

## THE MARIAS ERA



IMAGE COURTESY OF RAYA

Sometimes we stop and think, is this artist even real? The Marias surely are, and A&E reviews their most recent concert. Come check it out and see for yourself what the hype is about!

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## “DON’T SAY GAY” BILL

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“I am one of those students. I’m a first-generation American, the child of immigrants who came to the U.S. with limited financial resources, and I know how the SAT Suite of Assessments opened doors to colleges, scholarships, and educational opportunities that I otherwise never would have known about or had access to.”

- PRISCILLA RODRIGUEZ  
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## CAMPUS

BY ISAAH IRIZARRY CONTRIBUTING WRITER

# Director of Chabad at UCSD Pleads Guilty to Fraud Charges



The director of Chabad at UC San Diego, a Jewish Student Center, pled guilty to wire fraud charges on January 26th. Rabbi Yehuda Hadjadj admitted to conspiring with Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein, former director of Chabad at Poway, in a wire fraud scheme.

“The defendant abused his status and connections to help facilitate a years-long fraud scheme,” FBI Special Agent Suzanne Turner said in a press release by the United States Attorney’s Office of California’s Southern District, which is currently prosecuting the case.

According to the press release, the scheme exploited a corporate matching program by Qualcomm, where the company would match donations made by conspirators to Goldstien’s charity, Friendship Circle.

“Shortly after the donor wrote the check, Hadjadj returned all or most of the donation in cash,” the statement explained. “The donors would [...] request that Qualcomm match the sham donation. After Qualcomm matched the sham donations to Friendship Circle, Rabbi Goldstein funneled [...] two-thirds of the matched funds back to Hadjadj, keeping one third for himself.”

Hadjadj helped operate the scheme between 2010 and 2017, according to the official plea agreement. During this time period Hadjadj recruited up to three donors and used the cash from the scheme to help fund Chabad at UCSD.

“To conceal the true recipient of the matched funds, Hadjadj told the donors to write checks to Friendship Circle [...] Hadjadj fraudulently obtained approximately \$40,000 for Chabad at UCSD

over the course of the scheme,” the press release continued.

When contacted by The UCSD Guardian for further comment, an official representative from the U.S. Attorney’s Office offered no further information outside of the public record.

Chabad at UCSD has operated since 1993 as a Jewish campus organization that “provides an exciting variety of social, educational, and cultural programming for students.” The organization is affiliated with the greater Chabad, an international Hasidic Jewish religious movement, but establishes itself as open to Jewish students of all affiliations.

According to Assistant Director of University Communications Erika Johnson, Chabad at UCSD is not currently registered with the Center for Student Involvement.

“Many of our spiritual groups have a community advisor affiliated with an off-campus organization or congregation; however, [...] Hadjadj is not currently listed as the student organization’s community advisor,” Johnson said. “[Chabad at UCSD] has not hosted any Center for Student Involvement-approved events on campus since Fall of 2018,”

“We are not aware of the relationship between Rabbi Yehuda Hadjadj and the organization and we do not know the impact on the future operations of the organization,” Johnson continued.

Chabad at UCSD did not reply when reached for comment. As of the time this article was written, no one else involved with Chabad at UCSD is believed to be connected to the scheme. Hadjadj is awaiting sentencing and will be arraigned on April 18, 2022.

## CALIFORNIA POLITICS

# Single Payer Healthcare Bill Stalls in California State Assembly

BY JOSE CHAVEZ  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The California State Assembly stalled action on a bill that would have guaranteed medical coverage to every state resident via a single payer healthcare system a few days before the deadline on January 31st. In light of this, public health experts expect that national debate on healthcare reform could lead to the development of similar bills that close the gap between Californians without insurance.

Assembly Bill 1400 (AB 1400), also known as

the “California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act,” would have created a publicly -financed healthcare system called “CalCare.” The system would be run by nine voting members appointed by the Secretary of California Health and Human Services that are well-established in state health care and the medical field.

California State Assemblyman (D-San Jose) Ash Kalra, decided to revoke the bill’s floor vote after he predicted it was “double-digits” below the 41 vote threshold necessary for it to pass. Kalra declined several requests to elaborate upon his decision and whether or not...

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## RESEARCH

# UCSD Health Studies Cannabis Consumption on Driving Ability

BY KAITLIN LEE  
STAFF NEWS WRITER

A two-year study found that at least 50% of subjects who smoked cannabis with THC in a randomized clinical trial had a significantly diminished ability to drive compared to subjects who took a placebo cigarette. This study was conducted at the UC San Diego Center for Medical Cannabis Research (CMCR) and was published in the Jan. 26 online issue of JAMA Psychiatry.

Before this study, there were a number of small studies that examined learning, attention, and speed of processing under the influence of cannabis. Several studies before this one that focused on driving ability looked at how drivers swerve or adapt to a car in front of them.

“This groundbreaking research indicates that cannabis use does impair driving ability, but factors differ from alcohol,” said California State Assemblymember Tom Lackey said. “It also underscores the need for further research on this topic. Policymakers still need a better understanding of the effects of different ways of consuming higher concentration products to charter a path forward.”

However, CMCR co-director and Professor Thomas Marcotte explained that the studies were limited in their ability to represent accurate real-world cannabis usage.

“Many of those studies were done with occasional users,” Marcotte noted. “So one of the goals of our study was to really approximate real-world circumstances where someone who is a regular user will smoke to a desired highness and we wanted to see how does being acutely high will affect their performance.” Furthermore, co-author Professor Robert Fitzgerald noted that the percentage of cannabis in the cigarettes used was higher than the amount of cannabis used in previous studies.

“Most previous studies used marijuana that was typically 3 or 6% THC by content,” Fitzgerald explained. “We were using a [5.9] and a 13.4% cannabis, which is closer to what’s available in the dispensaries.”

Researchers recruited 191 regular cannabis users, ages 21 to 55 years old, to smoke a cannabis cigarette after abstaining for 48 hours. The percent concentration of cannabis in the cigarette varied in three amounts: 13.4%, 5.9%, and a placebo of 0.02% THC. After smoking, subjects went through a simulation presented on a Driving Simulator

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Californian Governor Gavin Newsom is committed to implementing a single payer healthcare system and is waiting on a report

“California’s Health California for All Commission” detailing different health care models the state could pursue in the future.

“The facts are on our side that a single-payer system will save money and lives — and the people are on our side that meaningful

healthcare reform is urgently needed,” Kalra reassured. “Especially with four democratic vacancies in the Assembly, the votes

were not there today, but we will not give up.”

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS



# SAT Goes Digital

BY JOSE CHAVEZ

SENIOR STAFF WRITER

On Jan. 25, the College Board announced that the SAT Suite of Assessments will soon be going online. Starting in 2023 for international students and in 2024 for domestic students, the digital SAT will have a shorter duration of two hours, abridged reading passages with only one question per passage, and a built-in Desmos calculator for the math section. Educators and students will also see reduced turnaround time, receiving their scores in a matter of days rather than weeks.

Despite the digital transformation, the SAT will still have to be taken at a school or testing center. Students will be given the option to test on a school-issued device, a personal laptop, or a personal computer. This choice is in response to concerns about students having varying abilities to access three hours of high-quality Internet and power.

This decision follows students’ and educators’ positive response to the digital SAT the College Board piloted globally in November last year. According to the College Board, students reported finding the digital SAT less stressful than the traditional physical format, and educators responded that the tests were more convenient to administer.

In a Jan. 25 press release, Priscilla Rodriguez, vice president of College Readiness Assessments at College Board, lauded the new SAT’s relevance and improved test-taking experience.

“We’re not simply putting the current SAT on a digital platform — we’re taking full advantage of

what delivering an assessment digitally makes possible,” Rodriguez said. “With input from educators and students, we are adapting to ensure we continue to meet their evolving needs.”

However, the benefits Rodriguez touted do not seem to be distributed equally amongst all students. According to the College Board’s 2019 report comparing students’ performance on the SAT® Suite of Assessments across pencil-and-paper and computer-based modes of administration, Hispanic students tended to perform better on the pencil-and-paper test than they did on the computerized version. Students whose first language was not English also scored better on the physical reading tests.

The College Board’s shift online arrives in time with a growing discussion among educators and students alike about equity in and access to higher education, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spotlight higher education’s entrenched inequities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the widespread cancellations of standardized tests have influenced colleges to re-evaluate their admissions processes and prompted more colleges to abandon standardized testing. According to the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, more than 1,800 colleges have decided to forgo mandatory standardized testing.

More recently, the UC Board of Regents’ unanimously decided to halt the use of SAT and ACT

for admissions decisions within the University of California. This is due to evidence that such testing has led the UC system to further marginalize students of color and low-income students during the admissions process. Given that the UC system received around 250,000 applications last year, this decision will likely lead to a large reduction in demand for standardized testing.

The impact of eliminating the examination requirement can already be seen at UC San Diego: the Fall 2021 cycle marked the highest number of applications in UCSD’s history, and more than one-third of first-year and over half of transfer students admitted for Fall 2021 were first-generation students.

However, Rodriguez believes the College Board still has a role to play in improving access to higher education, and said they are committed to serving students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

“The SAT allows every student — regardless of where they go to high school — to be seen and to access opportunities that will shape their lives and careers,” Rodriguez said. “I am one of those students. I’m a first-generation American, the child of immigrants who came to the U.S. with limited financial resources, and I know how the SAT Suite of Assessments opened doors to colleges, scholarships, and educational opportunities that I otherwise never would have known about or had access to. We want to keep

those same doors of opportunity open for all students.”

Yet, when speaking to The UCSD Guardian, Sixth College freshman Hieu Pham explained that there were numerous factors beyond students’ control that could influence their SAT scores.

“There were people who were put at a disadvantage because of their school’s academic fundings, [their] focus on extracurriculars, and even financial needs[,] which is just disappointing to think about...[The SATs] don’t entirely measure the determination and individuality of each student, [so] I don’t find them relevant,” Pham said.

Pham also spoke on their experience taking the SAT, and asserted that they believed it didn’t accurately reflect one’s character and individuality.

“[I] spent most of my time studying for my AP classes and working[,] so I never really set time apart to study for the SAT...I definitely felt like I was put at a disadvantage,” Pham said. “Standardized tests like the SAT/ACT are designed in a way that if you study how to take it, you’ll get better scores. I didn’t get the time to really study any online material or go to any boot camps... Once I heard that the UCs were dropping/ making admissions SAT/ACT optional, I felt completely relieved. The SAT never tested what I knew and was passionate about as a unique individual, but rather, [whether I was] a good test-taker.”

To find out more information about the dDigital SAT Suite of Assessments, students can visit the College Board’s website.

Students can also find out more about the UC System’s admission process by visiting the University of California’s website to learn more.





# Florida’s ‘Don’t Say Gay’ Bill is a Direct Insult to Progression

BY MARCELLA BARCELLO  
Staff Writer

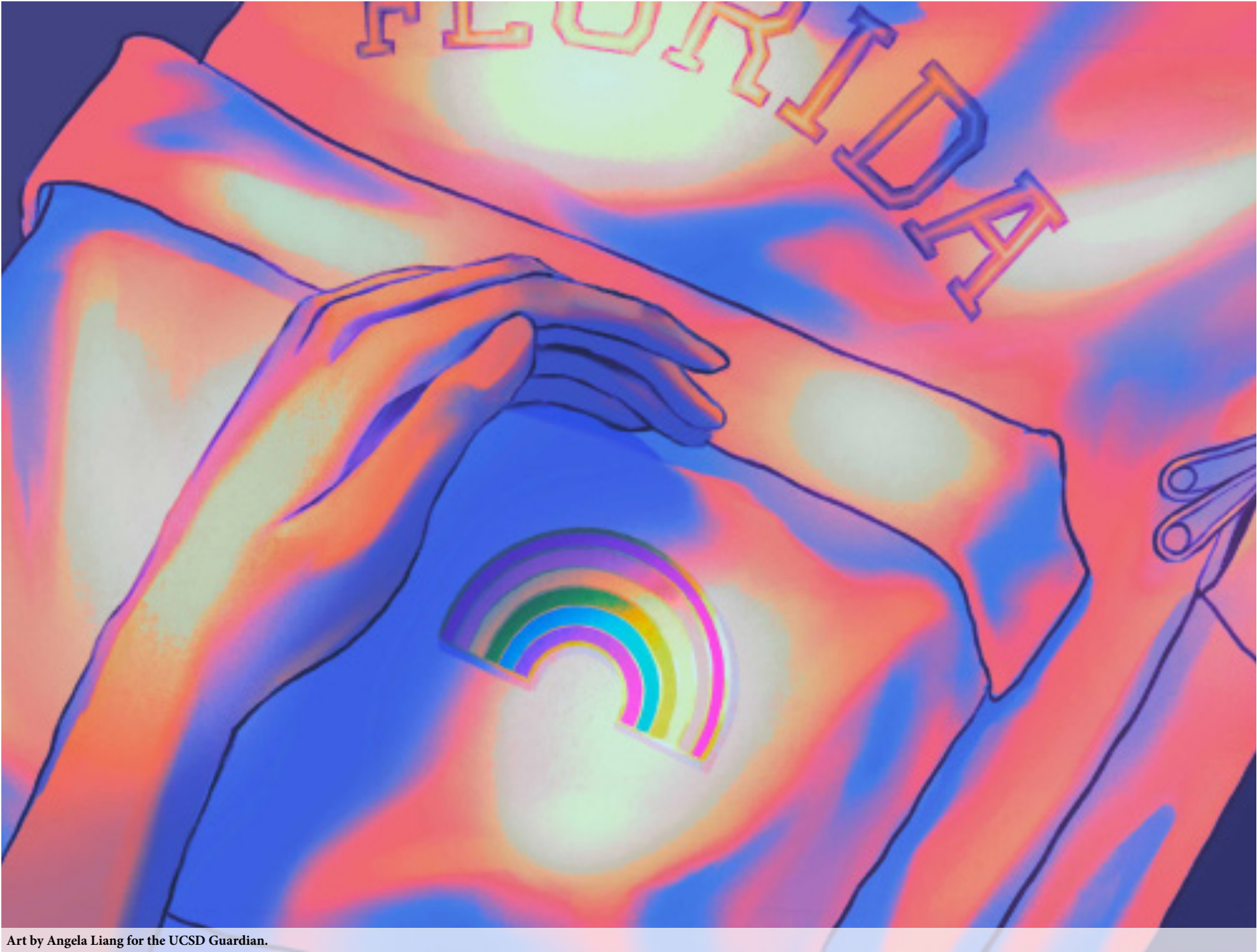
Censorship within public education has been a repetitive issue. It seems like every year, a school board or federal entity takes it upon themselves to dictate what educational materials belong in classrooms and which ones do not. However, Florida’s legislators have recently crossed the line with the creation of a new proposed bill designed to completely silence any discussions of sexuality or gender identity in primary schools at the expense of students’ education and society’s social progression. Despite being rooted in homophobia and unacceptable levels of censorship, the bill, known as the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, has continually moved forward within the legal process. After passing through multiple committees that deemed the bill acceptable, it was handed off to the Judiciary Committee for review, which places it dangerously close to passing. Joe Harding, member of the Florida House of Representatives,

is the primary sponsor of the legislation. According to the bill’s text, written by Harding, its main intention is to strengthen parents’ control over their children’s education and return the parental right to make decisions on what material is reviewed in schools. Thus, the bill encourages parents to take serious legal action against school districts that violate the rules of the proposed bill, adding a significant monetary consequence to already underfunded public schools to ensure complete compliance from teachers and staff. However, parents are not the most reliable sources, and personal biases may prevent them from discontinuing a generational cycle of ignorance. The purpose of education has always been about ensuring the development of a person by supplying them with the necessary information and resources to properly grow and mature into a functioning member of society, and sexuality and gender identity are a natural part of development. A child normally enters the first stage of gender identity development

around the age of two as they begin to notice the physical differences between sexes. By the age of three, they are starting to become familiar with their own sex label, and, by the age of four, they have a general sense of their gender identity. These are crucial learning years for children and they should be given a reliable, unbiased, and fully informed space to learn about and safely discuss sexuality and gender identity. Choosing to ignore and silence these discussions surrounding a critical portion of a child’s forming identity is harmful to the education system as a whole and directly goes against what schools were designed to do by breeding ignorance and stunting students’ development. Historically, implementing measures to prevent dialogue regarding sexuality and gender identity has not delivered favorable outcomes. Take, for example, the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” bill created by President Bill Clinton in 1993. The bill ended the ban on members of the LGBTQ+ serving in the American military by creating a “compromise” where these

individuals were welcomed into the services at the expense of hiding their identity. If they were discovered to be gay by colleagues or administrators, they were immediately discharged, which created a sense of fearfulness and shame in soldiers who were forced to hide their identity. Similar to the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, this legislation ultimately reinforced the stigma surrounding homosexuality by supporting silence and intensifying the preconception that being gay is something to be ashamed of and kept hidden. While the bill was repealed by President Barack Obama in 2010, it seems reactionary politics have now come full circle with the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, and its reversion to previous discriminations. Furthermore, the bill makes the argument that sexuality and gender identity are “inappropriate” topics to discuss in primary school. However, there are various ways to introduce complex topics like sexuality and gender identity to children in an age appropriate manner that is conducive to learning and development. Silence is the

opposite approach. Dr. Wanjiku Njoroge, an adjunct professor at Yale and program director of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, said the following in response to the question of discussing race with children, “In the absence of these conversations, silence is powerful: If they hear nothing about race, they figure out that there’s something different about that topic. And that difference can become imbued with negativity.” Similar logic can be applied to sexuality and gender identity. Children should feel supported in their identity, not apologetic for it. Overall, censorship in public schools would do a great disservice to future generations and the education of these children. School is designed to be a place of learning; discourse and discussion are vital to development. Ultimately, no government official or otherwise should be able to stand in the way of a child’s education and the production of well-educated individuals.



Art by Angela Liang for the UCSD Guardian.



# Change Needed for Treating Suicidal Patients

BY CATALINA FOGG  
Staff Writer

A common phrase you hear surrounding mental health is “don’t be afraid to ask for help.” Yet, why is help that isn’t scary so hard to find? In this generation, mental health has definitely become easier to talk about. Both through social media and in real life, more people are willing to open up and talk about the commonalities and struggles mental health has brought upon them. However, it seems as though intense mental health treatment hasn’t caught up to current times. Why is it that suicidal individuals are still being sent to the emergency room by police when they should be treated with a different approach? This needs to change.

First of all, the process of even getting to the emergency room to get evaluated can be traumatizing, especially if the person has made a suicide attempt or has suicidal ideations. Often times the first point of contact for a suicidal patient is the police. Even at UC San Diego, when mental health services find out that a student is suicidal, they will automatically call the police to access the situation and

typically take the student to the emergency room to get evaluated. Someone who is clearly not in a good mindset is likely not going to want to get bombarded by people in police uniforms with loaded guns. This gives the indication that the person who is suffering is a criminal instead of a person and is being treated as such, like they have done something wrong. Police officers do not know how to handle these situations well in the first place because their purpose is inherently to reprimand criminals and encompassing situations. They add nothing to the situation other than fear placed upon the suicidal person. Not only is their presence scary for the individuals, but getting driven to the ER in a police car with bars is not a good message to send to someone who is struggling. If one is feeling suicidal, wouldn’t it be a good idea to escort the person to the evaluation in comfort? Bars and plastic seat backs in a police car don’t exactly scream “comfort”. In some cases of suicide attempts or ideation, the individuals are even handcuffed on their way to the ER.

The next step of getting help in this path is going to the emergency room to get evaluated; the emergency room where every

other kind of physical trauma or injury goes to get evaluated. This is inherently overwhelming, being in a fast paced and high stress environment where others around you are clearly in pain or in distress. There is clearly a reason people tend to be scared of the doctor’s office. The environment of a hospital is cold and harsh, with uncomfortable hospital beds, intense waiting rooms, and a sterile smell lingering in the air. This is not an ideal environment for anyone, let alone someone struggling from mental health.

In this day and age of COVID-19, the emergency rooms can be more crowded and overfilled, with an increasing danger of exposure to patients and loved ones. Sometimes there can even be a lack of rooms with patients having to wait out in the hall or even get their care and evaluation out in the hall. It is unnecessary that mental health patients be evaluated in these circumstances, witnessing and hearing the stressful physical situations happening around them. This is why the ER is not an ideal place for a suicidal individual to go. There should be certain designated centers which are specifically made for suicidal individuals or those in mental crisis. In these centers,

the surroundings should be comforting and cozy to allow the individual to relax and feel comfortable opening up and receiving help. Being in an environment where everyone is there for the same reason as you could be comforting to individuals who feel like they are alone, as well as being in a safe place that isn’t as traumatic or scary as going to the ER. The care needed for mental health patients is drastically different than care needed for normal patients and should be treated

as such. The same evaluations could occur but just in a more comfortable and appropriate setting for the situation that isn’t as stress inducing. If this was the case, maybe so many individuals wouldn’t be as scared to ask for help when they really do need it. Mental health patients are not criminals and it’s time they stop being treated as such. Mental health should be handled with care and sensitivity, something a busy emergency room is not bound to provide.



Image courtesy of Martha Dominguez / Unsplash.

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## FEATURES

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## Navigating ADHD and the OSD

OISHEE MISRA CONTRIBUTING WRITER

*Second year student shares her experiences with the Office of Disabilities (OSD) at UCSD.*

Photo courtesy of UCSD.

When current sophomore UC San Diego student Nicole Muir was six years old, her first grade teacher suspected Muir had Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). After relaying this to Muir's mom, Muir ended up getting tested and was officially diagnosed with ADHD and has been living with it ever since.

Her ADHD and medication impacts her life in a myriad of ways; – the medication makes her fidgety, she tends to be hyperactive, and without medication, she has trouble paying attention. Her ADHD also increases the likelihood of having anxiety and depression, both of which she has dealt with in her life.

Prior to college, Muir did not ask for or receive accommodations for her ADHD. She felt bad that her mom would have to go through a lot of administrative work, including dealing with forms from the doctor and her school, and it felt like too much of a hassle.

"I could have done it for the SAT or the ACT, but it's just a lot of paperwork and it's such a process to get those accommodations," Muir told The UCSD Guardian. "I had friends who took advantage of those accommodations and I'm glad that they did, but it just seemed like such a process that I didn't feel like I could deal with it and have enough control over making sure I could get it, so I didn't."

After starting at UCSD, Muir emailed [The Office of Students with Disabilities \(OSD\)](#) to ask for accommodations due to her ADHD.

OSD said, in an email to The UCSD Guardian, that they work "with students who have documented disabilities by reviewing documentation and, through an interactive process with the student, [determine] reasonable accommodations."

In line with this protocol,

Muir was interviewed by an OSD counselor, which took approximately an hour. She then got paperwork filled out by the therapist she sees for her anxiety and the psychiatrist she sees for her ADHD.

Muir's accommodations include extended time on tests, extensions on assignments when necessary, bathroom breaks, a separate room to take exams in and requesting note-takers.

In the case of the note-taking accommodation, Muir notes that the OSD expects students to find their own notetaker at the beginning of the quarter. If the student can't find one, they can ask the OSD to help — – this is why the emails requesting students to be note-takers are sent out as late as week four or five.

An email from the OSD stated that students with disabilities in areas ranging from "psychological, psychiatric, learning, attention, chronic health, physical, vision, hearing, acquired brain injuries, and autism are eligible for accommodations" may request accommodations.

OSD also cites that the accommodations they offer include adaptive technology (such as screen reading or speech recognition software), alternative formats (such as electronic text, Braille and large print), captioning and sign language interpreting services, note-taking services, and exam accommodations.

After Muir first got her accommodations during her fall quarter of freshman year, she received an email asking her to get interviewed again. She was confused by this, so she emailed her counselor and was told to ignore it.

Things went smoothly during the winter quarter.

Since students have to reapply for accommodations every quarter, Muir had to ask for them again during the subsequent spring quarter.

"You have to reapply for your accommodations ... that frustrates me the most, like I have really severe ADHD, my condition isn't really going to change, it doesn't fluctuate at all," Muir told The UCSD Guardian. "This is really the state that I'm going to be in for a long time. I know people usually say that ADHD goes away when you become an adult, but I think, it's more so that you've learned to mask the symptoms."

Muir emailed the OSD asking for accommodations the Saturday before spring quarter started. Generally, the OSD sends students a portal where they can fill out their classes and desired accommodations. Muir anticipated this email as a response.

Instead, she received an email that told her to redo her forms and prove she had ADHD again.

Since it had been less than a year since she had asked for accommodations, Muir felt like it didn't make sense, especially since her ADHD does not change over time.

She emailed her doctor for forms, and they were finally completed two weeks later, which was stressful for her. After sending these new forms to the OSD, her counselor told her that they were incorrect because they didn't have dates on them, which was another hassle.

"I don't know if it's like bureaucracy or something, but there's something fundamentally wrong with the OSD Office," Muir told The UCSD Guardian.

The inefficiencies of the OSD is not just a UCSD phenomenon; it is a problem across all the UC campuses. In fact, in order to

address these issues, a non-profit coalition called [UC Access Now](#) was founded by [Megan Lynch](#) (a UCLA alumna and UC Davis graduate student) on July 26, 2020 — – the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act — – to promote "accessibility and inclusion for all disabled people in the University of California community (as well as disabled visitors to UC locations)." [UC Access Now](#) continues to advocate for change and dismantle bureaucratic barriers to accommodations for students, staff and faculty that are impacted by disabilities.

The OSD stated, in an email to The Guardian, that "[students need to request accommodations each quarter](#); however, in many cases, updated documentation is not required," and also that "current students may request accommodations for the subsequent quarter as soon as they register for that quarter."

Muir feels that the OSD is not consistent about emailing students about things.

"I know I'm an adult and I'm supposed to be responsible for myself, but like, I forget things sometimes," Muir told The UCSD Guardian. "I think there's just a little too much responsibility put on us as students with disabilities than there should be."

Initially, Muir tried to navigate the problem by asking why she needed to provide new forms in the first place. However, she didn't receive any conclusive answers and was scared to question authority further.

Muir remembers freaking out because she had assessments starting as early as Week 3 in her classes, and wasn't sure if she would receive her accommodations by then.

"I was told by a few people, when it was happening, they were like maybe you should report

your counselor to the OSD office or talk to someone higher up," Muir told The UCSD Guardian. "I was like I don't know, I'm just a student, I'm just trying to make sure I have my accommodations, I don't have the time to be dismantling OSD right now. I'm just trying to do math."

Muir notes that perhaps the OSD struggles to operate smoothly because they are poorly funded. She adds that if she were asked to give more money to the school in order to better fund the OSD and ensure everyone has access to an equitable education, she would. When The UCSD Guardian asked OSD about the funding they receive, the OSD said that there was information available.

At the end of the day, though, Muir is grateful for her accommodations because it made her "college experience a lot easier and her education a lot more traversable." However, the number of things sitting in the way of receiving those accommodations is often daunting.

"A big thing that I see a lot is people finding out that they have ADHD or thinking that they might have it, and I see a lot of students that do have ADHD and have had experiences with OSD typically caution them and be like 'you need to vouch for yourself, you can't expect them to do things for you, or to do things that I think most OSD offices at other colleges would do,'" Muir told the UCSD Guardian. "You need to make sure you get the paperwork even though it might not be necessary, you might need to do tests.' People generally say 'be prepared, buckle up, it's not gonna be good,' and it's really sad that these people have to think — – is it going to be hard to get these accommodations that I deserve?"



# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Image courtesy of Raya.

The Marías, coupled with maye and Rosie Tucker, had an awesome performance that highlighted how soft and gentle voices can still carry so much sway over an audience. I am excited to see how their music will evolve in the coming years.

-ANDREW HA GUEST A&E WRITER/NEWS EDITOR

## The Marías Concert Review

Do you ever go to a concert and have this thought in mind: they could not possibly sound like their recordings. That voice isn’t something you could reasonably hear on a live stage. It’s too melodic, too unique. Concerts for better or worse seemingly expose an artist’s real vocal dynamic behind the veil of production. A good difference sometimes, while others... We don't talk about the others. It’s almost as if I were subconsciously tempering my expectations.

When Puerto Rican indie singer María Zardoya stepped to the stage, I was afraid that her soft and rich voice would be drowned out by the heavy instrumentation. This was a similar concern I had when listening to Chvrches and an issue that actually rang true for Clairo. Yet here I stood, surrounded by enthusiastic fans hearing The Marías perform a set that reminded me of all the reasons why I missed going to concerts throughout this pandemic. Her energy, like her genre-defying music, meanders from the provocative to the whimsical — swaying everyone in the hall with a marriage of Latin pop and psychedelic rock.

Her command of the stage coupled with the band’s apt setlist made me become immediately engrossed with the performance. Choosing “Just a Feeling” for their opening song felt absolutely right. Lyricless, the song is slow and endearing; it builds a sort of excitement while making you have a sense of comfort. The lively resonance of the string instruments elevates your body as the guitar interludes ground you again. Paired with “Calling You Back,” The Marías prepare the audience for a night of beautiful paradoxes — the gentle allure of her voice and hard hitting beats that encompasses your senses.

The warm red hues from many of the band’s songs provides a seductive charm that draws you in to focus on Zardoya, who dressed and surrounded in red butterflies, is the focal point of the concert. With her delicate smile, you feel like she genuinely means it when she says “I wanna make you feel alright.” Little by little, The Marías took their time creating a calming ambience for the audience and before I even realized, I felt surrounded in a tender embrace.

The atmosphere, lights and her voice blended into a beautiful display of what music should always be: an amazing sensory experience that captivates you with every moment. As fluid as each song followed into the next, The Marías continued to surprise with a trumpet solo that honestly took me aback. The brass melody infused a jazz vibe into the soundstage and made it all the more entertaining to listen to. From “Un Millón” to her cover of Britney Spears’ “Baby One More Time,” I found each song more enjoyable than the last. They left the stage leaving me wanting more.

With the sub-bass reverberating the smoke-filled stage, white beams of light turned into red strobes and The Marías returned for their encore. And if not for the technical hiccup between transitions, it would have been a perfect rendition of “Hush.” Perhaps I am a bit biased because it’s my favorite song, but “Hush” felt as though it tied the perfect knot on an already amazing set. Mesmerizing us with her seductive voice, Zardoya made certain that it would be a memorable concert experience.

It’s here that I must also give notable mention to the openers, Rosie Tucker and maye, who both had great performances to lead up to The Marías. Tucker, whose music is much more pop and rock oriented, led their band through a medley of songs that, although unknown to me, were all wonderful to listen to. Their relatable interludes while tuning their guitar between songs provided the audience with a sense of familiarity. A gentle voice that can grow more powerful with the strength of the bass guitar, Tucker sang to her heart’s content. After listening to “Ambrosia” once more on the car ride home, I felt as though Tucker is one of those artists that has an incredible potential to grow big in the future.

Following them was maye, who, with her blend of latin and bedroom pop, had an eclectic set of songs. While I really wanted to enjoy her set, two things held me back. The first was a rocky technical start as the volume of her microphone was too quiet followed by a slightly obnoxious buzz from her guitarist’s mic. While her more upbeat songs flowed perfectly well, her two slower ones — which started and ended the performance — highlighted how her voice struggled to hold a consistent tone. I really enjoy maye’s discography but these particular renditions left me disappointed. The chorus felt disjuncted and took away from the overall experience. That being said, everything else in her performance was incredibly fun. Mixing Spanish and English seamlessly, maye knew how to intertwine the languages with the melody. Her band played well with these changes and even had their moments to shine — the pianist in particular blew me away.

The Marías: A  
maye: B  
Rosie Tucker: A-





Image courtesy of Collider.

# “Moonfall” is the Silly, Self-Aware Disaster Film We Need

Roland Emmerich has made his most ridiculous disaster film yet. It might just revitalize the genre.

As “Spiderman: No Way Home” makes its way towards a historic domestic box-office haul, critics are hailing the return of movie-going. Sitting in a dark room, munching on overpriced popcorn, and hearing strangers’ reactions to every slightly-funny joke are just a few joys of the experience that had long been halted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Another joy: watching several minutes of movie trailers while you wait for the main event. One trailer that’s had various film-focused parts of the Internet abuzz is that for Roland Emmerich’s latest disaster film, “Moonfall.”

The director of classics like “Independence Day,” “Stargate,” and “The Day After Tomorrow” as well as the pop culture moment that was “2012” appears to have outdone himself in his latest work. Starring John Bradley (“Game of Thrones”), Halle Berry, and Patrick Wilson, “Moonfall” imagines this ragtag trio teaming up to stop a dire impending disaster: the moon falling out of orbit. Not only that, but there’s something intelligent and evil inside the moon. The trailer has the heroes take a rocket to space to fight the moon while Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Bad Moon Rising” fittingly plays in the background. It looks ridiculous — because it is ridiculous — and yet, it also looks enjoyable in the way that only a self-aware film can be.

Of course, “Moonfall” isn’t the only self-aware disaster film to come out recently. Much was made of Netflix’s star-studded “Don’t Look Up,” a 2021 climate-disaster film meant to satirize humanity’s willingness to ignore impending disasters, and those trying to warn us of them, until it’s far too late. Despite its impressive cast, the film received mixed reviews, with many critics deriding the cynical tone of the film as overbearing and depressing. The general consensus: it hit too close to home. “Moonfall” sidesteps this pitfall by avoiding any serious parallels to the real world. There is no statement to be made, no call to action. It’s a disaster movie that knows it’s a disaster movie and embraces its task of providing silly escapism.

You can’t turn on the news without seeing a story about wildfires, tsunamis, earthquakes, freak snowstorms, or unexpected heat waves. On a day-to-day basis, our lives feel like they take place in the very disaster films we’ve entertained ourselves with over the past decade (“The Impossible,” “San Andreas,” “Geostorm,” “Greenland.”) At the same time, there is a general fatigue of those serious entries in the disaster genre which recycle the same themes: who deserves to be saved? Why do we lose our common humanity in times of crisis? How can we avoid this fictional future becoming our grim reality? “Moonfall” takes one small step for a blockbuster and one giant leap for the disaster genre. It asks: how epic would it be if we fought the moon?

With “Moonfall,” Emmerich nods to his history of outsized disaster films by making his most ambitious project to date. Not only is the moon out of orbit, but it’s also hiding lurking evil that could be a number of interesting twists: aliens, the government, an evil moon ghost. “Moonfall” comes at a moment when this kind of ridiculous disaster — one so improbable that Bradley’s character, KC Houseman, is rightfully branded a conspiracy theorist — is more welcome than ever.

In real life, disasters are something to be afraid of. In disaster movies, they’re something to be amazed by. When Houseman goes up into space, he’s wowed when his iPhone floats by his face. Later, he snaps a picture of space with his phone camera while Berry and Wilson’s characters look on in annoyance. He has a childlike wonderment about the whole moon fiasco, something you cannot say about the stone-faced disaster heroes that preceded him. Houseman is us. He reacts like an audience member that’s been transported on-screen, excited to see if he’s going to save the world or die trying. That’s what makes “Moonfall” such a special entry in Emmerich’s canon and the disaster genre as a whole. Also, did I mention they fight the moon?

-BAILEY BUJNOSEK STAFF WRITER







Image courtesy of Sincerely Media from Unsplash.

## I Did Wordle Every Morning For a Week

BY SAMANTHA PHAN  
CONTRIBUTING LIFESYLE WRITER

For me, this quarter has been the death of my morning routine.

Gone are the days when I wake up early, stretch, and eat a healthy breakfast. No more fun skincare routine, morning walks, or picking out a cute outfit. In all honesty, I don't even get dressed anymore. The long three-week winter break, combined with four more weeks of online school, has replaced my once relaxing habits with waking up at nine and going on my phone for an hour before class. My days are spent mostly the same: a foggy haze of homework, eating, and sleeping, all in my small UC San Diego dorm room.

But it was in this dorm room that I found a beacon of hope. I was in bed, scrolling through TikTok, as I seemed to be doing constantly when I saw a video of someone playing an on-

line game. It wasn't super fancy with crazy graphics or anything like that. It just sort of looked like 2048 with letters. After observing, I realized that I had missed the punchline of the joke and had to rewatch the video to understand.

That seemed to be my mistake. By the next day, my For You page was covered in TikToks about this silly little word puzzle. It was called "Wordle", and the rules were simple — you try to guess a five-letter word in six tries. Each attempt must be a real word, the result telling you whether the letters you used are in the final word and if they are in the right place.

Because I was on Wordle TikTok, I figured that I might as well try the game once. I put in my first word, and before I knew it I had guessed the answer in three tries. And even though this simple puzzle only took me a few minutes at most, I was filled with an odd sense of pride. Pride that you usu-

ally shouldn't be able to have from guessing a five-letter word correctly.

After that first try, I became addicted. The first thing that I did every morning was a Wordle, and while looking at my phone so early in my day may cause some issues later in life/down the road, I really was enjoying myself. Besides, it wasn't as if I had spent the last four weeks doing anything different. I was having fun comparing my Wordle scores to my family, friends, and even random people on TikTok. Each correct guess gave me a flash of enthusiasm and a strange sense of confidence. That enthusiasm was what helped me get out of bed and eat some breakfast. That confidence helped me get dressed in the morning. Easy, uncomplicated tasks that had somehow become more and more difficult as the quarter went on. I suddenly saw the appeal of a daily crossword

puzzle.

I feel the need to put a disclaimer here: Wordle is probably not going to cure your depression. I still don't leave my room super often and I spend more time looking at a screen than not. There are still times when I just lay in bed staring at my phone. Playing this game for a week has not drastically changed my life.

And yet, every time I think about doing my daily Wordle, there's a feeling that jumbles itself in my chest and absorbs itself in my cheeks, forcing me to smile. It may not be life-altering, but it is fun, challenging enough that in guessing the word you feel a sense of completion, but not so much that you fear that you'll never guess the word. And, even if you don't, there's always tomorrow. I guess that's why I've learned to love Wordle so much. It reminds me that even if today sucks, tomorrow might be something different.

different.

The return to online school has been hard for us all. And while last week was the first time some of us had classes in person, others are going to remain online for the rest of the quarter. I, personally, have only one class that is going back in person. So yeah, this small silly little word puzzle is the highlight of my day. I suggest you try it out. And even if you don't like it, look for something else that you can do. Find that small little piece of joy in your life and experience it.

Here are my Wordle stats for those interested:

STATISTICS

810088

PlayedWin %Current StreakMax Streak

GUESS DISTRIBUTION

1	0
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	2
6	0

NEXT WORDLE

05:28:48

SHARE

P.S.: comment your Wordle stats below!



# My Top 3 Favorite Coffee Shops in San Diego

Calling all coffee connoisseurs and tired college students! Just like everybody else, I've been quite burnt out and lacking motivation as we begin to approach the last few weeks of the quarter. And what's one better way to fix all your problems instead of improving your work ethic and organizational skills? A good ole cup o' joe.

I'm no different from every other college student and have developed a severe caffeine addiction. If you're looking for some new cafes to try around San Diego, you're in luck because I've spent most of my free time driving around the city to fulfill my desires. If you're ever in these areas, check them out!

**The Forum**

Starting with my favorite cafe I have ever stumbled upon, The Forum. Located on Genesee Avenue, this quaint cafe has a large selection from cold brews, to lattes, to teas, to matcha. If you're in the mood for something sweet or bitter, they got you covered. One sip of their coffee and you'll be hooked. I recommend that you try "BB Code," a cold brew made sweetened with their in-house banana milk. Also, grab a chocolate croissant or cardamom while

drinks to quench your thirst, but they have fresh pastries every day. They also offer a decent amount of space for people to study and work. And I know you're probably in desperate need of studying for that chemistry midterm. Adorned with string lights and plush sofas, this comforting atmosphere might just help you get out of your mid-quarter funk.

**Shaka Coffee**

Shaka Coffee is a small coffee shack chain located along Balboa Avenue and Mesa College Drive that you have probably driven past multiple times but didn't blink an eye. They specialize in a wide variety of Hawaiian coffee, creating beverages reminiscent of popular flavors in Hawaii. It's a change of pace from the usual cinnamon and spice you may get with your coffee. I recommend the "Aloha White Mocha", a sweetened white chocolate mocha with a kick of banana and coconut syrup — with oat milk, of course. They also offer fruit smoothies and acai bowls if you're not in the mood for the usual fuel. Since these two locations are simply walk-up stands, they offer a limited amount of seating if you wish to study here, so plan accordingly!

**Communal Coffee**

Located near the heart of North Park, Communal Coffee is sure to catch your eye. Situated right next to a luscious plant shop, this is by far one of the largest coffee shops I have stepped foot in. Embellished with plants and modern architecture, you might find yourself wanting to stay and possibly chat with the stranger next to you. But beware, located on a busy street, parking is difficult and all tables, seats, and even the coffee bar are congested with college students "studying." Despite this mild setback, I highly recommend you try their orange cardamom latte, a citrusy spiced latte that is sure to make you reminisce on cold weather and sweaters. Some may say it's overrated, but I believe it's a San Diego classic.

With that being said, I leave you with my top three favorite cafes around the city. If you have other cafe recommendations, feel free to send them in the comments!

BY PRISCILLA ANNE PUNO  
LIFESTYLE CO-EDITOR



Photo by Keghan Crossland on Unsplash.



triton

tritonoutfitters



A group of seven diverse college students posing for a photo on a balcony. They are all wearing light blue sweatshirts with different school names and years printed on them: 'roosevelt est. 1968', 'marshall est. 1975', 'warren est. 1974', 'revelle est. 1964', 'sixth est. 2001', 'seventh est. 2003', and 'muir est. 1967'. They are smiling and looking at the camera. The background shows a modern building with large windows.

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UPCOMING UCSD GAMES	M Volleyball	2/9	7PM	vs UCLA
	M Basketball	2/10	7PM	vs UC Davis
	W Tennis	2/11	1PM	vs Cal Poly
	W Water Polo	2/12	9:50 AM	vs SDSU
	W Basketball	2/12	5PM	at UC Riverside



Image courtesy of Derrick Tuskan / UC San Diego.

# Loss in Straight Sets for UCSD Volleyball Against USC

BY DONOVAN PEREZ-SCHIPPER  
Senior Staff Writer

UC San Diego’s men’s volleyball team (3–3) took on the University of Southern California (8–1) on Wednesday, and with each of the teams being ranked in the top fifteen, this marquee match-up assuredly turned some heads. Ultimately, the seventh-ranked Trojans defeated the Tritons, who ranked number 13 in the nation, in straight sets. Although it

was a deceptively competitive match, the Trojans controlled the game with their superior athleticism and dominated most of the statistical categories. Still, after defeating some of the better teams in the country and hanging tough with an obviously talented USC squad, UCSD has a lot to look forward to with this year’s team. The first set started neck and neck with each team trading blows. Two consecutive sets by senior setter Blake Crisp set up the Tritons to go up 8–6, with the second of two coming on

a second-touch kill by senior outside hitter Kyle McCauley. UCSD and USC then traded runs of three points each, with UCSD’s run including an impressive combined block from McCauley and senior Middle Blocker Logan Clark. USC again responded, this time with three straight again to put the Tritons down one, 18–17. Each team continued to go back and forth in this extremely competitive match until a USC service error tied it at 23. With two points left to go, the indispensable first set would soon be decided. Each team was struggling to make headway, but steadfast with stout defense which created some impressive rallies. USC once again prevented UCSD from going on any significant run and went up by one. UCSD was calm in setting up their attack, but off the rebound the dependable star McCauley’s ball was just too wide and awarded USC their first set. UCSD started a little more lethargically as USC’s offense started to pick up the pace and went down 7–4. Crisp responded by setting up senior outside hitter Wyatt Harrison and Logan Clark to cut the lead to one, and a quick outside block knotted this one at seven. UCSD took their first lead off of a McCauley kill to put the team up 10–9, and this one seemed to be shaping up similarly to the last set. The experienced UCSD team

and the uber-talented Trojan squad were evenly balanced, making the match a tough battle for both teams. USC rattled off a five point run to go up 16–11. Putting in freshman setter Gabriel Dyer gave the Tritons a little jolt and put the team back in striking distance after a powerful fourth kill from McCauley, which was just the beginning of his huge night, resulted in a score of 17–14. USC soon regained control and put the Tritons down 23–16 with another big run. The Tritons made it a little interesting forcing a service error and with a McCauley ace. USC again killed the momentum by making McCauley get involved on defense, and a service ace took the Tritons out by a score of 25–18 heading into the potentially deciding set. With Dyer in the game, McCauley began to heat up and scored two of the first four Triton kills, the second of which tied the game at four. The two teams traded some small runs as the defenses seemed to adjust to the other team’s offensive strength, with hitting errors becoming frequent as angles were sealed off. Two consecutive USC errors gave the Tritons a 13–12 lead heading into the second half of the set, and the team still seemed to have plenty of fight left in them. USC began to put the pressure on the UCSD defense, but the team adjusted and an out of system Triton offense

scored a crucial point set up by McCauley to Wyatt Harrison after a timely dig by Dyer. McCauley was on a tear, scoring or assisting on six of the last seven for the Tritons and tying the game at 21. The epic will of the Tritons on the shoulders of their senior leader was being tested by one of the best teams they’d seen all year as the game reached its end. The Tritons were pushed to the brink, ceding two straight to go down 24–22. A McCauley kill tied it at 24, but USC took the advantage at 25–24. The teams went back and forth until they were tied at 28, with each team refusing to budge as they returned serve at every junction. After a USC service error, McCauley scored his 15th kill in an epic third set performance to give the Tritons the advantage at 30–29. The match, however, was not destined to continue after UCSD’s herculean efforts were stymied by a 3–0 run by USC after an attack error by McCauley. UCSD may have lost in straight sets, but the team never gave up and there are certainly markers of sustained success for this team. With a Big West title in the team’s aspirations, gut punches like this will be a great lesson before league play begins. Another tough match is soon to come with UCLA coming to town on Wednesday, Feb. 9 in what will surely be a fun, challenging matchup for both squads.

# This Week in the NFL: Brady Retires, Flores Sues, Washington Gets a Name

BY PRAVEEN NAIR  
Sports Editor

It’s been one of the most eventful weeks in the recent history of the NFL, and not just because of the tense football we saw in the conference championships. The greatest player in the history of the sport announced his retirement, a former coach made serious allegations about the league’s competitive integrity and racial inequalities, and we got a new team name in the nation’s capital. In case you’ve been too busy studying for midterms, here’s a rundown on the wild week in the NFL. **The GOAT Hangs Up His Cleats** After 22 legendary seasons in the NFL and 7 championships, Tom Brady has finally, and mercifully for the rest of the league, retired from football. As someone born after Brady was drafted, it’s certainly going to be bizarre to see a league without him. The 44-year-old from San Mateo pushed the limits of every part of the game, setting career records for passing yards, touchdowns, and overall wins, and obliterating any measure of playoff success. But perhaps what’s most impressive is that he has completely silenced the question of who the greatest NFL player of all time is, a feat matched perhaps only by Wayne Gretzky in North American sports. When I first started watching football just over a decade ago, the debate was Brady versus Peyton Manning. Then it became Brady versus Joe Montana and Jerry Rice for

the title of greatest of all time. By the time Brady came back from a 28–3 deficit against the Atlanta Falcons in Super Bowl LI, it wasn’t even a question anymore, and it can’t be overstated just how difficult it is to silence the critics like that. Not only was Brady the greatest quarterback of all time, but he was still one of the best in the league — Brady will likely be the runner-up for MVP this season (personally, he has my vote for No. 1), he led the league in yards and TD’s, and he brought his Tampa Bay Buccaneers back to tie last week’s divisional playoff game from a 27–3 deficit before a last-minute field goal won it for the Rams. Brady was by no means forced into retirement, and that will make his longevity even more legendary; he played until he was 44, and he wasn’t even done yet. Last week, sportswriter Mina Kimes said that Brady’s defining trait was the inevitability of his success. Even when he was down by 25 points against the Falcons or 24 against the Rams, in the back of your mind, you still believed he was going to win — even when he didn’t. His greatness and penchant for comebacks was such that you could never, ever count out Touchdown Tom. Hell, even after Adam Schefter reported Brady’s retirement, it looked for a hot minute like Brady would come back from that too. For the first time in 22 years, Tom Brady isn’t going to be an NFL player. It’s going to be weird. **Brian Flores Sues the NFL** This week also saw a major set of allegations about the league’s hiring practices put forth in a lawsuit by former

Miami Dolphins coach Brian Flores. The 58-page suit alleges, in short, two main points. First, the suit argues that the league’s Rooney Rule, which requires teams to interview minority head coach and front office hires in an effort to balance existing disparities, causes teams to interview black coaches without ever really intending to hire them. Flores’ evidence for this claim comes from the fact that Patriots head coach Bill Belichick, in a pretty comical mistake, accidentally texted Flores congratulating him on landing the New York Giants’ head coach position three days before he even interviewed for that job. But Belichick had instead intended to text Brian Daboll (he got the wrong Brian), and Flores’ suit alleges that this indicates that the Giants had already settled on Daboll, and were therefore only interviewing Flores to comply with the Rooney Rule, undermining the entire point of the system. Second, the suit claims that Dolphins owner Stephen Ross offered Flores \$100,000 per game to lose and earn a higher draft pick in the 2019 season. In addition, Ross apparently sought to get Flores to skirt the league’s tampering rules and meet secretly with an unnamed quarterback on Ross’ yacht, and Flores’ refusal was apparently a factor in his ultimate dismissal, despite the fact that Flores had been widely lauded for leading the team to winning records and the edge of the playoffs for two straight seasons. These allegations, especially those about Ross, are serious, and get to the core of the NFL’s competitive integrity. If a team

owner is trying to coerce his coach to throw games — and Flores has gone on to allege that other coaches have been offered similar bribes — fans could be forgiven for having less investment in the product on-field. If Ross truly did offer these bribes, nothing short of his expulsion from the league would be enough. But as for the revelations about the perverse effects of the Rooney Rule on black coaches, it’s a much more complicated question. Flores is right that it’s demoralizing and embarrassing to have to interview for a job you know you won’t get. But that seems like a natural downstream effect of a rule that incentivizes teams to interview minority hires, but not actually hire them. That’s not to say that a racial hiring quota would be better, but rather that there isn’t a single, elegant top-down solution to coaching disparities. At the very least, Flores deserves the due diligence and respect owed to him as a winning football coach, a basic dignity denied to him by teams like the Giants and Denver Broncos who allegedly didn’t even consider him as a potential hire during his interviews.

**The Washington Commanders** Another bombshell dropped this week as we learned that the Washington Football Team — sorry, the Washington football team — will henceforth be known as the Washington Commanders. It’s certainly an underwhelming name, but hey, it’s an underwhelming team. (And if that feels like a low blow, the team’s on-field performance is probably the least bad thing about them.) First of all, the change comes two seasons after the temporary Washington Football Team moniker was put into place — long enough to build up unrealistic expectations and for fans to get attached to the brusque authenticity of the WFT name. What can I say? The idea of a team called “the Washington Football Team” was growing on me. But as for the team’s actual name change, it was somewhat hampered by a perceived need to attach the team to the federal government or military, when Washington, D.C. is an actual city with residents, history, and traditions that a name could be drawn from. **For rest of article, visit UCSDGuardian.org**



Image courtesy of Jeffrey Beall and Washington Commanders.