

DRAKEO
THE RULER



Drakeo, a performer of a lifetime, passed away due to gang violence. Read more about him, his legacy, and what his death meant to the community in A & E's piece.

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- UC SYSTEM
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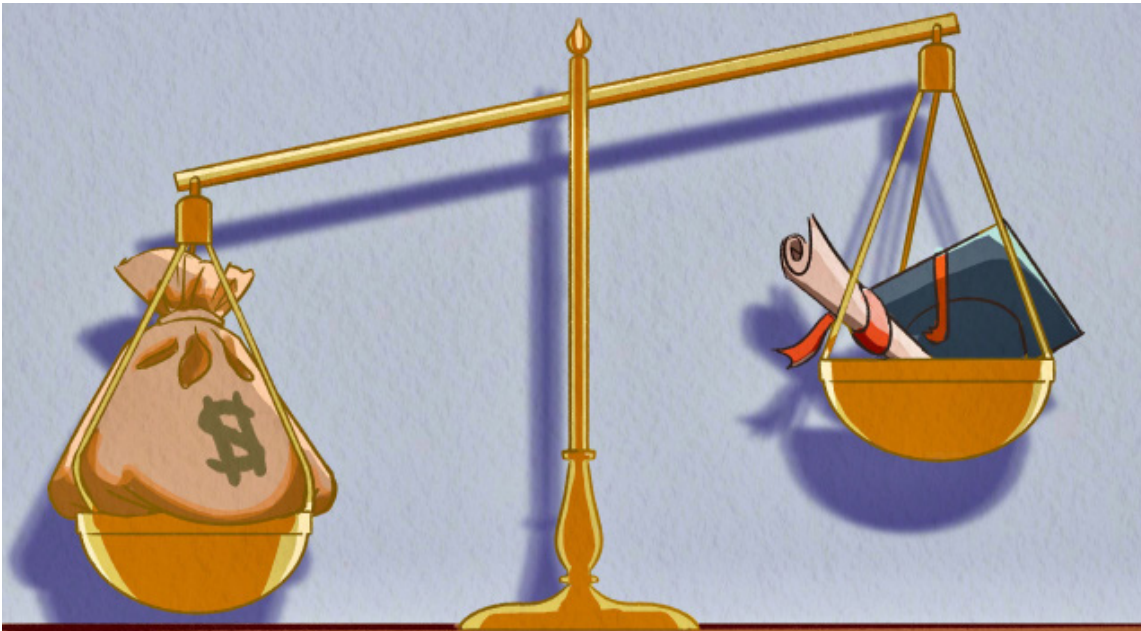
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GOVERNMENT

Governor's Proposal Aims to Satisfy
both UC and State's Plans

BY ANANYA NAG CONTRIBUTING WRITER



Art courtesy of Nicholas Regli for UCSD Guardian.

On Feb. 2, the Legislative Analyst's Office of California published an analysis and summary of Governor Newsom's proposals for the University of California 2022-2023 budget. The proposals aim to satisfy both the UC system and state legislatures as both parties face a disconnect in how they envision growth for the UC system in regards to the state budget. In the past, University of California has covered operation charges by using the state fund, increases to tuition, and increasing acceptance of out-of-state students who pay an increased tuition to attend. The state sets enrollment targets and if they estimate enrollment growth, the fund provided to UC is increased.

In the last two years however, the state has also implemented setting an "outyear target" which estimates enrollment targets for the future year. Additionally, for the past seven years, the state has changed their target to reflect only projected enrollment growth.

The UC system sets their own enrollment targets based on recommendation from the UC Office of Regents and an analysis of the state funded budget they will receive.

"In consultation with the UC chancellors, President Drake sets the enrollment targets for each campus [targets] are informed by input from the UC Regents, who approve UC's operating budget, and that budget is informed by the total state-funded enrollment level for resident undergraduate students. After these enrollment targets are set, there can be year-to-year fluctuations in actual enrollment," stated Ryan King, Associate Media Director of Relations at the UC office of The President.

In the 2021-2022 budget, the state made policies for the UC system to reduce the number of enrollment of non-residents of California. The 2020-21 plan implemented a plan to reduce the population of non-resident undergraduate students from over 21 percent in 2021-2022 to 18 percent by 2026.

However, in the past few years, non-resident enrollment had increased significantly and the state argued that this could limit access of the schools to in-state residents.

The plan to limit enrollment is supposed to start in 2022 and the state has said that it will fund UC the loss of revenue they would incur from limiting out-of-state enrollment.

Although the state set enrollment targets, the University of California has not followed them and enrolled more than the state target for the past several years. The state has not increased the fund they provide UC to account for this over enrollment but instead used the numbers as a baseline when setting the target for the

numbers as a baseline when setting the target for the next year.

Governor Newsom's proposal for the 2022-2023 budget is a general fund of \$99 million to be given to UC. Almost \$68 million is to support the enrollment growth that is envisioned for UC and the rest is to account for the lost revenue from reducing out-of-state enrollment which would otherwise cause the UC to lose much of the revenue they bring in from out-of-state residents' increased tuition.

The governor also proposes a multiyear enrollment plan, aimed to accommodate higher enrollment in the next few years. Per the plan, the governor's administration suggests the UC grow their enrollment by one percent each year until 2026-2027. The administration believes that an annual growth like this would bring in an additional 8000 students each year, over a four year period.

UC has agreed with the governor's proposals and encouraged state legislators to follow through with the proposal as it is much needed to support growth on campus.

"In order for our growth to be successful, expansion requires reliable support and sustained funding. UC believes that many of the goals laid out by the governor in his proposed budget reflect these shared priorities. This is why we are encouraging state legislators to support his proposal and help us secure the necessary funding for expanding access to California undergraduates and improving graduation outcomes for underrepresented students," stated King.

He added that this proposal supports the growth they intend to see in the next couple of years. The University of California, Office of the President envisions adding 20,000 students over the next decade and the amount of funding in Newsom's proposal will allow UC to create additional housing, add additional faculty, and support the arrival of more students.

In the past, the state has not provided additional funding to the UC system due to over enrollment but the governor's proposal plans to do so. The UCOP believes this is a necessary accommodation as in the past, the over enrollment coupled with only a baseline fund has proved difficult for operations on campus.

"Between 2014-2015 and 2020-2021, California resident enrollment grew by about 24,100 students (including summer enrollment). However, during this period the state only provided support for about 14,400 of these students... this gap in state funding strains campus resources, leaving our campuses without roughly \$100 million that should be available to support these

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ASSOCIATED STUDENTS

AS Council Brief:
Weeks 5 and 6

BY NIKITA CARDOZO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Week 5

During the A.S. Council's Week 5 meeting on Feb. 2, the senators updated the council about their projects. They also provided information pertaining to the impact of COVID-19 on the students of UC San Diego.

First, Thurgood Marshall College Senator Ashley Jones works for Marshall College Advising and noticed that a lot of students ask questions that college advising can't answer. Senator Jones expressed interest in doing a project based on issues that students indicate they need assistance with through a survey or Webtool. After answering the questions, they would be provided with a direct option of where to reach out and how to get the specific help they need immediately.

Next, Seventh College Senator Ian Fosth discussed his project of drafting a committee that lets students talk about how COVID-19 changes things for them. He would like to hear more from student input about how the committee can better help them transition and get the help they need in the midst of the pandemic.

Furthermore, Senator Fosth discussed the discrepancy with the university's COVID-19 dashboard versus other campuses: UCSD's dashboard doesn't include the number of vaccinated students and faculty but will begin adding these numbers by the start of Spring Quarter.

Engineering Senator Samir Nomani underscored the need for funding mechanisms and grants for engineering organization projects. Moreover, he stated that during the University Centers Advisory Board (UCAB) meeting, they approved the renewal of the Price Center COVID vaccination site for Winter Quarter. It will now be open from Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.. Price Center will also distribute one KN-95 mask per student per day at the moment.

Freshman Senator Michelle Griffith mentioned that she is trying to find more sustainable ways to get rid of single-use plastics, including better packaging in Housing Dining Hospitality markets and different bins for different recyclable materials (paper, plastics, etc.). Arts and Humanities Senator Rhianen Callahan asked if Senator Griffith has reached out to the AVP Environmental Justice Affairs office and Griffith said they have reached out to Courtney

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Art courtesy of Ava Bayley for UCSD Guardian.

Washington, the AVP, and are planning to work with them.

Next, Arts and Humanities Senator Callahan discussed her project of hosting a writing workshop, which will take place on Feb. 22. Callahan added that there will be a rally at the chancellor's mansion on Feb. 16 for housing justice and stronger contracts for students.

John Muir College Senator Serena Zheng highlighted how hard it is for the students in Camp Snoopy to have access to food, since they are located far from the dining halls. Senator Zheng updated the council about the Camp Snoopy food project to increase their access to food. She is working with the HDH director to install three vending machines (snacks, water, drinks) at Camp Snoopy. Moreover, the prices of items sold in these machines are cheaper than in markets.

John Muir College Senator

Daosiri Rattanamansuang informed the council that her starship robot delivery is not feasible because it will cost too much after she had a meeting with the HDH director.

Lastly, VP Campus Affairs Isaac Lara called for the senators to update the student body of what projects everyone is working on and wants to summarize the work the council is doing to the senate. Moreover, the A.S. winter retreat is scheduled Week 8 weekend and mandatory for assembly. The A.S. Council will start professional development workshops at the end of this quarter.

Week 6

During the A.S. Council's Week 6 meeting on Feb. 9, the senators discussed the recent updates with Price Center and the alleged scandal with the California State University Chancellor. They also further discussed their

updates about their current projects.

First, Senator Lopez highlighted her project where students could use Minecraft to host a virtual social platform to connect with students. Lopez hopes to provide students with a fun way to connect students, despite the pandemic.

Next, Senator Samir Nomani's group managed to increase the hours of Price Center. Starting Jan. 14, Price Center will be open till 11 p.m. on weekdays and weekends till 9 p.m.. The hope is that Price Center will be open until 2 a.m. in Spring Quarter. Furthermore, UCAB is looking for ideas of how to spend their special project fund.

Senator Eng was just appointed to Executive Director of Campus Performances and the Event Office Search Committee and is looking for an Executive Director for Performance Arts to handle all things related to the amphitheater.

Lastly, Arts and Humanities Senator Callahan mentioned that the "CSU Chancellor, Joseph Castro, is under fire over his handling of sexual harassment allegations." He allegedly handled questionable behavior by the former president of student affairs by allowing him to quietly retire and providing him a glowing letter of recommendation. There have been many sexual scandals, especially involving the sorority and fraternity life at CSU Fresno, but the Chancellor has done nothing about it.

A.S. Council meetings take place at 6 p.m. every Wednesday and are open to students. Students can participate in these meetings by joining the Zoom link or joining on Facebook Live.

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However, the legislative report has made it a point to note that UC is in a unique position due to the pandemic so the state may



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editor@ucsdguardian.org
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- Art: art@ucsdguardian.org
- Marketing: marketing@ucsdguardian.org
- Advertising: 858-534-3467
ads@ucsdguardian.org
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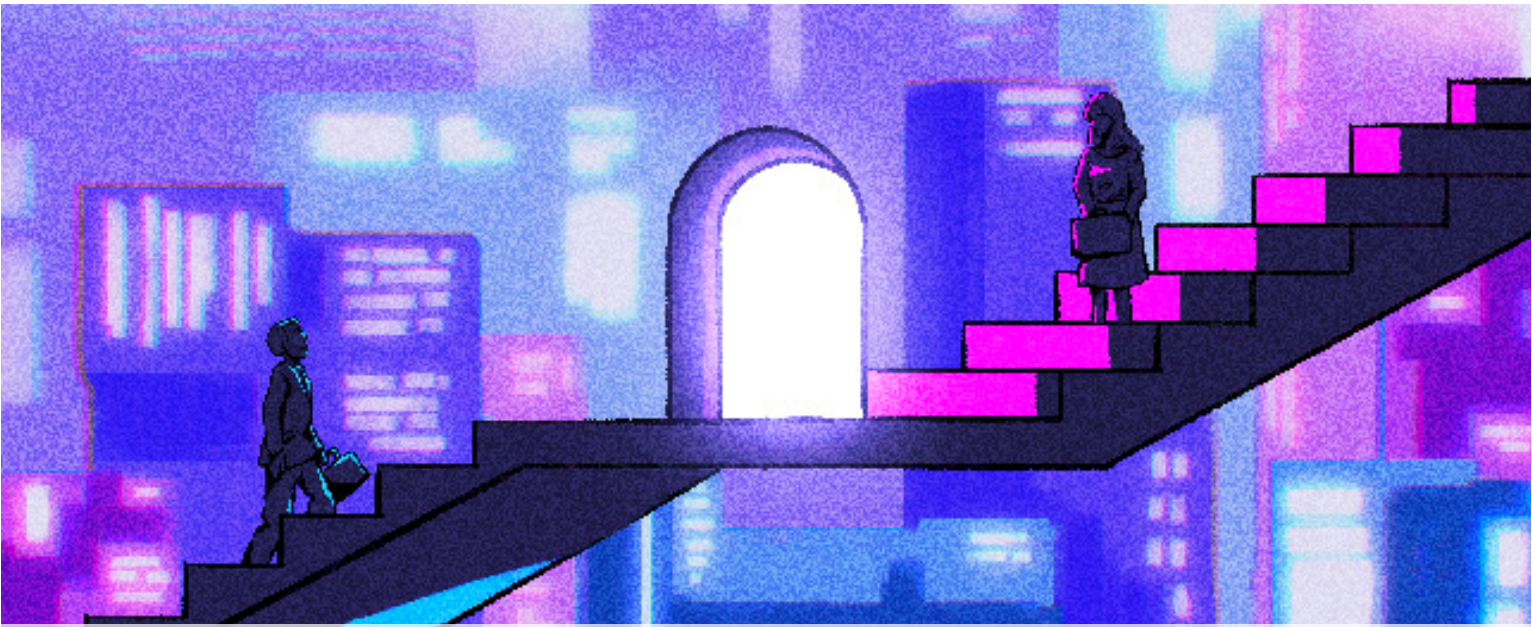
want to lean in their favor this year.

The state versus UC disconnect has affected students at UC San Diego as well. Around 8 percent of the student body of undergraduates are non-residents of California. Although the state wants UC to reduce the number of out-of-state students and UC hasn't followed through, Rachel Dotzler, a Roger Revelle College junior at UCSD from Texas, agrees with the state.

"My doctor actually told me about this plan that the state had and insisted that I must have been exceptionally smart because I enrolled in UCSD from Texas. I think that the state's plan will make UC's look more competitive, reduce the acceptance rate, and only take exceptional out-of-state students which will enhance the student body of UCSD. I think UC's should follow through with this plan," Dotzler stated.

Many students were unaware of the governor's proposal but upon learning about it, were quickly in agreement. Constance Wu, a Sixth College junior, believes that the additional funding will help students on campus and provide them with many additional resources.

"I was almost unable to secure on-campus housing this year because of the limited availability of housing but high number of incoming students. If the governor's plan allows UCSD to improve that, then I'm all for it," Wu stated.



Art courtesy of Angela Liang for UCSD Guardian.

GENDER

Gender Bias in the Workplace

BY RODRIGO GUTIERREZ STAFF WRITER

A recent study conducted by the Rady School of Management at UC San Diego researched the prevalence of gender bias in the workplace regarding hiring practices in terms of being considered "overqualified." The study, published by Elizabeth Lauren Campbell and Oliver Hahl, explored how women with high levels of experience and qualifications enter careers and positions where they often compete with men of lower qualifications.

The issue of overqualification is highlighted in the research, which demonstrates that a woman's achievements and successes are often diminished in compari-

son to men.

The gap between men and women in the workplace has been a recurring issue that the U.S. has faced for decades. A prominent issue is the wage gap that continues to exist. In a 2020 study published by the Pew Research Center, it was found that women made 84 percent of what men made.

The wage gap shows a lack of how women are being valued for their achievements and efforts. The education and experience that women acquire and hold are not being translated to a tangible salary that reflects their work.

Although women are more likely to be enrolled in college and

graduate than men, the gap in the workplace persists. With more educated and qualified women entering the workforce every year, the gap threatens to ever slightly close. The issue arises when stereotypes continue to influence hiring practices.

For students at UC San Diego,

In 2016, The San Diego Union Tribune reported that UC San Diego enrolled more women in science, technology, engineering, and math than other prominent universities in the U.S.

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February 19th, 2022 | Town Square, 3-5pm

Awkwafina is Not Sorry

BY HEMMY CHUN
Managing Editor

On Feb. 5, Nora Lum, more famously known as Awkwafina, released four screenshots of her notes app on Twitter to address criticism surrounding her use of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Her written statement consisted of a total of 347 words and not one of them was “sorry.” Twitter user @theNiaLangley summed it best when she tweeted: “You see no apology because Nora is not sorry.”

This isn’t the first instance where Lum failed to adequately address her use of AAVE — in an interview with CinemaBlend during the “Shang-Chi” press tour, the actor was asked to address comments surrounding her mannerisms and vernacular. She struggled to formulate a coherent answer, telling Reuters that she’s “open to the conversation” and that the topic is “really something that is a bit multi-faceted and layered.” Her response can perhaps be best likened to the viral video of the “have you ever had a dream” kid — both child icon and comedian stammer their way through wisps of underdeveloped thought and emerge from their speech with a stifled pleased side grin, as if to say “yeah, I nailed that.”

Her tweet (and the refusal to recognize her statement as an apology is deliberate) similarly follows this familiar vein of deflection. Within the first page of her statement, Lum immediately opens up on the defense and attempts to deflect accountability under the false premise that people of color are not capable of taking part in cultural appropriation — which is simply not true. She explicitly places an emphasis on “dominant” by placing asterisks on both ends of the word, writing that the African American community have “historically and routinely seen their

culture stolen, exploited and appropriated by the *dominant* culture” (referring to white people) in a feeble pursuit to bypass her own appropriative behavior as an Asian American woman.

Lum has an extensive documented history of donning Black culture to dress her comedic and acting roles, swathed tightly within the persona she constructed for herself as Awkwafina until that character no longer serves to benefit her professional career. Her appropriation of AAVE is evidently interwoven within the very fabric of her most prominent roles, with characters Peik Lin in “Crazy Rich Asians” and Constance in “Ocean’s 8” most famously epitomizing this phenomenon.

“I’m not like her at all,” Lum said to The New Yorker’s Jiayang Fan in reference to her character Peik Lin, who can be observed adopting an exaggerated version of the “blaccent” throughout the film. “You gon’ roll up to that weddin’ and be like ‘bawk bawk, bitch,’” Peik Lin advises Rachael in one particularly resonating scene, employing a loose wrist, and bobbing neck and index in order to cement her point. In the same interview, she compares both herself and her character Constance to be “scrappy, die-hard hustler[s] from Queens.”

And this is the bedrock upon which Lum was able to formulate a context that partially alleviated her from repercussions of her cultural exploitation: Awkwafina plays into the trope of a struggling immigrant who grew up in the “hood” in order to explain her inconsistent vernacular. In her Twitter statement, she repeats this excuse, writing, “My immigrant background allowed me to carve an American identity off the movies and tv shows I watched, the children I went to public school with, and my undying love and respect for hip hop.” Lum’s hometown of Stony Brooks boasts an impressive population statistic of 86.83%

white, 9.41% Asian, and 2.25% Black.

In her Vulture article “Who Really Owns the ‘Blaccent’?,” Lauren Michele Jackson succinctly explains how Lum is able to find success through her specific caricature of black culture: “certain profiles borderline fetishize the Awkwafina backstory, as if the idea that an Asian-American woman who grew up in Forest Hills [...] loves rap is too absurd to be true.” There certainly exists a strange cultural sensation inevitably waiting to be had at the sight of an Asian American immigrant attempting to model a culture that is often perceived to be its direct antithesis in regards to the ethnic stereotypes (needless to say, both categorizations uphold white supremacist values, and there are more nuances within this thread of conversation than the length of my rambling article allows).

But unlike Lum, Black people cannot stop the way their physical appearance alters the way they are perceived, cannot stop being Black, when their next potential roles call for a more serious deposition — a coded and problematic association in itself. They must, for the reminder of their lives, exist under the ceaseless panopticon of social oppression that is signified by their skin tone. The hyperbolic exaggeration of black culture by non-black individuals relies on the premise that the very existence of Black people is the punchline. Their vernacular, body language, and culture, are made mockery of by those like Nora Lum who reap the benefits from this appropriation, whether or not the motive to imitate was set in malice.

Richard Schur further explores the concept of cultural colonialism in Duke University Press’s journal in “Are You Entertained? Black Popular Culture in the Twenty-First Century,” where he writes that the “consumption [of

African American culture] has not necessarily translated into either improved cross-cultural communication or enhanced status or wealth for many African Americans.” Former “American Bandstand” (a teenage television program that aired from the 1950s to the 1980s) dancer Jimmy Peatross recalls his own experience as a Black man in the entertainment industry. Peatross grappled with the disparities between the mainstream enjoyment of black culture from non-black communities and the effective erasure of the culture’s origins, stating “young America watched and danced with enthusiasm, oblivious to the debt of gratitude owed to the black community.”

But the gravity of cultural appropriation, the magnitude of the racial effacement doesn’t stop there. Namely, this echoing historical pattern has, and continues to, actively exploit black cultural practices and labor for profit. In his song “The Anthem,” Eminem wrote “I am the worst thing since Elvis Presley / to do black music so selfishly / and used it to get myself wealthy / Hey, there’s a concept that works.” Here, he explicitly references artists like Presley who regularly stole from black artists without facing retributions for his appropriation, and admits his own complacency within this long-standing dynamic.

It was actually “Big Mama” Thornton who first recorded the hit “Hound Dog” before it became popularized by Elvis. Bob Marley wrote “I Shot the Sheriff” in 1973, a full year before Eric Clapton re-recorded and garnered acclaim for the track. A fourteen-year-old African American dancer from Atlanta named Jalaiah Harmon is the original choreographer of the Renegade, one of the biggest dance trends ever created on the internet — but none of them received proper recognition in the public eye. And the list goes on and on and on.

Lum had years to draft a decent apology and the best response she was able to give to the Black community was four screenshots of her iPhone notes app that failed to reach the actual thesis or touch productive discourse beyond the most basic surface level observations about the experiences of Black people living in America. Nora, yes, obviously the African American community is disproportionately affected by institutionalized policies — how have you, intentionally or not, upheld those standards? How does anti-blackness in the Asian community further contribute to this demonization and fetishization of black culture in America? How can you mention that the African American community has “historically and routinely seen their culture stolen, exploited and appropriated” while simultaneously omitting your own role within this dynamic? In what ways have you personally benefited from the very same appropriation you write so venomously about?

Ironically, Lum concluded her official statement with “And though I’m still learning and doing that personal work, I know for sure that I want to spend the rest of my career doing nothing but uplifting our communities. We do this first by failing, learning, acknowledging, hearing and empathizing... And I will continue, tirelessly, to do just that.”

A few hours before Lum announced her retirement from the “ingrown toenail that is Twitter,” user named @jonahsahn responded to Lum’s statement with a series of tweets that read: “why did it take so long to say this, especially when you knew the conversation on you existed [...] Thanks for talking about it now by posting these screens, but who [...] are you going to have *the conversation* with? To process all of this?” Lum’s response was to block him.



Image courtesy of Getty Images.

How California’s Housing and Homelessness Problem Intertwine

The Omicron surge threw plans for reopening UC San Diego in a smooth manner into disarray. Now, the housing availability crisis which occurred during the fall and the big issue of housing insecurity is still in the picture

BY EUNICE KIM
Contributing Writer

As many students returned to campus for the fall quarter, the issue of housing security and availability arose during the scramble to find housing. With the university’s need for housing to reflect the COVID-19 infection rates and living costs in California still remaining high, housing insecurity and even homelessness are here to stay.

UCSD already promised to resume putting three students in a dorm and adding 700 undergraduate beds for the upcoming fall quarter—something they could not do before because of social distancing purposes.

In fact, this winter quarter does not offer triple housing for residence halls and apartments. The main reason for the lack of triples is the rise of the highly infectious Omicron virus cases but with falling infection rates, the need for ample housing near campus is more vital than ever.

The hope for students is that with a complex of 2,000 more beds coming onto campus in 2023, more relief can come for those who need on-campus housing—although even these spaces don’t fully take into account the increasing enrollment into UC campuses.

As of Winter 2022, there are a total of 40,873 students, which is a rise of more than a couple thousand from Winter 2020. This is unprecedented because the year 2035—not this one—had expected to see this amount of students.

The issue of homelessness also plays a role in the housing situation in California. The view on those who lack and or cannot afford proper housing may be through a more sympathetic lens than the perception of the homeless population. However, the issues can and do intertwine.

After all, homelessness is related to very severe housing insecurity; the lack of affordable housing and other issues also fall under housing insecurity.

Moreover, homelessness—perhaps not commonly on UCSD campus but in general—increased even before COVID-19 with California consistently being home to the most homeless individuals and the nation having more than 580,000 homeless individuals in a single night of 2020.

Governor Gavin Newsom presented a plan that addresses vulnerable, homeless individuals, promising an extra \$2 billion to a plan for mental health housing and services and clearing encampments. This is on top of a \$12 billion package for 55,000 new housing units and treatment slots.

Due to COVID-19 and the concern of the unsheltered population, more attention focused on these financial packages. But much homeless assistance functions on the local level to accommodate the different communities’ needs and there is

a risk of these investments not succeeding without strict goals of sheltering homeless individuals.

Unsurprisingly, being of a low-income household is just one of the factors that can propel one to housing insecurity and homelessness. Low-income Californians for one can end up spending more than half their income on housing.

In UC’s booklet of improving student basic needs, the price of a California home is much higher than the national average and UC campuses are located in coastal areas where real estate prices are the priciest in California. There is also no

Democrats say that one being poor is tied to circumstances beyond their control; both groups also saw one being rich based on efforts versus having more advantages differently.

In the 2018 findings, the results were similar as almost half of Republican groups dubbed those poor due to lack of effort than 31% who said that they were circumstances beyond control while in 2017, it was 56% to 32%. While these partisan differences are notable, there are also different perspectives based on gender, varying incomes, and more.

This data is intriguing because it can explain how

According to UCLA Law Review, individuals need a safe and stable home first, then a focus on mental health services. For instance, as stated in the work, one who is “chronically homeless” or homeless for more than a year is more likely to experience mental health issues and involvement with the justice system than those who struggle with homelessness on an intermittent basis. Homelessness can wreak havoc on one’s feelings of stability.

The concept of not having physical stability can apply to students as well, with an improper living situation translating into a plethora of problems.

find some solace in affordable off-campus housing with the help of an overview presented by the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) and consultations.

But ultimately, these sources just don’t take away how San Diego rent and housing costs are known to be very high, especially in the La Jolla area. Housing close to campus is attractive and cuts on commute time, but it proves to be higher in costs than off-campus housing.

Sean Read, a chief program officer at a non-profit called Friendship Place that aids homeless individuals, states that homelessness is generally a delayed response to economic issues. Government aid for housing could still be insufficient for someone to have a home the next year or so. Similarly, a student who cannot afford housing may eventually find themselves living in their car for a bit or couch-surfing before they are able to access Basic Needs.

Still, by June 2025, one of the goals for UC Basic Needs is to reduce the proportion of undergraduate students who have experienced housing insecurity or non-permanent housing—in this case—by 50%. Another aim is to reduce the proportion of graduate students who have experienced homelessness by the same percentage. Factors like being a foster youth, LGBTQ+, or low-income affect one’s chances of being homeless even more.

On another brighter note, according to UCSD Associated Students (ASUCSD), their Instagram states that the University Community Planning Group (UCPG) established authority over land use in University City. For instance, it has limited high-density housing projects such as apartments near campus for the past few decades.

The University Community Planning Group (UCPG) is an organization that represents North and South University in the City of San Diego’s planning process; they have been holding meetings every month, with UCSD also participating in their meetings that involve the area near campus.

Thus, if one lives off campus or lives in the University City, ASUCSD states that they could register to become a member of the UCPG by February 7th and vote for student representatives that can address the housing crisis so that they have more of a voice in the housing matter.

The root causes of one’s predicament isn’t always clear. Being sympathetic about it isn’t a necessity, but seeing the real picture is. Housing insecurity such as bearing the weight of expensive housing isn’t mutually exclusive with homelessness. Ultimately, a lack of stability is impactful and cyclical as it leads to more issues for the individuals such as mental health problems and financial crises.

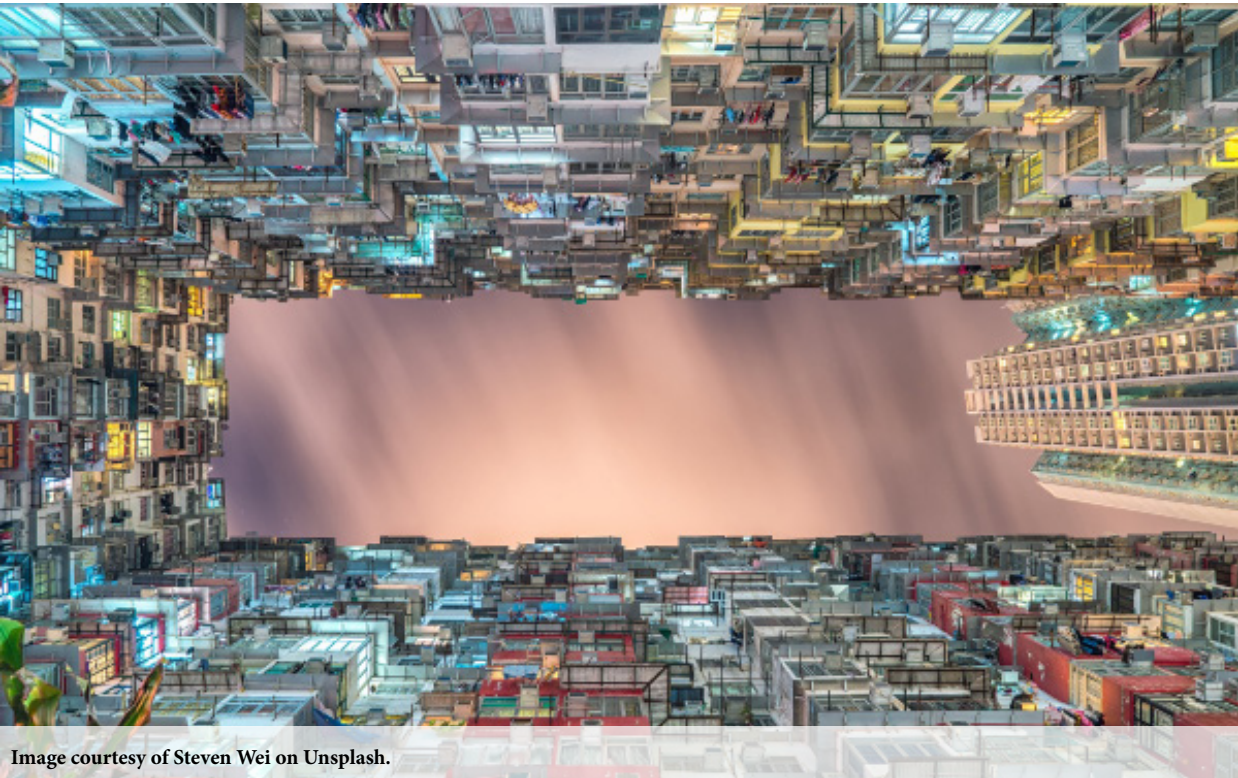


Image courtesy of Steven Wei on Unsplash.

new financial aid to help cover the cost increases of on-campus housing and the maintenance of a home such as amenities.

Despite this aid, what is striking is how there can be different perceptions on homelessness and varying incomes based on those with different political leanings.

For instance, national correspondent Philip Bump of the Washington Post says that Trump connected issues like homelessness to his political opponents. Blue-state major cities did notably see the homeless population rise while in red states, major city numbers dropped—California, for example, possesses the largest homeless population. This, however, didn’t take into consideration how homelessness is more visible in big city states or how statistics of homelessness in rural states may not be represented as properly as urban states especially amidst COVID.

According to a 2017 Pew Research article, there are partisan differences in perceptions over what makes someone rich or poor. For example, Republicans are more likely to say that one is poor due to a lack of effort than circumstances they weren’t in control of while an immense majority of

many attribute homelessness to one’s own personal shortcomings while others emphasize the effect factors like mental health or housing crises have on the homeless.

Interestingly enough, findings point to how housing availability was the primary predictor of the subsequent ability to avoid homelessness. Better services reduced the risk of homelessness if housing was also available, according to research and experiments done to test the effectiveness of housing and service interventions for the homeless with severe mental health problems.

This is in contrast to many who solely attribute homelessness to substance abuse and mental health problems. When one views homelessness in terms of affordable housing, there can be a more sympathetic perspective that relieves some responsibility from the homeless individual’s character.

Because homelessness has a link to criminal justice involvement, substance abuse and mental health issues, the perception of them may not be as sympathetic as for a struggling student. However, it might be notable to see how the chances of chronic homelessness increase with vulnerable statuses such as poverty, former incarceration status, and housing issues as well.

“Housing costs are the highest contributor to student debt and among the most significant contributing factors to students’ unstable and unhealthy basic needs experience,” the University of California’s booklet on improving student basic needs from 2020 goes. “In general... financial aid funding has not kept pace with the rise in both on-and off-campus housing.”

Thus, housing and food insecurity—which go hand-in-hand— affect individuals’ mental health among other things like student GPA. But getting to the root of the issue before homelessness enters can be life-changing and this includes confronting problems like limited kitchen access to unsafe or far housing conditions. However, once costs enter the picture, choices become limited as to what an individual can do to lessen the burdens of a far, taxing commute or a more roommate-packed environment when these options also help one save money or rent costs.

If one is in dire need of emergency housing on campus at UCSD, they may rely on Basic Needs. The process begins when one fills out a Basic Needs Assistance form but they may also email basicneeds@ucsd.edu for temporary housing.

In the less severe scenario, a student who needs housing could

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

CONTACT THE EDITOR
ELIAS ROMAN
✉ entertainment@ucsdguardian.org

Once upon a Time in L.A.: a Nightmare

“Is the concert over?”
“Yeah, he’s just been killed.”

THE GUARDIAN STAFF



Image courtesy of Complex.

These are the words exchanged between myself and a security guard with an empty look in her eyes. The crowd stands around me taking in the news, some oblivious and some desensitized. Street politics, loud music, an overabundance of alcohol, and violence: these are scenes all too familiar to some in the crowd. Police helicopters use their searchlights to look for the suspect while the crowd dances and waits for Snoop to perform. I haven’t stopped thinking about whether that was normal. Slowly the air of a crime scene begins to set in as more and more people rush out through the gates. Slain was Darrell Caldwell — though many of us remember him as Drakeo The Ruler.

Drakeo was LA’s own, a one of one artist, engineering a new rap sound he called “nervous music.” He maintained authenticity through his distinctive and stand-out sound, while still incorporating a West Coast rap flavor — if you know, you know. He was a trailblazer who, at the young age of 28, was setting the stage for a career as an underground legend. Drakeo never itched or feigned for the mainstream; the mainstream craved him. His discography is mixed with features from Drake to Saweetie. “I saved California Rap, you can thank me later,” he rapped on his newest album, critically acclaimed for the cleverness of his cadence, a style which he called “Lingo Bingo.” On Dec. 18, 2021, Drakeo was set to perform in front of a hometown crowd of thousands and declare himself as next-in-line for LA’s rap throne. This moment of triumph would come just a few months after he sat in solitary confinement for faulty charges he was acquitted for.

It was supposed to be a good day. Gente, music, and cross-generational hip-hop legends on every stage. The ambience of the event was aligned with its name, “Once Upon a Time in LA,” a Westside day dream. Pioneers in rap like E-40, Ice Cube, Warren G, and 2Short performed next to and in between legends like Brenton Wood, Delfonics, and Al Green. No doubt, the festival was culturally dedicated to bringing alive lowrider soundtracks that blasted out stereos from East L.A. to the Bay in the ‘70s, ‘80s, and ‘90s. This soundtrack is the synchronicity of gangster rap and soul. The event’s attendees were likely the descendants of, or themselves members of these communities, the majority of whom would be Black and/or Latinx. There was a particular comfort to be felt among those of us who have grown up attending car shows or big family barbecues at the park, just waiting for the sun to go down.

And then the sun came down. In a matter of moments, our collective daydream turned into a horrible nightmare. Gang violence, a monster which transcends dreams and haunts our reality, terrorized our night once more.

An article published online by Los Angeles Magazine, “The Assassination of Drakeo the Ruler,” finally put an appropriate name to what happened to the young artist at the festival in December. The article was written by journalist-turned-friend and witness of Drakeo’s murder, Jeff Weiss. Weiss’ work recounting Drakeo’s murder is a powerful yet painful piece that serves justice to Drakeo in ways that transcend the punitive carceral system, a system that took so much of Drakeo’s life away before his passing. Weiss tells Drakeo’s holistic life story as a resilient artist whose success couldn’t absolve him from the disease of gangs, both institutional and street. Drakeo mastered the complex art form of rapping but wouldn’t formally declare a set in LA, painting a target on his back as a result — not just by street gangs but also by the Los Angeles Police Department.

Drakeo was faced with adversity on both sides of the prison cell at the hands of street gangs, poverty, and cops, a trap that is much too common among our inner city youth. In an interview with Rolling Stone, Drakeo’s mother told the world that “he planned to do so much,” as she recounts her son’s character as a provider. “He wanted to help the homeless and do something for children who were needy. And he wanted to take care of his family ... Darrell wanted to help everybody.”

Drakeo the Ruler fell victim to a violent gang ambush as he was minutes away from performing his set. He was fatally assaulted, dying from a knife wound that night. The assaulters were young men, gang affiliates. I won’t get into why, because, as Weiss stated, “no one is an expert on gangs but its members.” Drakeo the Ruler’s life as a young icon was cut short, taking the breath of life out of a new uniquely-Cali style of rap, as well as a rapper who many from LA looked at with pride and respect. A father, a son, but most importantly, a precious human life taken senselessly and too soon in a place we expected to find refuge and safety.

In present times, culture and community serve as a saving grace for those who find themselves most vulnerable to the implications of a global pandemic. Once Upon A Time music festival in 2021 transported attendees into the past, only to then snap them back to reality.

Gang violence and other issues of poverty and disenfranchisement create a “dual pandemic” for Black, Indigineous, and other racialized people. The tragic loss of Drakeo the Ruler is a symptom of these conditions. We should treat gang violence like COVID-19, as a public threat destabilizing these communities. If we follow the thread from Drakeo’s murder to gang violence, it will only be a matter of time before we find root issues like poverty, lack of education, racism, and organized abandonment as fellow conspirators to the rapper’s murder.

I write this as I reflect on beating the odds as a first-gen, Chicax, poor daughter of two ex-gang affiliates. What did it take? Drakeo’s death is a painful reminder of how much work is left to do to solve these issues and other forms of intergenerational harm. I don’t intend to prescribe the solutions to stop this kind of tragedy from happening again or to suggest that there is even one single solution. I trust that I will not have to, given the growing nationwide movement to abolish the root causes of harm in order to achieve justice in society. I’m confident such solutions must be holistic and span across disciplines, with the input and leadership of those most affected by the issues of intergenerational violence. So to you, UC student, the future engineers of complex solutions, what is your role? For our public institutions in Cali, what is their role? For the issues collectively felt most among the most oppressed, it is becoming increasingly unlikely that money and success will absolve you. The future of community safety and serenity is contingent on our actions. Still then, our efforts will only bear fruit if institutional power structures shift to support them.

Rest In Peace Drakeo the Ruler.

Streaming Services Ranked

Staff Writer Kamiah Johnson ranks the most popular streaming services from Netflix to Apple TV.

I think it’s safe to say that everyone has at least one streaming service they are subscribed to. In this day and age, streaming services have become the new norm. When talking about the latest show or movie coming out, our first question after hearing about it is, “What is it on?” to which they will reply with one of the various streaming services out there. However, not all streaming services are created equally. Each of these platforms have their own unique features, quirks, and catalog that makes them different from one another, and makes some better than others. As someone who has way too many streaming services for one person, I feel qualified to rank each one from worst to best.

8. Peacock

Peacock came late in the game, premiering in 2020, and has not been a favorite of mine. While they have classic NBC comedy shows such as “The Office,” “Parks and Recreation,” “30 Rock,” along with some hit movies, they don’t bring enough to the table to justify paying a monthly subscription (especially when some of their shows can be watched on other platforms you most likely already have). Although they have an option to subscribe for free, you have to endure ads, which no one likes. They offer a plan without ads for \$4.99 a month, but that still won’t entice people to pay for a subpar service that is already available for free.

7. Apple TV Plus

When Apple TV+ was first announced, I knew it was either going to be the best streaming service ever, or the worst one. After using it for a year, I came to the conclusion that it was the most neutral service out there. In terms of their Apple TV+ originals, they have some heavy hitters with Emmy-winning shows like “Ted Lasso” and “The Morning Show,” as well as other shows with big name actors such as “Defending Jacob” starring Chris Evans, and “Dickinson” starring Hailee Steinfeld. Even with this star-studded catalog, Apple TV+ lacks popular shows and movies to generate a large audience. Another downfall of Apple TV+ is their extra channels that allow you to watch shows and movies from other services like Starz, Showtime, and HBO, but that require separate subscriptions. It can be very misleading to those who pay for Apple TV+ and expect to be able watch those other shows for free. I think Apple TV+ should be free for those who own Apple products and paying \$4.99 a month is just another way for Apple to take our money.

6. Paramount Plus

I know that Paramount+ is not high on anyone’s list of best streaming services, but it has a few gems that make it worthy of the number six spot on my list. Paramount has the license to a lot of titles that give viewers enough reason to subscribe. If you loved older MTV reality shows like “The Real World” and “The Challenge,” or if you want to relive your childhood and rewatch “iCarly,” then Paramount+ is the service for you. They also have big movies like “A Quiet Place” (I and II) that make the \$12 a month worth it. Along with their \$12/month plan, they have a \$6/month plan for those who don’t mind ads. Save for revival series like “iCarly” or reunion specials like “Real Word: Homecoming,” they don’t have any really exciting originals. With more original content and a more user-friendly revamp to their app interface, Paramount+ could be great.

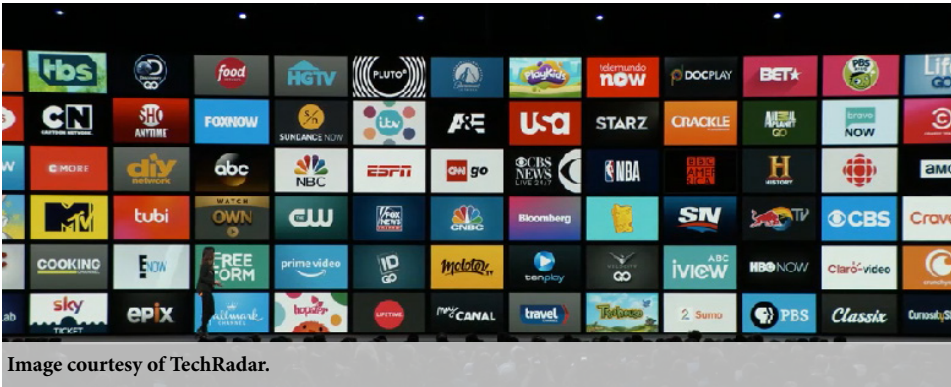


Image courtesy of TechRadar.

With more original content and a more user-friendly revamp to their app interface, Paramount+ could be great.

5. Amazon Prime Video

Amazon Prime Video is the most “non-traditional” streaming service amongst them due to the fact that it didn’t start out as such. A lot of people subscribed to Amazon Prime for the free shipping when ordering from Amazon and the streaming service was just an added bonus. That added bonus however, does come with some enjoyable shows. While other services rely on shows and movies from other places, Prime’s biggest strength is their original shows. Prime original programming such as “Invincible,” “Good Omens,” and the upcoming Lord of the Rings series, and movies like “Being the Ricardos” are the attention grabbers that draw in audiences. The layout of both their app and the website are easy to navigate, although they make it a bit hard to tell what is free to watch with Prime and what isn’t. A number of other shows on Prime are only available to rent. This can be confusing for people who assume everything on there is free to watch with their subscription; the little Prime banner in the corner of the title isn’t enough sometimes. Other than that, Amazon Prime Video is worth checking out if you already have Prime.

4. Hulu

Hulu has been around since 2007, and with each year they continue to get better and better. Although I don’t like ads and will avoid them at all cost, Hulu makes their ad experience bearable with their ads being short. For \$6 a month (\$2 a month for students) you have access to thousands of TV shows and movies. Many will find ads during a movie annoying, but I will argue that Hulu is better for watching TV. You can watch popular sitcoms from networks like ABC, CBS, NBC, and FX or you can keep up with live shows like “The Bachelor.” With their range of old and new shows and their Hulu originals, you will never run out of things to watch. Hulu also has a great interface that allows users to easily navigate TV, movies, news, and individual categories that suit their interests. If you don’t mind paying extra, you can upgrade to their Hulu Live TV plan that allows you to watch TV shows, sports, and news when they air live. Hulu offers affordable plans that suit everyone so your whole family can enjoy all they have to offer.

3. Disney+

I think Disney+ was the first streaming service I was genuinely excited about launching, and taking one look at their selection explains why. Disney+ has something for everyone, making it the ultimate family-friendly choice for streaming services. They split everything they own into five groups: Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, and National Geographic, giving you easy access to what you came there for. Marvel and Star Wars fans can watch all the movies plus the Disney+ original shows that go along with them, ‘90s and early 2000s kids can relive their childhood with Disney Channel original movies, and kids can enjoy all of the newer Disney and Pixar cartoons. With no ads, \$8 a month is a great deal for all they offer. Although Disney+ seems to be the total package, they lack original content that isn’t connected to an existing franchise. They rely on Marvel and Star Wars for original shows and I think they could greatly benefit from a completely-original show on that scale. I only ask Disney to add a “start from beginning” button to make it easier to restart a movie.

2. HBO Max

I believe that HBO Max has the best catalog of any streaming service, but its downfall is its interface. Let’s start with the positives: they have an amazing catalog of movies and shows. All HBO series like “Game of Thrones,” “The Sopranos,” “Succession,” and “Euphoria” are there for our viewing pleasure. Along with HBO shows, they have the majority of DC live-action and animated movies, Studio Ghibli movies, Adult Swim, and Cartoon Network shows. Not to mention the almost never-ending list of hit movies such as The Matrix trilogy, The Lord of the Rings franchise and the Harry Potter franchise. HBO Max was not only able to bring Zack Snyder’s true vision of “Justice League” to screens with “Zack Snyder’s Justice League,” but they also made me very happy by making all seasons of “Doctor Who” available for me to binge-watch again. I could go on and on about the amazing selection of TV and movies they have, but what needs to be addressed is their interface. Navigating HBO Max is difficult for no reason, making you take extra steps to watch what you want. For instance, say I wanted to watch “Insecure” and I clicked on an episode, it would take me to an entirely-different screen where the plot synopsis is instead of playing that episode. Now, say you were halfway through that episode and wanted to start it over again. There is no “play from the beginning” button for that, so you would have to manually rewind it. This wouldn’t be a problem if their rewinding feature wasn’t terrible, but it is super inconvenient and causes you to over-rewind or fast-forward, leaving you fighting with the app to just stop it. If HBO Max could fix these problems, they would be regarded as the best streaming service.

1. Netflix

Netflix is the best streaming service for the simple fact that it was one of the first ones. Netflix has evolved and grown since its creation in 1997, and it has made a name for itself since. Although they keep raising their pricing (now \$15.50 a month), their catalog of both licensed and original titles continue to get better. They continue to have amazing original content like “Stranger Things,” “Daredevil,” “Sex Education,” and reality TV shows like “Too Hot to Handle” that keeps audiences coming back for more. Netflix has even become a streaming service known for pumping out movies such as “Marriage Story,” “Don’t Look Up,” “Power of the Dog,” and “Tick Tick...Boom!” Netflix also holds the crown for best streaming service layout. They make browsing and looking through episodes easy, the fast-forward and rewind functions are easy to control, and they allow you to take titles off of your “continue watching” if it gets too cluttered. Another feature they have that I love is their “play anything” feature, which picks something random for you to watch based on their algorithm. Netflix’s algorithm is almost scarily accurate in predicting what you like to watch, making the browsing experience even better. Save for their annoying autoplay feature that starts playing the selected title even if you don’t want it to, Netflix continues to bring their A-game to the streaming platform wars. Their slate of upcoming movies makes me excited for what they have coming, and more than willing to keep paying their constantly-rising prices.

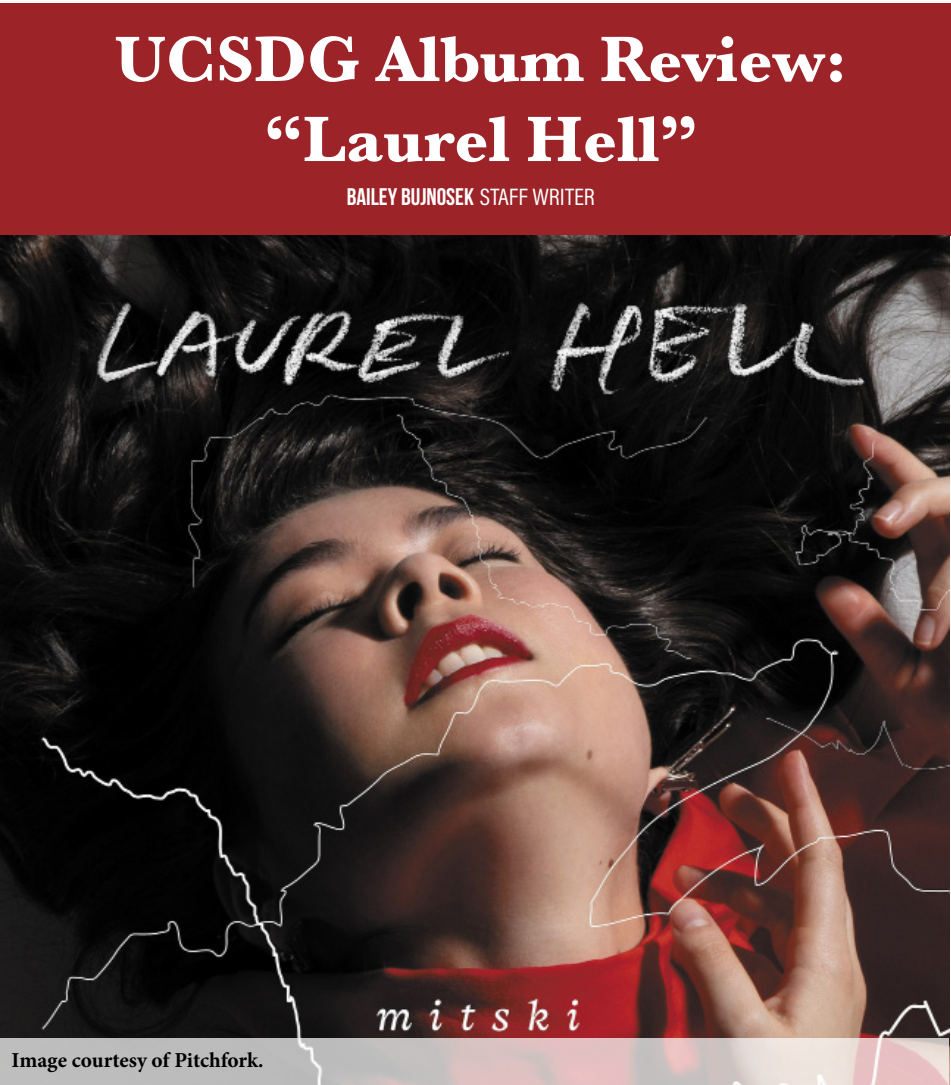


Image courtesy of Pitchfork.

Mitski returns from a two-year hiatus with a moody synth-pop album that isn’t quite sure of its sound, but makes up for it with her signature vulnerable lyricism.

“Laurel Hell” is Mitski’s sixth studio album, though it might not have existed today if she hadn’t been contractually obligated to release another album through her record label, Dead Oceans. She famously took an indefinite hiatus from music and social media in 2019, telling The Guardian in a recent interview, “It almost doesn’t matter what music I write and put out into the world. At the end of the day, I’m a woman in public, allowing myself to be consumed. I put out songs, but really what people are buying is the product that is me.”

Despite this keen awareness of her commercialization — or perhaps, because of it — Mitski puts it all on the page in “Laurel Hell.” Line after line reveals her deepest fears, worries, and regrets. She reflects on her career, most blatantly in the lead single “Working for the Knife.” On it, she croons, “I used to think I would tell stories/but nobody cared for the stories I had about/no good guys.” The song taps into the pain of trying to create when people aren’t receptive to, or are even apathetic to, one’s efforts. It also brings to the forefront the rocky relationship Mitski has with an audience who sees her as an icon for sad girls everywhere without stopping to consider her reluctance to be put on a pedestal.

With an ample mix of subjects, emotions, and sounds, “Laurel Hell” traverses the singer-songwriter’s diverse discography. Far from the grungy vibe of her debut album “Lush” and not quite as graceful as 2018’s heralded “Be The Cowboy,” “Laurel Hell” sees Mitski taking her artistry in a new direction. Retro synth intros and electronic soundscapes lend the album a nostalgic feel. In contrast, toned-down tracks with minimal instrumentation show a more restrained side of the indie pop star. Their sounds unite them to a degree, but there still appear to be two distinct moods on the album — the introspective, haunting one and the fast-paced, vibrant one. Because of this contrast, it’s difficult to declare “Laurel Hell” the cohesive body of work that its masterful predecessor “Be The Cowboy” was.

This could be due to the many changes the album underwent in the three years in which Mitski and longtime collaborator Patrick Hyland experimented with it, eventually landing on an homage to the 80s. Case in point: “The Only Heartbreaker,” which opens with a lifting beat a la “Take On Me” or “Our Lips Are Sealed” — the 2020s, sad-girl version of these songs’ peppy intros. Coming after the wistful “Heat Lightning,” “The Only Heartbreaker” starts the album’s transition from straight-up sad songs to songs that package the same feeling in a brighter, shinier box. There are dips back into melancholic territory in the album’s second half, with the moody “There’s Nothing Left For You” and “I Guess” interrupting their livelier counterparts. It’s not inherently bad to have an inconsistent sound across tracks — an album is a multi-faceted project, after all — but this inconsistency muddles the listening experience as a whole.

Although she fumbles with what she wants the album to be, Mitski retains the skillful lyricism that first catapulted her to fame. There is a depth given to every line, whether it’s describing early-morning musings on “Heat Lightning” or declaring, “Sometimes I think I am free/Until I find I’m back in line again” at the end of the experimental track “Everyone.” Mitski detaches herself from the pains of the past by acknowledging them, staring into the window of memory like it’s the still pond imagined in “I Guess.” By the end of that song, she seems to be thanking her tormentors — be they ex-lovers and former friends or less tangible foes like creative block and unconquerable feelings — for helping her realize her need to get away from them all. How else could she escape the album’s titular “Hell” and search for her slice of heaven?

“That’s Our Lamp” is a strong way to end the album. Beginning with a bouncy electronic beat, the track dives into Mitski’s delightful vocalizations. A sweeping disco pickup takes place in the middle. Drum rolls and a perpetual metal clink carry this lifted mood forward. Mitski’s vocals are strengthened by background sounds and voices woven with her own. “That’s where you loved me,” she reminds, reminisces, reflects, again and again until the song ends. For once, the sentiment is not bitter or sad, but simply stating and even celebrating the place where love once existed. It is proof: love has happened, and it will happen once more. There was a past that wasn’t all bad. There is a future that might be better.

Grade: B+

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SPORTS

CONTACT THE EDITOR
PRAVEEN NAIR
✉ sports@ucsdguardian.org

UPCOMING
UCSD
GAMES

M Basketball	2/15	7PM	vs UC Irvine
W Basketball	2/15	7PM	at UC Irvine
W Basketball	2/17	9PM	at Hawaii
Softball	2/18	7PM	vs Sacramento State
Baseball	2/19	1PM	vs Seattle



Image courtesy of Derrick Tuskan / UC San Diego.

Women’s Water Polo
Splits Saturday Double-
header at Triton
Invitational

BY EMER NOLAN
Staff Writer

The 12th-ranked UC San Diego women’s water polo team saw a mixed bag of results this past weekend on the first day of the Triton Invitational, hosted by the Tritons at Canyonview Aquatic Center. UCSD had not played for two weeks but looked to build on the previous two wins from their most recent performance at the Lancer

Joust. After a promising early win against crosstown rivals No. 18 San Diego State University, the Tritons fell in the afternoon to No. 2 UCLA. The home side was then forced to look to Day 2 of the tournament to make a return to winning form.

UCSD kicked off the weekend with a morning match-up against SDSU that ended 13–10 to the home side. The Aztecs were first to put points on the board just a couple of minutes into the first quarter, but sophomore utility player

Annika Arroyo equalized for the Tritons with an effort from distance that skipped past the goaltender into the back of the net. A successfully-converted penalty shot taken by graduate student center Ciara Franke nabbed the lead for the Tritons, who then followed that up with a short-range goal taken right in front of the net by freshman center Kendall Thomas.

The second quarter began with a powerful shot driven into the net again by Thomas just seconds in to put the Tritons 2 points up, a lead that was again shortened by a quick-response goal from the visitors. Each team grabbed 2 more in the period to end the first half 6–5 to UCSD.

A goal by Franke gave the Tritons back their lead after the visitors pulled even early in the second half, the first of 4 consecutive goals scored by the hosts. While the third period was relatively uneventful, the fourth was lively, with 3 of UCSD’s 5 goals coming from Thomas, whose 5 total goals throughout the game led the hosts that morning. The Tritons spent the last few minutes of the final quarter determinedly defending their lead and it paid off. Although they scored 4 of their own, SDSU was never able to get a strong hold on the game and the morning ended in disappointment for the visitors.

Throughout the game, SDSU was chasing the lead the hosts snatched from them early in the first period, but were unable to pull back ahead at any point

in the game despite equalizing a few minutes into the second half. Although they finished with a relatively narrow lead, the game decided by only 3 points, the morning was controlled by the Tritons and it looked to be a promising start to the weekend for them.

Unfortunately, they were unable to replicate that result in their afternoon tie against UCLA; the 13–6 loss was a less-than-ideal way to head into the second day of the tournament.

The home side began the afternoon positively, carrying their momentum from the morning to put the first points on the board. Franke continued her strong performance from the morning to push a skipped shot past the Bruins keeper early in the first period, then doubled the Tritons’ lead with another goal just a few minutes later. A goal tossed over the home keeper by UCLA’s Molly Renner got the visitors back into the game as the last goal of the first period. After the break, a penalty, again scored by Franke, was the only point for either team in the second quarter, sending the game to half with the Tritons in the lead 3–1.

Despite their promising start, the Tritons completely lost their grip on the game in the second half, conceding 6 goals in the third quarter to allow the invigorated Bruins to flip the home side’s hard-earned 3–1 lead to a 7–5 deficit. A goal each from freshman utility player Lucia Doak, who had also

scored twice in the morning, and junior center Grayson Mix broke up the barrage of attacks on the hosts’ goal, but the Tritons were never able to regain the lead they enjoyed in the first half.

The final period was also high scoring for the visitors, who again put 6 points on the board to widen their lead. The only goal for UCSD, scored by Lucia Doak for her second of the game, broke UCLA’s 3-goal streak, but was followed by another trio of points for the Bruins. Though they doggedly maintained an attacking mindset down to the full-time buzzer, UCSD was limited to the one goal in the final period, the afternoon ending 13–6 in the Bruins’ favor.

It would seem that the halftime pep-talk in the UCLA camp proved exceedingly motivating, as the visitors came out of the gate with an extra determination to wrest back control of the game, and it proved to be too much for the Tritons. Though they put in an impressive shift in the first half, UCSD was unable to keep up with the near-constant assault on their goal and the day ended in disappointment.

After that pair of results on Saturday, UCSD was slated to play UC Davis the next day. They hoped to put this loss against UCLA behind them and get back to their winning ways on Sunday to end the tournament on a high note.

UFC Fight Night Recap: Hermansson vs. Strickland

BY NELSON ESPINAL
Features Editor

Two weeks after UFC 270: Ngannou vs. Gane, the UFC came back with one of their Fight Night cards. These cards serve as a showcase for young talent and veterans alike who want to rise the ranks. Most prospects make their debuts on these cards, eventually making their way up main event slots on Fight Night or on the main card of a pay-per-view (PPV) event. The main event for these showcase Fight Nights feature rank fighters attempting to use the main event slot and parlay it into a title shot or a No. 1 contender fight.

Jack Hermansson and Sean Strickland vied for a spot in the title picture at the middleweight division, with the champion Israel Adesanya fighting Robert Whittaker in the following week. The title picture at middleweight is confusing, with Whittaker and Adesanya already beating most contenders. At No. 2, Marvin Vettori lost to the champion twice already, making a third fight very far away. No. 3 and No. 4 Derrick Brunson and Jarred Cannonier are fighting for a title shot in UFC 271, but they already lost to the champion and Whittaker. This leaves No. 6, Hermansson and No. 7, Strickland providing fresh blood for whoever wins the middleweight crown at UFC 271: Adesanya vs. Whittaker 2.

The Fight Night card also featured a few interesting prospects fighting each other, trying to work their way up from prospect status to contender.

What was at stake?

Sean Strickland and Jack Hermansson entered with winning streaks. Strickland was riding a 7-fight win streak with him building his way up the rankings into the #7 spot. He fought at welterweight years ago, but after a devastating motorcycle accident, he entered middleweight and has been on a run ever since. Now, Strickland, coming off a main event win against Uriah Hall, tried to continue the momentum going into the Joker.

Hermansson came in following a win against one of my favorite prospects — who may never realize his potential — Edmen Shabazyan. In the fight, Hermansson displayed wrestling chops with good ground-and-pound alongside good control on top. Hermansson has constantly been one fight away from the title, losing against top 5 contenders Marvin Vettori and Jarred Cannonier whenever he got the main event slot.

Such disappointments placed a lot of pressure on the Norwegian, especially considering his unwillingness to garner any attention from a part of the MMA community. Jack is a nice guy, hard working, and committed to his dream of becoming champion, but he does little to market himself as a personality. His personality is similar to any average UFC fighter’s desire of becoming champion. To earn that title shot, it takes either a long, impressive resume of wins or a personality that inspires fans.

Strickland’s polarizing appeal created an opportunity for him to step into a title shot. Hermansson probably needed

another win after this one to enter the title picture firmly, given his rollercoaster of contendership.

In the co-main event, Nick Maximov faced Puna Soriano. Maximov trains out of the Nick Diaz Academy in Stockton, California. The Northern California fighter was a credentialed wrestler out of Oregon with a brown belt in jiu jitsu. His alliance with the Diaz brothers makes him a fighter to follow. Soriano, on the other hand, trains out of the same gym as Francis Ngannou, with Xtreme Couture. Soriano won his first two fights in the UFC, notably beating prospect Dusko Tudorovic. Soriano is a power puncher with a good deal of momentum in his favor at the middleweight division. Both Soriano and Maximov entered unranked and with the chance of impressing at the co-main slot.

While these two fights filled out the top of the Fight Night card, the hardcore’s main event featured one of the most promising prospects in the entire UFC; Shavkat Rakhmonov. Rakhmonov faced another prospect, Charleston Harris, not as well-known, but an interesting test nonetheless. Harris packs a mean punch along with a well rounded game as well. While most believers in Rakhmonov felt this fight would end up as a showcase, other experts thought it would be a rough test, not one Rakhmonov or others should simply brush off. A win by either fighter would place them very near the rankings, with Rakhmonov finally fighting a rank fighter and getting tested in a much more serious fashion. Harris

had the chance to also enter the rankings or generate some serious momentum against such an established fighter.

What happened?

Sean Strickland def. Jack Hermansson via split decision (49–46, 47–48, 49–46)

In the first round of the main event, Hermansson peppered Strickland with leg kicks along with a few takedown attempts early on. Strickland defended both attempts very well, getting an underhook and keeping himself balanced. Whenever Sean wanted to hit Jack with a jab, it was open the entire fight. In a close round, Strickland won the round with the jab and the combos as well.

He displayed a good balance of body punches along with targeting the head as well. Throughout all 8 takedowns attempts in the fight, Strickland defended all of them, showcasing a real ability to stuff takedowns at will. The first round was essentially how the rest of the fight played out, with a repeat of failed takedowns and plenty of success for Strickland’s jab. Hermansson was never going to win without taking the fight to the ground; his striking game was just not good enough to

hang with Strickland. Not only can Strickland hit fighters, he can also avoid strikes as well. He defended around 70% of Hermansson’s head strikes in the fight. His range control and defense can provide any fighter with problems, Hermansson especially.

Uncharacteristic of Strickland, he never quite turned it on in the fight, doing enough to win all of the rounds with the jab, but he never traded with Hermansson and looked for a knockout. A ho-hum performance which puts him into the title picture, but not necessarily a title contender.

Nick Maximov def. Punahele Soriano via split decision (28–29, 30–27, 29–28)

In the co-main, Nick Maximov squared off against Puna Soriano. The fight was an interesting style match-up which favored Maximov. Nick has a really good ability to take a punch with his zombie-like chin along with his ability to wrestle and grapple. Soriano has a lot of power and can cause damage for an opponent who likes to stand and trade.

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