middle Eastern and South Asian Resource Center. If he is farther past the Humanities and Social Sciences Building, he and fellow Muslim students try to meet up to pray around the library, such as under the stairwell of the Ocean Side.

“Sometimes, beneath those stairs, I’ll see people who are just sitting there, or some [fellow Muslim students] have



reported that there are people taking naps down there. When that's the case you kind of feel not as comfortable praying there because there's someone sitting there, you know? So then I'll go upstairs a floor, between the bookshelves," said Ejaz. He balances having enough space to pray and not blocking other people's paths.

The space under the library stairwell also has spiders and cobwebs. "If you take a look under there, you'll see [praying Muslim students] looking around like, 'Oh



my goodness, there are quite a few spiders living here,' you know?" The area receives heavy foot traffic throughout the day as well.

Some Christian students, such as members of the Asian American Christian Fellowship (AACF), pray on campus differently. With a smaller staff this year, AACF doesn't currently hold prayer meetings. When they were being hosted, Jennifer Wang, the current Prayer and Bible Study Coordinator, described how Prayer Meeting Coordinators would host it either in front of the lagoon or at Campus Point—a place everyone could go. "So the prayer coordinators would just come up with a couple of prayer topics to pray

about and usually it would be individual prayer," said Wang. AACF aspired to hold prayer meetings at accessible times and places, potentially after students' classes or at someone's house. The atmosphere for prayer meetings is intended to be like hanging out with friends.

Isabel Zhou, the former Prayer Meeting Coordinator, observed how different coordinators would organize prayer meetings differently. Zhou enjoyed being in nature and would organize prayer meetings on lawns around campus. "Prayer isn't confined to a room... We can really host [prayer meetings] anywhere," said Zhou. She is currently the Freshies Ministry and Small Group Coordinator. Neither Wang or Zhou have used the contemplation room on campus.

## Prayer Rooms: For Everyone, but Few in Number

In the past year, the Muslim Student Association (MSA) has worked hard to obtain more prayer rooms on campus. Houda Filga, the president of MSA, has been in contact with the Division of Student Affairs and the Associated Students Senate to reserve rooms. "I think the best option we've had so far was just a meeting room in the Multicultural Center. However, the furniture is heavy to move, and...it's a small space," Filga said. MSA also contacted the library, the Counseling and Psychological Services, and the Old Gym, none of which had space. For the communal Friday prayer, Jumu'ah, that Muslim students may observe, a large room in the Arts building is available for 2 hours every week.

Given the specific requirements of salat and the discomfort of praying in public, prayer rooms can be especially helpful for Muslim students. However, they are for everyone to use. "We know that there are



other religions where students have to pray sometimes or students who would just like to come and meditate,” Filga said. “So we just want this to be a space that everyone’s able to use when they have time.”

Dr. Katya Armistead, the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Life and Belonging, first received requests for a prayer room seven years ago from Muslim and Jewish students when she became the Dean of Student Life. “We’re a public institution, so we can’t necessarily have designated places for just prayer, so we use the word ‘reflection.’ Someone can go there and meditate. They can pray any way they want,” Armistead said. “It’s the idea of having a quiet space to reflect, however, that might look for them spiritually, mentally.” Limited space on campus has prevented more contemplation rooms from being established.

When the contemplation room was chosen, the library was under remodeling, and large rooms were reserved for students to study. Classrooms in Girvetz Hall have

been temporary options, and a space in the SRB is under consideration. A large room adjacent to the contemplation room could become available soon, but contains cage-like fences used for events that must be cleared out.

Students have used the contemplation room to do homework, take naps, or host Zoom meetings there before. “That’s an example of an issue we’ve had in the past. The staff at the University Center was going out there all the time ... to say, ‘Excuse me, you can’t sleep in here,’” Armistead said.

Armistead believes that “campuses are probably catching up” with students’ requests for more identity-based resources. Universities with newer buildings can incorporate these requests sooner, whereas UCSB hasn’t recently had construction for that type of space, or incorporating contemplation rooms “wasn’t on top of mind when new construction has happened.” If new buildings for student resources are made, Armistead confirmed that prayer spaces would definitely be built in.



## Please, Don't Take Zoom Meetings in the Contemplation Room

On the third floor of the UCen, among angular hallways and study rooms with large tables, is the contemplation room. A pale, upholstered chair sits in the center of a windowless, six-foot-long space, with a frosted-glass door for privacy.

Ejaz does not use the contemplation room since he has to go upstairs and navigate the rooms. He has heard of fellow Muslim students going there to pray and find students working there. A friend of Ejaz's said, "I tried to tell [the student] politely that this is like a prayer space. 'Are you praying right now?' And they were like, 'No.' 'Okay, I'm going to pray, is it okay if I could have the room for myself?'" They ignored Ejaz's friend, who informed the staff. When he returned, the person was gone. "There's no system enforcing that," Ejaz said.

## In Conclusion: On-Campus Soul Enrichment

Prayer rooms give students the space to focus on their mental health and comfortably incorporate their spirituality into their college experience. Ejaz stated that practicing the five daily prayers nourishes his soul. Being able to exercise them is rewarding if a struggle. "Let's get that prayer room. Let's get that space where we can pray and practice our religion in a comfortable space," Ejaz said. "People know that we have to pray. People are not, you know, 'What is a Muslim?' People know the basic tenets of the faith. 'Five times a day? You really do that?'"

He does.

"When we're talking about developing the whole person, the whole student, that's an area I don't think that our campuses really work on and develop and support as much," said Armistead. "I think we could do more of that." **W**

# Running From Ruins



## Is UCSB as Sustainable as it Seems?

WORDS // ANUSHA SINGH  
PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN //  
HANNAH MASSEY

**“IT’S FUNNY HOW** one moment from my second class ever in college is still the most vivid experience I remember to this day,” said second-year Environmental Studies major Desiree Vudeleon.

Imagine this: it’s your first day of college, and you’re already tired and hungry. You feel a little congested because of how grimy Isla Vista Theater is. There you are barely hanging on while your professor is discussing the syllabus.

And as it turns out, the ceiling light above you is also barely hanging on. This

huge, gray metal object ends up crashing down on the floor, missing your professor and fellow students by inches.

Vudeleon recalls, “College only really started when that light fixture fell. ‘Welcome to UCSB!’ it screamed as it shattered on the ground ... I genuinely and actively avoid classes in IV Theater now.”

Facing the consequences of older buildings is not a unique experience among UCSB students. There are the small, crowded classrooms in the Humanities and Social Sciences Building (HSSB), seismic retrofitting renovations in the Music Building, and the College of Creative Studies (CCS) is simply falling apart.





Despite the impacts building disparities have on students, UCSB often evades responsibility; while older buildings are left behind, the top-notch, multi-million dollar buildings such as the Interactive Learning Pavilion or Henley Hall are celebrated.

UCSB prides itself on being a sustainable, green campus. We've got green spaces, recycled water, and compost bins on every corner. We're doing a lot right. Yet, we've still fallen into the trap of shiny innovation while neglecting the old. We build and build, but have we forgotten the structures that have defined our campus for so long? IV Theater's ceiling sure could've used some love.

## What is UCSB doing right?

UCSB has distinguished itself as a leader in sustainability, serving as both a sanctuary for environmental stewardship and a hub of sustainable innovation. The university has committed itself to achieving zero waste with over 230 acres of green space on campus and 90% of the campus's irrigated water recycled.

Bren Hall was the first-ever LEED-certified building across the entire UC system and the first LEED Platinum-certified laboratory facility in the country. This is the highest rating a building can receive in Leadership in Energy and

Environmental Design, a green building certification system used worldwide.

The San Joaquin Apartments and Portola Dining Commons are the first and only LEED-certified Neighborhood Development projects in the entire UC system. They feature solar-heated water generation for all residential buildings and the Dining Commons.

The university owns 22 LEED-certified buildings, almost all of which are on campus, totaling over two million square feet of LEED certification.

UC-wide goals hold the university to a high sustainable standard as well. The entire UC system is dedicated to achieving 100% clean electricity by the end of 2025 and aims to reduce total emissions by 90% by 2045.

## What's missing?

Despite the university's commitment to sustainability, there is still drastic room for improvement—specifically concerning the maintenance of older buildings. One reason for the disparities between older and newer buildings is campus policy.

In 2002, UCSB adopted a campus policy stating that all new buildings commissioned after July 1, 2004, must meet a minimum of the US Green Building Council's LEED Silver certification. In 2012, the standard

was increased to Gold certification. As a result, newer buildings are not only more sustainable but also receive more funding, resources, and attention than their older counterparts.

While achieving LEED-certified status has generated sustainable innovation across campus with buildings—such as the \$56 million, nearly 50,000-square-foot Platinum-certified Henley Hall featuring intelligent energy monitoring and control systems with interactive displays—has this

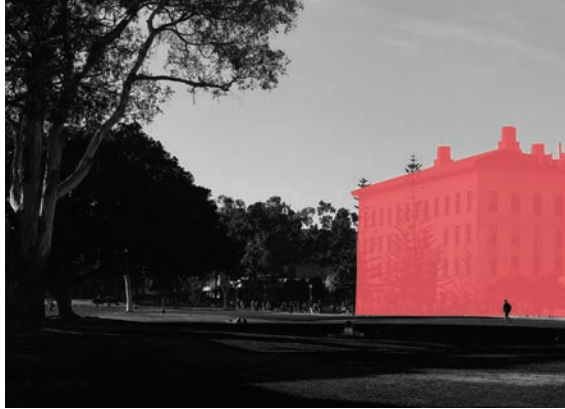
**“Sitting in old, musty classrooms makes the class feel less important to the university itself like our education is second-rate because it isn’t STEM-related”**

innovation stifled the long-term, simple, sustainable practice of maintenance?

Take, for example, the Music Building, originally built in 1954 and currently undergoing renovations to earthquake-proof the structure. According to the Music Department’s website, “the improvements include adding strong concrete walls, reinforcing existing structures, upgrading the building’s foundation, and strengthening other parts like columns and beams to keep everything safe.”

Finn Christensen, a fifth-year double major in music composition and political science, said the renovations, while necessary and overdue, have been impacting student life.

“Practice rooms and rehearsal spaces are harder to book because of the limited availability, as half of the building is gutted and shut down. Still, the department has done a very good job keeping existing spaces available,” Christensen said.



The CCS Building is in a similar position to the Music Building, yet still awaits much needed repairs and renovations.

“The College of Creative Studies, where my major courses are taught, is a building that was meant to be temporary, yet has remained as it was originally built some 50 years later,” said fourth-year CCS Writing and Literature major Faith Talamantez. “It’s crumbling on the inside—walls have stains, windows can barely be pushed open, and desks and tables are often damaged or graffitied. Creative studies are just not prioritized by UCSB, especially considering that the new ILP got built right beside CCS.”

It is also important to look at the sustainability disparities across campus. Disparities among STEM-centered and Humanities-centered buildings on campus are widely noticed among students.

Out of the 22 LEED-certified buildings owned by the university, eight of which are buildings with classrooms, only two are explicitly geared towards humanities-related fields: the Social Sciences & Media Studies building and the Education Building, both of which were built in 2010 after the LEED campus policy was enacted.

Talamantez said, “My classes in HSSB are always stuffy, overcrowded, and never have enough desks. There is maybe one plug in the entire room. Meanwhile, STEM classrooms have ample seating with plugs at every single desk. They have nicer windows with great views of the beach,



that aren't riddled with cobwebs and caked with old dirt."

Talamantez also noted that building disparities can directly impact students' learning experiences, especially those with non-STEM majors.

"I think the classroom itself has a huge impact on learning. Being in a newer classroom makes the class itself feel more important, and it makes it feel like my learning is being prioritized by the university. Sitting in old, musty classrooms makes the class feel less important to the university itself like our education is second-rate because it isn't STEM-related," she said.

Even among staff, the differences between older and newer buildings are an apparent and important issue. Kelly Garvey, a Bren PhD student and Teaching Assistant, said she is often assigned to small, crowded rooms in the HSSB, which negatively impacts her teaching experience.

"I knew as soon as I found out that one of my sections was in HSSB that I would have to change it. I remember walking in on the first day and there was just such a sad energy in the room," Garvey said. "When I got my section moved to ILP, I think everyone was just happy that we were in a new building. Everyone felt more comfortable and safe."

For some students, like third-year Psychological and Brain Sciences and Sociology double major Shayla Prasad, the

disparities in campus maintenance affect more than just the classroom experience.

"I work at the Daily Nexus, under Storke Tower. We are constantly seeing pieces of the ceiling deteriorate and fall as we're working," Prasad said. "To have a work environment where the ceiling is literally falling on top of us and we have to move chairs around to dodge it is really concerning, and I hope that we're able to get things fixed soon."

## What can be done?

UCSB has made impressive strides, with initiatives like water recycling, LEED Platinum-certified buildings, and ambitious campus-wide goals for carbon reduction. However, beneath the surface, a gap exists between the university's sustainable image and the reality of its infrastructure. While newer, high-tech buildings embody UCSB's commitment to green innovation, older buildings often fall behind, suffering from inadequate maintenance and outdated systems. These buildings are often integral to campus and student life.

"It feels so weird how we put up with all these old buildings just because the outside environment is so nice. I feel pretty jaded about where the money goes, but at a university this size, it's pretty unsurprising," Garvey said. "It's still disappointing, though, because we want to think that things would be better."

Whether it is through campus policy reform or gearing more resources towards attentive renovations, to truly fulfill its vision as an environmentally responsible institution, UCSB must balance its pursuit of new advancements with a commitment to sustaining the entire campus, embracing both state-of-the-art facilities and the everyday spaces where students and faculty learn and work. Only by doing so can UCSB genuinely embody the values of stewardship and equity it so proudly advocates. **W**



PHOTOGRAPHY  
+ DESIGN //  
ALLY FULLER

# ONESTOS



たんの者の喫煙は、  
禁じられています。  
は、あなたが肺気腫  
と慢性閉塞性肺疾患  
(COPD)になり、呼吸  
困難となる危険性を  
めます。

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Cigarettes  
Charcoal Filter

DRIVE

USA  
DRIVER LICENSE

NEW  
MODEL  
BODY  
COLOR  
PATENT PENDING

RAW





# InVerse

Trapped

Benjamin Stein

POETRY EDITORS // ARIANA DUCKETT +  
AUTUMN HAMLIN  
DESIGN // HANNAH MASSEY

Beneath sandpaper skies

At the bottom of the valley littered with stray dogs

Walmart shopping bags swim through the grey ocean of dust

Watched by cigarettes and daisies in the dead grass

Above sewers lying in plaid patterns

Beneath the rotting concrete bones of a long forgotten city

In the center of the valley

By the garden of broken Bud Lite bottles and tire tracks

Where we saw a slasher film with no ending

There is a prison

Where the wardens like to play with matches but we always get burnt

Inside the prison

The ghost of Johnny Cash tries to teach me to play barre chords

And we look for portals to nowhere inside tarot cards

Escape to SB

Sophia Quinto

I am someone else here. I don't know if you would like her.

She isn't afraid to speak her mind. She isn't afraid to hold her convictions up in her palms and let them see the sun.

She has her people and she knows who they are and who they aren't. She likes it that way. She is polarizing.

You made her small, but she has escaped. She has grown. She is ten feet tall. Her head skims the cloud while yours is buried in the sand. She sees everything. She wants to show it to you, but you are too small, too far away.



## Colored Hues

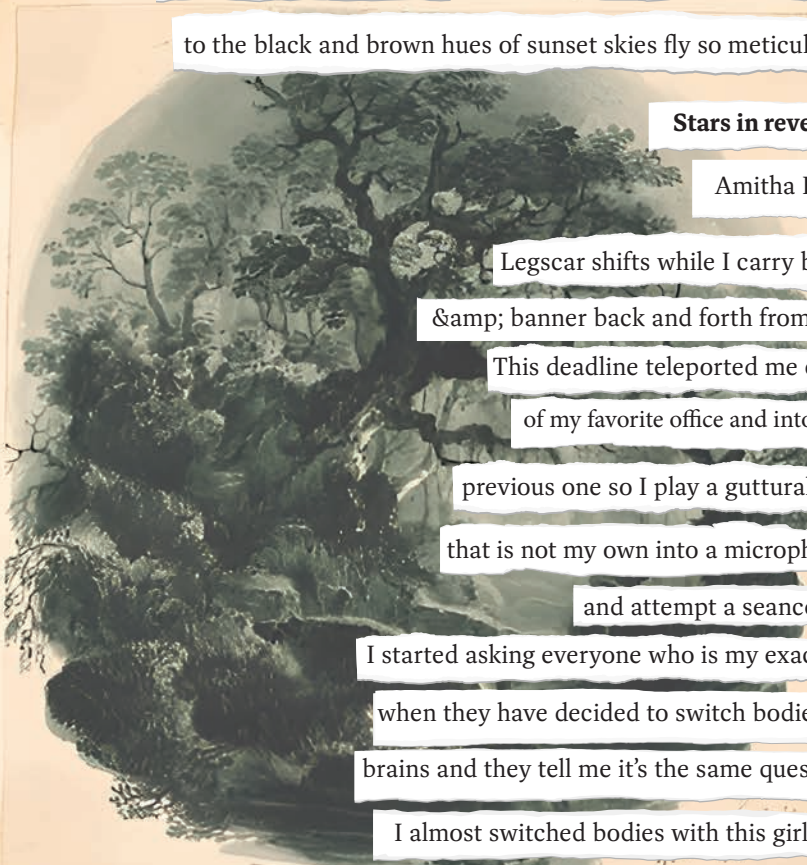
Eemaan Wahidullah

Winds and seasons ever-changing, the hues of my auburn skin glowing in the shades of light,  
Keeping my head high with the beauty of my skin, that unlike the fall seasons is everlasting.

My skin like the brown hues of the leaves I see falling graciously,  
to the black and brown hues of sunset skies fly so meticulously.

## Stars in reverse

Amitha Bhat



Legscar shifts while I carry box  
& banner back and forth from one  
This deadline teleported me out  
of my favorite office and into the  
previous one so I play a guttural cry  
that is not my own into a microphone  
and attempt a seance.

I started asking everyone who is my exact age  
when they have decided to switch bodies or  
brains and they tell me it's the same question.


I almost switched bodies with this girl who  
lived in my old dormitory, but I told her no — it was  
just a momentary compulsion I had since a  
pileup phone call, when I kept repeating the words  
I want to go home with my eyes closed and “home”  
was when I first looked back at the invisible audience.



# TALES FROM

## UCSB's Hidden Mine Shafts

# BELOW



WORDS // HANNAH ROTT

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // LIANA LE

**OVER A CENTURY AGO**, directly beneath UCSB's lagoon, an explosion erupted underground, forcing two severely burned men to drag their bodies up 50 feet of ladder in complete and utter darkness.

Escaping the flames and reaching the surface, they each smothered mud over their charred skin, waiting in agony for help to arrive.

Dying the following night in the hospital, Charlie Ellis and Bill Burch—one of whom was 70 years old—were victims of highly dangerous working conditions at Goleta's former asphalt mine.

While many know that UCSB's campus was built from the barracks of an old WWII Marine air base in 1909, few can recall the land's history before then. In the late 1800s, Goleta was a forerunner in the budding American asphalt mine industry, even supplying the pavement for the first streets in San Francisco.

The Chumash people of the Santa Barbara area used asphalt long before settlers mined it for profit. They utilized this form of petroleum oil to caulk plank canoes and line coil baskets, effectively making them waterproof. T. Wallace More, a wealthy landowner in the Santa

Barbara area, started selling asphalt in the 1850s after inheriting 400 acres of land in the Goleta area, now known as More Mesa. He built More's Landing: a 900-foot wharf placing Goleta on the map and allowing him to ship out asphalt and local farmers to ship out their crops. This asphalt was prized for its high quality, generating much wealth for More.

Local historian Tom Modugno described More's mining process as rudimentary. "He was sticking dynamite on the ground, blowing all this junk up, and having guys pick it up," said Mudugno. According to Mudugno, More stopped his mining operations in the area after about 20 years, leaving room for another lucky entrepreneur to start their own mine.

In 1890, Augustus Den, did just that. After inheriting a chunk of land on what is now UCSB's campus, Den discovered a large tar pit on his property and first leased the land to the California Petroleum and Asphalt Company in 1890 and then to the

## Miners often lost consciousness and suffered frequent infections.

Alcatraz Asphalt Mining Company in the mid-1980s. They named it La Patera Mine, the nickname given to Goleta by Spanish settlers for the abundant ducks in the area.

La Patera Mine's shafts were unusually deep compared to other mines in the area. They started at 200 feet and were eventually sunk to 550 feet. As stated by Justin Rughe in his book about Goleta's history, the asphalt, solid at the surface, oozed just a few feet below. Because of this, the mine was both extremely dangerous and required extraction around the clock. If not, the shafts would collapse from the asphalt flow, trapping the miners and all their supplies inside the caverns.

On his website about Goleta History, Modugno writes that miners worked in 10-hour shifts for 25 cents an hour, twice the wage of a farmhand at the time. In fact, many of the workers were farmers, working in their off-season to make extra money, as well as men of all ages and walks of life.

"A lot of transients passing through would go there to work for a couple of days, or because they offered lodging too. So if you're like a hobo, as they called it back then, riding the rails, coming through town, you need a place to stay. These guys would pay you to work too," said Modugno.

The high wages resulted from perilous conditions, as injuries became commonplace at the mine. After breathing in highly contaminated air and sloshing in pockets of brackish water for 10 hours, miners often lost consciousness and suffered frequent infections. Burns from the scalding hot asphaltum were also recurrent.

Timber supports were used to hold up the mine, often splintering and breaking in the depths of the mine shafts. In one instance, water was struck from above, causing the shaft to cave in. In an attempt to escape through a small hole filled with mud and water, a worker was impaled by his own pick. Two other miners were badly injured in this incident.

Next time you peer into the murky, serene waters of the Lagoon and get a whiff of slightly rotting fish, think about the remnants of a deep system of hundred-year-old mine shafts, collapsed and oozing with thousands of tons of asphalt. Then, pay silent homage to the brave miners who risked their lives and try to remember that maybe, your three-hour shift at the Rec Cen isn't so bad. **W**





# Wake-Up Call

## Student Sleep Deprivation

WORDS // NASTIA GRITS

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ELLA LUK

**IN THE SMALL** college town of Isla Vista, filled with band shows, surfing, late-night Deja Vu runs, situationships, and rusty bicycles, sleepless zombies are sneaking around undercover as fully functioning, put-together students. They terrorize the streets, running on Red Bulls and Celsius, groggily treading from class to class.

Many students in IV experience sleep deprivation from overworking themselves. Juggling school, work, staying athletic, extracurriculars, and social life; all of this together does not leave much room for sleeping. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 60% of college students experience low-quality sleep and an average of seven hours of sleep a night.

One of these students is second-year Riley Bogard, who has noticed these negative effects in her daily life. She wakes up at 5 or 6 a.m. every morning because she has many responsibilities: school, tennis, jiu-jitsu, stringing rackets for the girls' tennis team, and holding an officer position in her sorority.

"I feel like if I wake up, I just try and get everything done, if I get everything done, it'll be fine, but then I don't get everything done, and then I wake up the next day, and I try and catch up, but there's no really catching up," Bogard said.



Another student, second-year Dennis Marcin, balances his environmental science major, fraternity membership, a love for surfing, swimming, and going to the gym.

"It feels like there are almost not enough hours in the day for me to finish everything. I literally don't have enough time," Marcin said.

Everyone knows that sleep is vital for our well-being, but somehow, it is a low priority on students' long to-do lists.

It should be vice versa because, as UCSB's Health and Wellness Health





Education Specialist Emily Teter states, the body produces hormones that impact learning, memory, alertness, mood, and the immune system. A lack of sleep correlates to less academic success, higher irritability, and decreased emotional health.

Pulling an all-nighter occasionally may not look that bad on the surface, but when done repeatedly, an exhausted brain does not have as many mental resources to exert and the body goes into sleep debt. Teter said, "If you get sleepy or fall asleep when there is less activity or stimulation in your environment, such as sitting as a

passenger in a car or in a darkened lecture hall, you likely are needing more sleep."

Marcin noted this as well, stating, "I did notice an effect on my mental health. I couldn't think or concentrate as well as usual, and when I was in lecture, I tended to doze off, and not retain as much information as I usually do. I also felt like focusing was just much more difficult."

Homework is one culprit in keeping students up, yet their lack of sleep makes it so they can't even pay attention in class.

"Fall quarter of freshman year was when I had the heaviest course load. All of my assignments as a humanities major were essay focused and therefore I was spending every week writing. I would go to sleep at 3 a.m. and wake up at 7 a.m. to continue and after that became so sleep deprived and unstable," said Devyn Frazier, a second-year History of Public Policy and Law major.

***"I don't get everything done, and then I wake up the next day, and I try and catch up, but there's no really catching up."***

A lack of sleep can also lead someone to drink more caffeine, which is associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety, according to the National Library of Medicine.

"In the morning, I have three shots of coffee, but sometimes later in the day, I have another shot of coffee, so four shots of coffee. That definitely affects my physiological state for sure, which affects my moodiness, which then affects my mental state. So I definitely think if I get well-rested, I don't need as much coffee, which means I'll be in a better mood," Bogard said.

Students notice a significant difference in their well-being when they get enough sleep compared to when they're running on lower levels. Frazier noted, "Being not tired lowkey feels so relaxed and soothed that I start focusing on things that are actually good for me, such as breaks and meals and nature, but when I'm tired, I do whatever I can to be productive because I've chugged maybe 1,000 milligrams of caffeine and dissociate my way through the day."

Juliet Becker who is a second-year Communication and Political Science double major, also observed a difference in her behavior when she gets less sleep. She has numerous extracurriculars, such as being a Paid Canvasser for Santa Barbara County's Democratic Party, an Assistant Editor for the Daily Nexus' Neuxestentialism, and the Publicity and Communication Director for the Campus Democrats.

"Most recently, on election day, I had to work from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m., and then I was awake long after that, so it was a very, very, very long day where I did not get enough sleep. I find that I'm much more irritable, I'm much less patient, I'm much less an on-my-toes of a thinker when I'm sleep-deprived. My mental state, I would say, it's just much more simple, I have a much lower tolerance for everything," Becker said.

UCSB has made an effort to help battle sleep deprivation by installing napping pods on the library's first floor. To use a napping pod, a student needs to close the overhead visor and set a timer. The pod

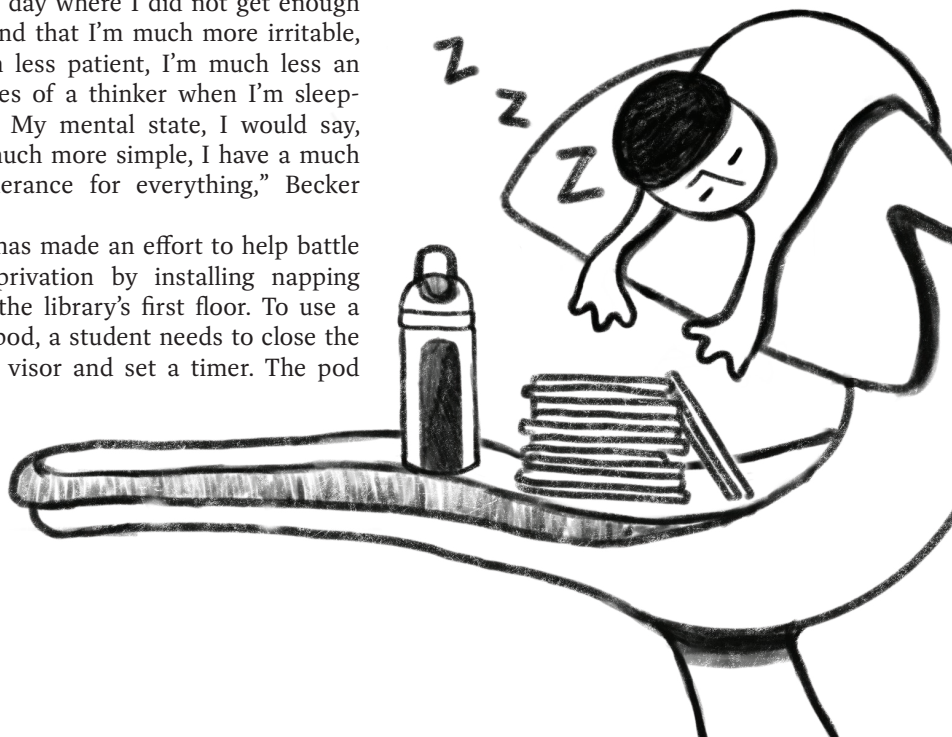
also comes with a speaker that plays music to provide a more peaceful experience and block out noise. For some students, napping is a must-have in their day.

"I'm really addicted to naps. I sleep a lot during the day. I crave naps. I feel the need to nap every single day and I actually have to fight the urge to go to sleep and sometimes in my life I've napped every single day for several hours for months on end because I love it so much," Becker said.

Becker added, "I get so tired at around 2 p.m. every day and I feel like it is the hour that I should be asleep as opposed to night time. It's just kind of an essential part of my sleep schedule, honestly and when I don't nap, that's when I feel sleep-deprived."

Another effort to improve sleep health is UCSB's week-long "Sleep Challenge." This workbook is on the Health and Wellness website and provides students with daily modules to complete that educate them on how to obtain better sleep.

"For many students who engage in our online education content, discovering more about the science of sleep helps them



feel empowered to influence their own daily habits and rhythms to better support their sleep health,” said Teter. “Sleep is a mysterious thing we all hopefully do every night and when it’s not going well, you can feel these detrimental effects in all areas of your life. From your mood, to your appetite or cravings, to your attention span or ability to focus.”

The Health and Wellness Center also offers other programs to help battle sleep deprivation, including “Wind Down Wednesday,” which teaches students about sleep, journaling, and meditation. They also offer resources such as sleep masks, earplugs, and professional guidance.

***“I find that I’m much more irritable, I’m much less patient, I’m much less an on-my-toes of a thinker when I’m sleep-deprived.”***

“Getting enough exercise or healthy movement during the day has been shown to support restful sleep. Establishing a bedtime routine that helps your mind and body wind down from the stimulation of the day can be helpful for falling asleep,” said Teter. Journaling, meditating, and reading can also make it easier to fall asleep.

There’s a light at the end of the tunnel if you’re struggling with sleep; however, scheduling your day well can be a solution to setting more time aside to rest.

“I abuse my calendar app by scheduling everything in there and that allows me to see everything very visually and know where I need to be at what time and how much time I’m spending on different kinds of activities and work,” Becker said.

At the end of the day, this lack of sleep comes from students wanting to make the most of the time they have. It may be stressful, but students just like to occupy their schedule with the things they love. As Becker mentioned, “I try not to sit in bed on my phone, I wanna make the most out of all hours of my day.”

Although sleepless and over-caffeinated, these zombies are the core of IV’s lively spirit. If they went to sleep, our town would go to sleep with them. **W**





# Locked In

Generic for:  
Adderall

Take 1 tablet daily







# Think Zebras, Not Horses

## Santa Barbara's Wild Zebras

WORDS // CAITLIN MAUNG  
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // OLIVIA PURCELL

**HIDDEN IN THE MOUNTAINS** of Santa Barbara lives a local cryptid. Santa Barbara's very own Bigfoot: Maynard, the zebra. Visitors come from all over to see this zebra legend in person, even adding him to their "Santa Barbara Bingo List," compiled with sights to check off when visiting the city. How or when Maynard got there remains a mystery; however, users online speculate that he may have traveled from Hearst Castle, which is a whopping two-hour drive from Goleta.

According to the official Hearst Castle website, it was once home to the largest zoo in the world, housing a variety of exotic animals, such as tigers, cougars, chimpanzees, and macaws. Locals have said that Maynard may have run away from a neighboring property, but his origin still remains a mystery. It is possible that he could have traveled over 100 miles to be in Santa Barbara. One can only imagine the amount of zebra power it took Maynard.

Funny enough, Santa Barbara County Animal Control acknowledges Maynard's existence but chooses not to interfere. According to California law, zebras are in the same taxonomic family as horses and donkeys, and thus are not a restricted species, meaning that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) does not regulate them. The CDFW is responsible for regulating the state's

wildlife and plant resources, as well as upkeep of their natural habitats.

Some students have been fortunate enough to see this anomaly themselves. Fourth-year Psychology student Paris Nemandoust chronicled the night she and some friends came across Maynard. Following a long day, Nemandoust's friend, Morgan, suggested taking an impromptu trip to Lizard's Mouth. Her friend, Ilan, showed obvious skepticism. "You're just going to miss out on an incredibly awesome opportunity," said Nemandoust. Ilan finally gave in, and the trip was set.



In the early hours of the morning during the Winter Quarter of 2022, the group embarked on a quest to find the zebra. To reach Maynard's stomping grounds, visitors must take Highway 154, then near West Camino Cielo, and start driving down a dirt road.

"The car in front of us suddenly stops, and then we see it," Nemandoust said. "We all started screaming in the car, and the zebra was right next to us, just eating grass." Maynard was seen grazing on the side of the road, in clear view, almost as



**“We were all just shocked that the rumors were true and we were lucky enough to see it.”**



if he was expecting visitors. Shockingly, Nemandoust revealed she was wearing a zebra hat that very night, almost foreshadowing the trip’s outcome.

Coming out of the experience, Nemandoust and her friends found the moment to be surreal. “This was our one big moment.”

While many still seek a glimpse of Maynard, it is important not to interact

with the wildlife and simply observe, as Nemandoust and her friends did.

Book your trip to Lizard’s Mouth when you are ready to make the group chat a reality. And when the sound of hooves reaches your ears; think zebras, not horses, as Maynard may be near. **W**



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DESIGN // SIMONE MANSELL

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# You'll Never Find

# ANOTHER GIRL LIKE ME!

## Defying Sorority Stereotypes

WORDS // MADELINE SLOGOFF

PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // FATIMA ROMERO

**WHETHER YOU HAVE** watched the movie, *Legally Blonde*, succumbed to the trending documentary *Bama Rush*, or fallen victim to #rushtok, most of us have been exposed to sorority propaganda in some capacity throughout our lives.

The media influences our everyday life in both overt and subliminal ways, often unconsciously inserting bias into our psyches. Panhellenic President Leili Delorme confirmed her exposure to these media-derived conventions. “Before I joined a sorority, I thought it aligned with the negative stereotypes that were perpetuated in pop culture. You had to look a certain way, dress a certain way, be a certain race,” said Delorme. Panhellenic is an organization of nationally recognized women’s sororities, each campus across the United States having its own respective chapter.

Institutionally, sororities do not have a proud past due to historical precedents of classism, elitism, and racism. These deep-seated issues stem from financial barriers that bar particular socioeconomic groups from joining, as well as “legacy” policies that are advantageous to those whose family members belong to the same sorority.

Such institutional notions of exclusivity, as well as distorted media coverage, have constructed the concept of a “sorority girl,” often accompanied by a negative connotation.

Elaine Jones, a senior member of Kappa Kappa Gamma and aspiring medical salesperson, shared her own outlook. “Before I came to school, I thought being in a sorority was partying, drinking, guys, the stereotypical trifecta. Then I came here and realized that’s not really the forefront of Greek life at all,” said Jones.



Panhellenic is an organization of nationally recognized women’s sororities, each campus across the United States having its own respective chapter.



For Jones and numerous other women in sororities, their sorority affiliation is just one aspect of their identity and endeavors. Their escape from these stereotypes is embodied in their varied pursuits unrelated to their sorority.

For Summer Briata, a senior member of Delta Gamma, this escape is lacrosse. She plays on the Italian national lacrosse and the club teams at UCSB. Even while participating in demanding extracurriculars, she did not feel like she had to choose between them. "Nothing has stopped me from doing one or the other," Briata said.

"I think it is what you make it, and it is how you cultivate it," Briata shared about the time commitment of a sorority.

Sofia Gupta, a sophomore member of Kappa Alpha Theta, spoke about the fruitful advantages of her sorority's support system through the lens of her business, Sandy Siren Tees. With her trademark sun-centered design, Gupta has crafted her business to combine her affinity for sharing art with loved ones, while also representing the spirit of "sunny Santa Barbara." After announcing in her chapter-wide group chat that she was starting this business, she received a large influx of encouragement.

An upperclassman in her sorority randomly approached Gupta and asked for her to make a shirt for her friend's birthday. This was one of the moments in which Gupta felt the support of this meaningful network. "My sorority has made it better because I've been able to share my art with a large amount of people," Gupta said.

"Art connects people in an emotional way. I just find it so beautiful that people want to be a part of something I created," Gupta shared. "I think that there's a lot of creative people in Greek life and they are able to bring such a different image to it."

**"It's more of a community than just an Instagram pic or facade."**

Ellie Morgan, a sophomore member of Alpha Delta Pi, also attributes much of her continued success in her business, Ellie Bellie Chains, to her supportive sorority community. Her business began the night before Deltopia freshman year. In a frenzy to perfect her outfit for the iconic UCSB celebration, she began making belly chains—"like necklaces for your waist"—for herself and her roommates. Thereafter, she started an Instagram handle for the





business, which has blossomed far beyond her expectations.

“All of them supporting and plugging Ellie Bellie Chains, wanting to see the process, giving me ideas for Instagram, or taking photos of my chains has helped me so much,” Morgan said. She expressed her gratitude for these unseen acts of kindness from fellow sorority members that fuel her business efforts.

Avery Lindsey, a junior member of Delta Gamma, agreed with the prevalence of creativity within the Panhellenic community, sharing that making music serves as a creative outlet and reflects her commitment to community values, which are also evident in her sorority. Lindsey is the guitarist of the prominent local band Big Hungry, one of few women represented within the musical landscape in Isla Vista.

Lindsey is also the president of Gauchos for Recovery and participates in a neuroscience research lab. She shared how this resonates with numerous other women in her sorority. “I’ve met so many diverse sorority women, and so many of them have such broad and interesting lives and passions outside of just being in Delta Gamma,” Lindsay said. She cited fellow members of Delta Gamma, including her roommate, who runs a jewelry business, and a friend who produces her own music.



Photo by Sean Schmitt

However, these women were not always familiar with Greek life’s diverse endeavors. Briata shared some of her own misconceptions about sororities after transferring from college in Georgia, where sorority life was serious and all-consuming.

“I viewed sororities beforehand as a cliquy thing where all the girls look the same. I thought it was more toxic positivity rather than beneficial positivity. I’ve been wronged for sure because I think it’s the complete opposite,” Briata said.

Morgan said, “I found that I’ve had such a good experience but it’s the stereotypes that make it worse.”

Twelve percent of identifying women at UCSB belong to Greek organizations, a relatively small percentage compared to other national universities, some of which accommodate up to 75% of their undergraduate female population in sororities. The recruitment process is four days long, compared to other schools, which extend it to two weeks. These statistics contribute to the prevailing outlook that sorority life at UCSB is comparatively relaxed.





Lindsey also shared her previous perception of sororities before joining. "I'm from the south, so I was very hesitant to rush. I thought everyone was gonna be like the people I've seen on 'Bama Rush Tok'," Lindsey said. "Honestly, it's just kind of different out here than it is elsewhere. I've met so many different types of people. I meet introverts, I meet extroverts, I meet people that don't like to party, I meet people that are party animals. I meet creatives like my roommates, I meet leaders like my big, who is the president."

Morgan, hailing from Arizona's sorority hotspot, described the same tentative feelings surrounding Greek life due to tales of her family's experiences. "I thought it was going to be more phony and superficial," she said. After joining, she found just the opposite. "It's more of a community than just an Instagram pic or facade."

Panhellenic president Leili Delorme shared both her and her family's misjudgments of sorority life before joining one at UCSB. "For me, both my parents immigrated here. So when I talked to them about joining a sorority, they were opposed because they also had those negative stereotypes," Delorme said. "Once you're in the community and you know what it's really about, you learn that we don't stand for those negative stereotypes and we don't value those things as organizations."



When asked about the impact of sorority life on their college experience, there was one common answer: friendship.

Delorme shared, "Being in Panhellenic has found me my job, found me my closest friends that I'm currently living with in my senior year, and found my internship that I'm currently working. So I would say that it's really changed my life in the sense that it has opened a door of opportunities that I wouldn't have necessarily found if I didn't join."

Morgan expressed the same feelings about friendship and reflected on an incident that particularly moved her. "Recently, we had two old ladies come back to visit my chapter. They were around 70 or 80. They told us they were in my sorority at UCSB 50 years ago and that they still hang out once a year. They have supported each other through all the hard times of life. Many of their husbands had passed on. The friendship aspect I expect will be with me forever, even though I can anticipate that sounds corny."

The Panhellenic community at UCSB is home to aspiring entrepreneurs, artists, researchers, sports players, and women with unique career pursuits; this list of endeavors continues to expand.

"It shouldn't be the overarching label that is assigned to Panhellenic women, because it's really harmful," Lindsey said. "Being a member of a sorority is just one part of me, not the whole me." ❖

**"Before I came to school, I thought being in a sorority was partying, drinking, guys, the stereotypical trifecta. Then I came here and realized that's not really the forefront of Greek life at all."**





# YETZ'S BAGELS

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# Isla Vista's Favorite Mailman

How Jorge Lopez Has  
Escaped the 9-to-5 Dread

WORDS // JASMINE KAVIL  
PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // DALTON BEELER

**IN THE PEAK** of midday sunshine, Jorge the Mailman strolls down the lively streets of Isla Vista, his mailbag slung over one shoulder and a smile as steady as his footsteps. Familiar voices call out from porch steps and balconies, and he greets each resident by name, pausing to chat with passersby on Pasado, waving to a group of students studying on their lawn.

For over two decades, IV's favorite mailman, Jorge Lopez, known for his cheerful waves, friendly chats, and unmatched dedication, has delivered more than just mail—he's brought warmth and connection to every doorstep in the community.

For many, Lopez is the one who brightens their day with a kind word or a quick smile. Knowing each street by heart

of Jorge nearly four years ago was on my way to surf and he gave me a big 'yew' with a huge smile and a shaka shakin'. I remember that getting me extra stoked on the community here," Grensted said. Over the years, many IV residents, and those adjacent, have voiced these praises.

Thinking about the beginning of this career path, Lopez recalled that it was his uncle who nudged him toward the postal profession. During a family reunion decades ago, his uncle, who was a postal worker himself, mentioned that the post office was hiring. "I never really said, oh, I want to be a mailman," Lopez revealed. His love for music, which he listens to constantly on his route, along with his passion for the outdoors, truly made the job appealing for him.

## **"Lopez always comes back to one truth: the people of IV remain his favorite part of the job"**

and many residents by name, his presence brings a touch of reliability and familiarity to a community known for its constantly changing student population, making our bustling college town feel a little more like home.

Students who once relied on him for care packages from their parents now have kids of their own. Over the years, Lopez has seen the landscape of IV change—from small businesses that have come and gone to the ebb and flow of student life as each graduating class moves on. Even as new residents arrive, the legend of Jorge the Mailman precedes him, his name spoken with a mixture of admiration and affection.

Kalvin Grensted, a fourth-year transfer student at UCSB, knew Lopez long before setting foot on campus. Having previously resided on the far side of IV, Grensted has been exchanging warm greetings with Jorge for nearly four years. "My first memory

However, Lopez acknowledged that the job can be challenging at times. "The job itself is very tough. It can be demanding—physically, and, you know, also mentally," he shared. From fending off a dog's sudden charge to mourning his mother's passing nearly six years ago, Lopez reminds us that hard experiences are simply part of life. Ultimately, the benefits far surpass any shortcomings, and in the end, Lopez discovered a career that suits him perfectly, integrating almost all of his passions into one role.

In 1996, when Lopez began his journey with the United States Postal Service (USPS) team, he was initially assigned to a different route. However, he frequently found himself sent to IV to assist with the heavy workloads. It wasn't long before he completely fell in love with the area.

Lacking seniority at the time, Lopez put in a bid for the IV route when the chance



resurfaced. “Nobody really wants to come out here because there’s so much work, and it’s like, oh the bikes, oh the skateboards, it’s so rowdy, and I’m like, that’s why I love it,” Lopez said with a laugh. As it turns out, he was awarded the route simply because everyone else opted for literally any other assignment. Lopez has been happily walking the streets of IV ever since.

A typical workday begins with Lopez arriving at the post office to sort the mail, collect packages, load the truck, and finally head out for the day. He noted that there are five different routes in IV, but now that he has attained seniority, he enjoys sticking to his favorite route. Lopez shared that the main allure of his route lies in the large, rural mailboxes that line the sidewalk. This setup makes it exceptionally convenient to deliver all types of mail to the residents of Trigo, Pasado, Sueno, and a few small side streets.

Regularly seen on the 67 and 68 blocks, Lopez fondly reminisced about the cherished, daily tradition of meeting his fellow mail carriers for lunch at Tierra De Fortuna Park. He described the peacefulness and tranquility of immersing himself in nature each day, even if only for a short time.

Yet, Lopez always comes back to one truth: the people of IV remain his favorite part of the job. He’s a true people person, enjoying the chance to connect with so

many wonderful people each day—and they’re just as happy to see him. “When you guys say what’s up to me, that makes my day,” Lopez said. He explained that if he can bring students the same happiness they bring him, and help ease their stress, it truly brightens his day.

Samantha Harvey, a student at Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts, often finds herself visiting friends in IV. “Jorge has become my all-time favorite part about visiting IV. He’s such a kind soul and radiates such positivity, you can feel how much he loves what he does. I cherish our chats and am honored that he always takes time out of his busy day to talk to me. He always puts a huge smile on my face. I just adore him,” Harvey shared. Even as an outsider to the community, Harvey has felt the genuine warmth Lopez brings to those around him.

As much as Lopez’s cheerful presence remains a constant source of joy, the world around him has been anything but steady. Over the years, he’s watched familiar streets and faces shift and evolve, reflecting the changing nature of the community he serves. One of the most striking changes over the years has been the surge in Amazon packages that require daily delivery.

Furthermore, Lopez reflected on how IV used to be out of hand, with its rowdy atmosphere marked by burning couches



and students wreaking havoc. Today, however, the area has become a lot more peaceful and tame. Lopez confidently stated that if given the choice to deliver mail anywhere in the world, he wouldn't hesitate to stay in IV.

His roots are truly grounded in IV, as he shares that the best thing to happen to him since joining the post office was meeting his wife, Mischa. She, too, was a mail carrier and once delivered mail in IV. Since then, she has taken on a role at UCSB in the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Lopez gives immense credit to his wife and family for their unwavering support and love over the years, especially as he's spent long days away from home, serving the community.

Lopez also relishes the opportunity to step outside the traditional 9-to-5 structure, finding fulfillment in a job that defies the usual professional constraints. It's clear that he doesn't just lack dread for his work—he genuinely loves it. “When you go to work, and it doesn't even seem like it's work, that's success,” Lopez said. He shared that his job is not just fun, but it also keeps him young, all while earning a living.

His gratitude truly is unmatched, as he speaks about his job with such high spirits, proving that it's possible to find a career that makes you want to live to work, rather than work just to live. “Look around you, you can see the f----- ocean, look at all the cool people, the weather,” Lopez said. Despite trying different routes in the area, Lopez always found himself bored and unfulfilled, with none of them lasting more than a couple of weeks.

He advises students on the brink of graduation to pursue their passions, urging them to focus on what they love rather than just chasing after money. He also encourages others to pursue what truly inspires them and take life one day at a time. “You have to plan your future, but you

have to live right now,” Lopez explained. “It's a journey, not a destination.”

With a smile as familiar as the ocean breeze, IV's beloved Jorge the mailman has become a local legend, transforming daily deliveries into moments of joy and connection. Having once worked a 9-to-5 job, and quickly realizing he hated it, he has freed himself from the dread of conventional professionalism for the past 25 years. “To each their own,” Lopez said with a chuckle. “It just goes down to that. If you're willing to be miserable but drive a \$200,000 car, go for it. Couldn't be me, though.” **W**





# GOING WITH THE FLOW

## Mindfulness in Isla Vista

WORDS // AUTUMN HAMLIN

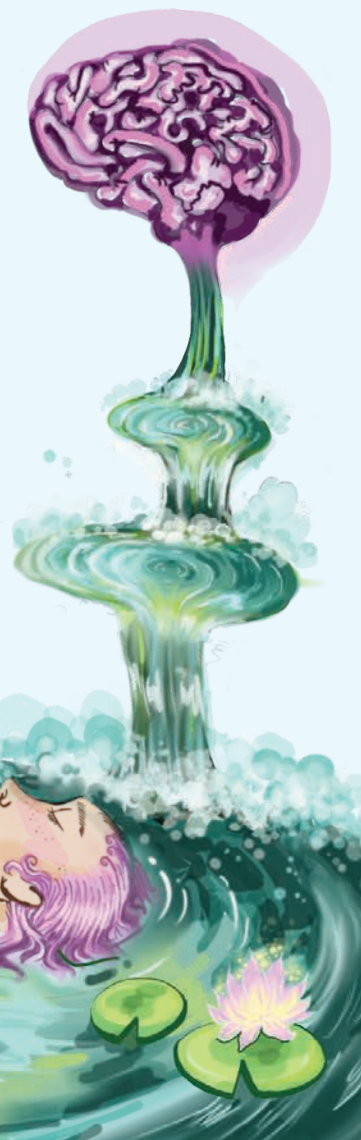
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // TAILI SHERWOOD-KONG

**GOING WITH THE FLOW** seems like it shouldn't be so hard in sunny Isla Vista. UCSB's marketing alone could convince me that life would never be so taxing along the coastline.


But what about those times when it is? Classes pile up, and balancing work and school becomes overwhelming. On top of that, your cat Bo got out last night and you forgot to go grocery shopping yesterday. How could you not be stressed?

When it all gets to be too much, mindfulness is a commonly utilized practice in Isla Vista and beyond. A tool for grounding oneself and finding reprieve amidst the instability of everyday life, mindfulness can quell both internal and external storms that may be brewing. "My second year, I was taking stats, and it derailed my life for ten weeks," said Lucy Rothbardt, a fourth-year Sociology student and officer of UCSB's Mindfulness Club. She soon attended a meditation session led by the Mindfulness Club and, from there, only fell deeper into appreciation for the practice.

However, to truly understand mindfulness's impact, the word's definition must be broadened. Rather than an entity in and of itself, mindfulness is a mere part of the things we do every day. By staying present, the potential to find mindfulness within small moments is made possible. These moments lie







within small parts of your day or hobbies, like listening to music, surfing, or even a stroll along the beach.

“Mindfulness, the way that I would describe it, it’s about being present,” said Rothbardt. In practicing our hobbies and making time for ourselves, we are focusing on the time right in front of us rather than projecting into the future. Often, mindfulness, or a state of intense focus on the present, is associated with and found in conjunction with engaging in activities you love and entering what many call a “flow state.”

In these moments of no distraction and pure interest in an activity, the mind is temporarily void of worries or anxieties. Nearly all focus is paid to one item, rather than the hundreds of items trying to grab your attention simultaneously. From surfing at Dev’s to laying on a grassy patch between classes, moments of peace can be cultivated if intention and desire are present. “There’s so many ways to cultivate mindfulness... there does just have to be some sort of intention behind the activity,” Rothbardt said. The intentionality is central, especially when it’s so easy to become distracted by friends, phones, or the ocean’s call.

Seemingly, the largest hurdle to approaching a flow state is the constant chokehold the attention economy has on all of us (except maybe your friend who said they have never even downloaded TikTok). As more information and media are made so readily available, the attention we can humanly parse out to each item decreases. “Do not Disturb” can only mitigate so many disturbances, after all.

When our time and mere focus are what rake in the big bucks, why wouldn’t companies desire to profit off our attention?

So, to be mindful, is a social media cleanse necessary? Perhaps this drastic move isn’t too far out of the question.

Aside from being a tool for nurturing connections that exist outside the digital realm, social media often shapeshifts into a black hole, where users easily disappear for far hours under the harmless guise of Instagram Reels.

What is most poignant about the time-suck is our mind’s ability to excuse it. How educational could two horizontal hours of short-form media really be? So, the first step might be a reevaluation and re-sanctification of our own attention.

Acknowledging the influence our attention, and therefore time, has on our mental peace is a characteristic of any form of mindfulness, from crocheting to gardening. This allows more attention to be allotted to our minds and bodies.

Just as flow states can occur with any hobby or activity, so too can mindfulness appear anywhere you look for it. For some Gauchos, this inner peace is brought forth by the Mindfulness Club. Rothbardt elaborated on the impact they’ve seen in the club, saying, “I think that mindfulness is really fundamental to being able to harness community because you lose so much ego when you actually start practicing regularly.” As much as mindfulness is an individual practice, its shared goal easily works to bring folks together.

This organization of students is a testament to the community that can be found and nurtured through those specific



activities that truly bring you peace.

Chances are, other folks find some sort of similar solace there too.

Another community within IV that prioritizes mindfulness is UCSB's Psychedelics Club. A product of the same few Gauchos who founded Mindfulness Club, Psychedelics Club's goals are "harm reduction and education," according to Officer Dylan Houseco. As an incoming transfer student last fall, Houseco attended the first meeting of the club and instantly felt a community bond. Expanding on the club board's approach to mindfulness in the club, Houseco explained the potential effects of psychedelic engagement. "You begin to see how important regular practices are to get control, whether it's basic therapy or journaling or a daily walk," he said.

Within the community of students committed to the safe use of psychedelics as vehicles for mindfulness, an equal emphasis is placed on the cultural and historical roots of psychedelic use. "Most people don't know that the mushrooms we know of in the U.S. came from a Hispanic shaman woman ... so the knowledge of mushrooms we have currently was co-opted from Indigenous practice in Mexico."

While the origins of tools like psychedelics are essential to know, so too are the roots of mindfulness in cultural and religious traditions. "So, of course, there are roots in Buddhism," said Emma Hanlon, a PhD student in UCSB's Religious Studies Department. "There's meditative practices in all of the quote-unquote world religions." However, Buddhism is just one of many religions with self-reflection and mind training suggested in prescriptive doctrine. "We can trace mindfulness to Buddhism, but also we can trace mindfulness to these kinds of prescriptive

practices... disciplining the mind, the body, and its desires."

Maybe mindfulness needn't be associated with a certain type of lifestyle, such as one of organic smoothies and yoga on the beach (unless that's your jam—by all means). Maybe instead, we ought to think of mindfulness as the secondary goal. In doing what we love, from a craft to a sport to a film, by indulging in productive and gratifying hobbies, we can find mindfulness and enter a flow, rather than feeling like mindfulness is something to chase. **W**







# Love and Acceptance

Does Isla Vista Cultivate a Safe Space  
for the Queer Community?

WORDS // NIKOU KANGARLOO-FOROUTAN  
PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // JORDAN BEDELL



**BEFORE MOVING HERE**, Jasmine Kavil had several doubts about Isla Vista. “UCSB has to be full of like, beach blonde white girls that are like coke heads and whatever,” Kavil said. Kavil recalls her best friend, who had then reassured her, saying, “No, there’s a lot of gay people, Kavil. Just take a walk around the campus, you’ll see them.”

For many students like Kavil, coming to college provides a fresh opportunity to explore who they are for the first time as the adult version of themselves. For others, it is a place where everything they once had to hide back home in regards to their sexuality, can finally be revealed. Students simply hope that their college environment turns out to be a welcoming place for people like them.

### **Bound by just the ocean and the campus, Isla Vista offers students a unique bubble seemingly protected from the prejudices of the outside world.**

Coming from Gilroy, a tiny, conservative town south of the Bay Area, Kavil was one of two girls who were openly queer. Growing up in the Mormon Church, she didn’t find that being queer was widely accepted by her community. Once at SBCC, she felt hesitant about what being queer would look like in IV after transferring to UCSB.

But to her surprise, Kavil’s friend was right. Upon her arrival, she found that Isla Vista is full of gay people. Bound by just the ocean and the campus, Isla Vista offers students a unique bubble seemingly protected from the prejudices of the outside world.

“I’m so happy I stuck here because the culture here is just amazing,” Kavil said. “It’s so nice to just be like, these are

all just young people who understand me, for the most part at least.”

She also credits the open environment in Isla Vista with helping her meet her girlfriend, Shannon Carew.

Their love story began when they first met doing Cabaret, a theater production on campus. Later, when Carew performed in Rocky Horror Picture Show, Kavil brought her a single rose to symbolize her admiration.

Kavil’s friends had helped her in her process of selecting the bouquet. “I remember we couldn’t find a single rose anywhere, so we got this big bouquet, and I was going back and forth to like, ‘should I bring the whole bouquet? Should I just bring the flower?’” Kavil said. “But yeah, the flower really wooed her away, so that was great.”

Since then, the pair have sensed an overwhelming amount of love and support from their friends and even the wider Isla Vista community.

For fourth-year Environmental Studies major Shannon Carew, meeting her girlfriend Jasmine Kavil was something she certainly did not expect to happen in Isla Vista. Carew grew up in Pacifica, California, a small suburb outside of San Francisco. For her, the COVID-19 pandemic is when she first discovered she was queer.

“I think it took a while for me to like, accept that part of myself,” Carew said. Once coming to Santa Barbara, however, she felt a switch in the way people perceived her sexuality. “It was so crazy being able to be so open about it and not even think twice.”



The feeling is shared by Yass Chouikh, a fourth-year Microbiology major, and Andrew Mansour, a fourth-year Sociology major. The couple first met through Naked Voices, an a cappella group on campus, and are now co-presidents together for the club.

Growing up in Morocco, Chouikh had never felt safe enough to come out as gay to anyone beyond his close friends. When he moved to California to attend UCSB, he decided he would no longer hide his sexuality.

"I was like 'You know what? I'm gonna come here, and I'm just gonna let that be free and see where it takes me,'" Chouikh said.

Chouikh felt generally accepted by people in IV, especially since he immediately found a queer community that he could relate to. "Queer people just really gravitate towards each other," he said.

Chouikh and Mansour feel that because this school is so big, it's really easy to find your crowd as a queer person.

"It's kind of, to me, a conscious decision that has to be made when you get here, like, 'I'm gonna find the people that I associate with, and I'm gonna create this space in which I feel accepted and loved and comfortable,'" Chouikh said.

His boyfriend, Mansour, agrees that Isla Vista is a relatively positive place to be in a gay relationship. "I don't think anybody would bat an eye or care," Mansour said when talking about showing affection as a gay couple in IV.

While their circles offer a safe space to be queer, the couple explains that this might not be the case wherever you go in IV. In their experience, frats have not felt welcoming to them. Additionally, the

strong hookup culture of IV amongst gay men doesn't feel uplifting for those who participate.

Will Goodell, a fourth-year Global Studies major, expresses similar concerns about the hookup culture for gay men due to the community being so small. "It becomes unsafe, like mentally and emotionally. Having to be gay and look for connection in unhealthy, like non-conventional ways can just...breed regrets," Goodell said. Within the tight-knit gay male community, it is easy for everyone to know your business.

***"Depending on the crowd you end up in, you may hear straight men casually throwing around the F slur – or find yourself as the next drunk girl's GBF."***

Goodell moved to IV from Texas, where he had believed to experience a normalized culture of homophobia and hostile attitude towards gay people. Because of this, Goodell had high hopes for moving to the more progressive coastal town in California, which he perceived would cultivate a safe space for all sexual identities.

Despite what he thought, this wasn't Goodell's experience moving to Santa Barbara. Depending on the crowd you



end up in, Goodell said, you may hear straight men casually throwing around the F slur - or find yourself as the next drunk girl's GBF (Gay Best Friend).

"It's hard to feel comfortable and like, find love or to find love within yourself when you're just facing all those attacks," Goodell said. These negative experiences both within and outside of the gay community have made Goodell feel less secure in his sexuality.

In regards to negative experiences on campus, Shannon Carew feels that some designated queer spaces at the university seem to cater to only a small crowd of the vast, diverse queer community in IV. She has also found that a lot of these organizations don't have as much recognition among the wider queer community.

Carew calls for more representation for various identities within the queer community and rejects the idea that queerness should be defined as just one thing. She appreciates her involvement in Rocky Horror for teaching her that she can express her queerness in any way that feels right to her. "The whole point of being queer is that it is beyond definition, it is beyond any box," she said, "There's no one way to do it."

Carew welcomes everybody, not just queer people, to challenge restrictive gender or sexual norms. "Homophobia hurts everyone," Carew said. This is why Carew celebrates students in Isla Vista stepping outside the masculine-feminine binary through their expression and style. Whether it's



***"Queer people just really gravitate towards each other."***

a woman leaving her armpits unshaved or a man playing with makeup, she notices many students already breaking these stereotypes in Isla Vista.

But collectively, it seems like what has made these students feel the most safe, despite whatever hostility they may experience in the wider community, is the acceptance that they have found within their circles.

Whether it's being literally cheered on during a Rocky Horror performance or simply having a heartfelt conversation with people who understand you, making these meaningful connections can completely change the experience of queer students.

Finding friends who recognize his struggle yet don't tokenize his sexuality has been what Goodell cherishes the most in feeling secure about who he is, "That's really all that I can ask. Just having a good group of friends." **W**



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You made it to the bus stop! Now you can go anywhere...

You went to the UCSB horse stables!

Oh no! You went back to campus...

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# AROUND TOWN

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On select Monday and Thursday nights, IV's personal movie house screens the best of current films and classics. We also show the ever-popular The Rocky Horror Picture Show! Free for UCSB students. Follow our up-to-date calendar on google:



Instagram:  
@officialmagiclantern

### BE THE PRODUCER

Need advice on producing your own show or performance in the wilds of Isla Vista or on campus? Anna Jensen, Director of IV ARTS, will happily help.

Email [akjensen@ihc.ucsb.edu](mailto:akjensen@ihc.ucsb.edu)



# WORD

Writers

What  
is...





# STAFF

## Artists

### ... Our Escape?



Liana Le  
"Nature + Sun"



Ally Fuller  
"Snowboarding"



Dalton Beeler  
"Hiking"



Olivia Purcell  
"Dancing in my room"



Angie Sethi  
"Cooking"



Fatima Romero  
"Music"



Ella Luk  
"Drinking Swirpees"



Hannah Massey  
"Backpacking"



Eva Lozeau de Guzman  
"Embroidery"



Simone Mansell  
"Listening to music"



Bailey Turner-Garnette  
"Watching Youtube"



Jordan Bedell  
"Singing"



Taiji Sherwood-Kong  
"Nature"



Amanda Harris  
"My Animal Crossing  
Island"



Tomiko Osawa  
"Floating"



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