

HONOR CODE MAGAZINE

FALL 2023

HONORS ECLIPSED

LAUNCHING INTO NEW GALAXIES





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MEET THE TEAM



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CO-EDITOR IN CHIEF



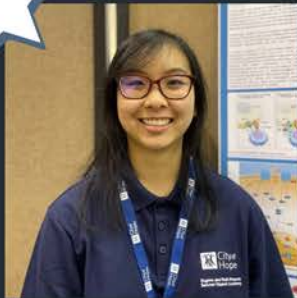
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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

In between the early morning sunrises and the warm evening sunsets, the shadows of each day keep us all on our toes as we all yearn to find our identities, discover our purpose, and make sense of the world around us. In essence, we're prompted to venture into the unexplored parts of our own universes. Alas we stand, starstruck at yet another end of a 365-day journey around the sun. In retrospect, we ponder just how worthwhile this past year has been for each of us.



In this semester's Honor Code issue, we are excited to share how our Honors community has made their journeys around the sun memorable. In selecting the features for this issue, we discovered a universal theme across all stories: amidst the gravity of life's questions and unknowns, each individual exemplified boldness in venturing through the unexplored, seeking to bring hope, encouragement, and enlightenment to themselves and to those around them. Inspired by this philosophy, we present the Fall 2023 issue of the Honor Code - Honors Eclipsed: Launching into New Galaxies. We hope the inspiring stories within this magazine are an authentic portrayal of how the raw beauty of our galaxies depends on the weight of gravity - both literally and metaphorically. May we contemplate the forms of gravity in our own lives that threaten to weigh us down. May we muster the courage to realize that our stories are only made whole when we fuel the gravity within our own lives to turn stardust into stars. In admiring the featured stars of this Honor Code issue, may we be encouraged as we each embark on our own next trips around the sun.

Hannah & Gaskia

NEVER APOLOGIZE FOR
BURNING TOO
BRIGHTLY OR
COLLAPSING INTO
YOURSELF EVERY
NIGHT.. THAT IS HOW
GALAXIES ARE MADE..

-TYLER KENT WHITE



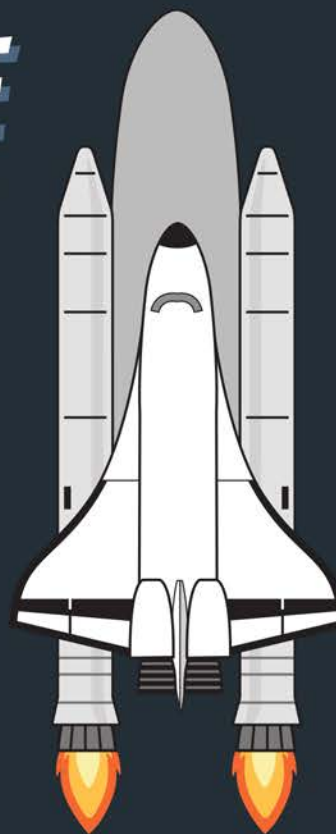
IT'S JUST ROCKET SCIENCE

THE BEACH LAUNCH TEAM WORKS ON BLASTING OFF!



BY CAMILLE WONG

—BEACH LAUNCHING TEAM



At CSULB, when someone mentions BLT, they're not talking about a bacon-lettuce-tomato sandwich; they're referring to the powerhouse that is the Beach Launch Team! Forget about lunch – this BLT is blasting off into the realm of rocketry. Meet Derek Madrid, a fourth-year mechanical engineering student who not only possesses knowledge on designing rockets fueled by energy particles moving at supersonic speeds, but also holds the positions of the Rocket Lab manager and Rocket Club president. Picture this: space engines running on liquid nitrogen, subscale models ensuring safety, and a dynamic mix of mechanical, software, and electrical engineers brought together by a lab formed by Dr. Yoozbashizadeh and Dr. Shankar. At a university where rockets are created by students, Derek takes us behind the scenes, revealing the challenges and teamwork that changed his entire career.

Managing a vibrant student organization of 30-40 members, Derek enables students to explore numerous aerospace projects and work on their senior projects. As a leader, he recognizes that “working hard and achieving very difficult, complex tasks isn’t about putting more effort in... it’s actually about scheduling time appropriately and getting the adequate rest needed to perform and balancing it all.” Derek takes a hands-on approach to mentoring, from showing his mentees the ropes to planning bonding events for the team to build camaraderie. Students of any major and from any university are welcome at the Rocket Lab.

After theoretical calculations are made, the team transfers their work from paper to the desert for practical application. Derek recounts, “we need to go through a rigorous test schedule. Sometimes it involves control testing, which is where we try to break our components and see how and if they fail. We also test our systems, such as our parachute deployment system. When they’re in the sky thousands of feet up, we can have more confidence that they’ll be able to catch our rocket.” The pinnacle of their testing involves

static firing the engine, which is running the engine while it is immobilized. This test measures “how much force it can develop, what temperatures it's running at, if its structure is stable – we just want to know how our engine will perform.”

Dr. Yoozbashizadeh, a driving force behind the BLT, brings a wealth of expertise and knowledge to the aerospace field. His research spans liquid rockets, 3D-printing metals, product development, and additive manufacturing. He and Dr. Shankar co-founded the Rocket Lab in 2017 to allow “students to gain hands-on experience in the design, fabrication, analysis and launching of rockets.” The Rocket Lab supports over 200 students annually and is home to three student rocketry organizations: Beach Launch Team, Long Beach Rocketry, and the Experimental Sounding Rocket Association.

Some of the most exciting discoveries the Rocket Lab has contributed to the aerospace industry are the development of: (1) an affordable static fire test stand to characterize liquid rocket engines for - research, (2) a low-cost and accessible nitrous/gasoline liquid rocket engine for testing subsystems in smaller scale and for universities, and (3) materials for 3D printing liquid rocket engines by adding nano-particles to metal powder. These significant findings have been published in renowned American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) journals.

The awe-inspiring power of the BLT is undeniable. Derek reflects, “I feel very confident about graduating and going into the workforce. I can’t say that anything I’ve accomplished is a result of purely my own effort – it’s a result of the environment I’m in and the people I’ve been able to work with... It’s provided such a good opportunity for me, and that’s the reason why I became the Rocket Lab project manager. I want to preserve the Rocket Lab and the opportunities it brings for all the students who will join after me.” It all started from a single visit at the lab. He remarks, “I didn’t even think that I would get into rocketry until I stopped by here one day. And now I’m a rocket engineer.”



Derek amid work at Amateur Rocketry Test Site Static Fire Attempt on 1/21/23



← **"ESRA AFTER SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH AND RECOVERY OF THE TEAM'S FIRST SOLID ROCKET ON 3/18/23"**



NAVIGATING THROUGH THE COSMIC CHALLENGES OF CROSSING BARRIERS AND CONFRONTING ECONOMIC INJUSTICE

BY CAMILLE WONG

The first few semesters in college are often filled with anticipation, academic planning, and the excitement of joining clubs. However, no one could have predicted the unexpected turn of events that the year 2020 brought – the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. For many, including Jamaican-American Honors student and accounting major Alexis Ferguson, the pandemic brought unexpected challenges. Alexis had initially taken a break from college with plans to return for less than a year until COVID abruptly delayed her plans. During her time having to work multiple customer-service roles in restaurants, Alexis noted that she gained “a more open perspective of how people tend to treat you when they realize that you are working in a position inferior to them. Working in these positions opened my eyes, and made me even more grateful and anxious to get back to school so that I could finish my education.” These experiences would later ignite her passion to view societal issues from both extremes of the economic scale and address this financial gap in her Honors thesis.

The challenges of the pandemic did not halt her ambitions at all; she is a driven student who eagerly explores opportunities in the financial industry. She worked hard to become an intern at both One United Bank, a minority-based institution, and Bank of America in Beverly Hills. Furthermore, she even secured a position as a leasing agent in the asset and wealth management for the real estate sector where she analyzed housing rates.

Her ultimate goal was to secure an internship at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), an international, multi-discipline professional services company that also covers financial services. To achieve this, she collaborated with Beta Alpha Psi, a professional honor society at CSULB focused on business professions, including accounting. Through this program, she secured an internship during an on-campus visit where she was interviewed by a PwC recruiter. At PwC, she gained hands-on experience in evidence gathering and rollovers. PwC emphasizes the importance of networking with other interns and coworkers, fostering a teamwork and communication-driven environment that boosted her confidence to present herself as an accounting professional.

Alexis amalgamated these experiences into a compelling narrative of her academic and professional journey. Inspired by her time working in diverse roles and witnessing socioeconomic disparities, she embarked on an ambitious Honors thesis project. During her research, she observed, “in my local town of Inglewood LA, I’m realizing and seeing all of the gentrification.” This led her to ponder: “What if minorities had equal access and opportunities to the essential building blocks of life? Would minorities not have had to worry about being gentrified and strategically redlined out of our own communities?” The evidence is clear that there are those actively attempting to gerrymander minorities out of South Central LA.



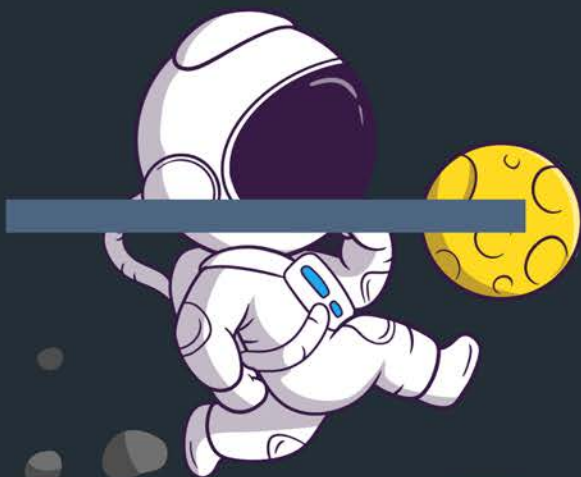
Alexis on a company trip to Universal Studios



With these questions in mind, her project is focused on the generational effects of economic oppression – specifically against minorities. During her research, she discovered a recent case whereby Capital City Bank was accused of redlining Latinxs and African Americans. She found that out of their eleven branches, only one is located in a minority-based area: Crenshaw, LA. Even though they denied the claims of the lawsuit, a thorough investigation conducted by the Department of Justice revealed that they were practicing redlining. Her thesis delves deeper into similar troubling issues, shedding light on the urgent need to combat economic injustice.

Alexus's journey is a testament to the power of resilience and determination. To students who are overwhelmed and need motivation, Alexis imparts this valuable insight: "Just keep showing up – be confident. Be firm, and know exactly

who you are. Know your worth and know your purpose. Realize that you belong there, and you have a lot to contribute – especially, due to your experiences."



Alexis at her trip to Disney World at the end of her internship. "There were plenty of team-building activities, networking opportunities, breakout, and activity rooms. Here, I was in the 'Happy Room,' which was a mini-funhouse. We also had an opportunity to visit the Magic Kingdom!"

REACHING FOR THE STARS

UHPSA PRESIDENT ALANNA HA'S JOURNEY AT CSULB



☆ BY NATHALIE (GRACE) WESTERVELT

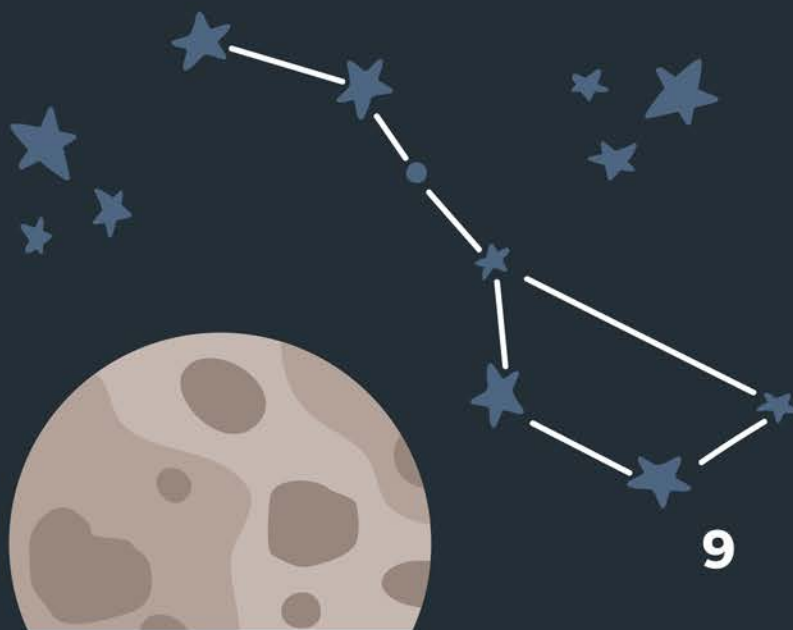
Whether it be priority registration, smaller class sizes, a built-in community, or a structured way to challenge our learning, we have all chosen to apply for the University Honors Program (UHP) for different reasons. UHP Student Association (UHPSA) President Alanna Ha applied for all of these reasons and more. After hearing about priority registration from a friend, Ha was surprised to learn about an Honors program on campus. She was used to taking Advanced Placement courses and pushing herself to the limit academically throughout high school. Her excitement piqued at the opportunity to do the same on a collegiate level, especially with general education classes.

Prompted by this discovery, Ha joined UHP in the second semester of her first year. Though her rise to becoming president on campus was a linear progression, her overall journey through the university hadn't been so straightforward.

Like most of us, Alanna hadn't known what she wanted to do straight from the get-go. After spending time as a pharmacology major, Ha got the opportunity to work at a CVS and saw a day in the life of a pharmacist. She soon

found that pharmacology involved fewer personal interactions than she'd originally thought, pushing her to reconsider her career pathway. Ha is currently studying Molecular Cell Biology, hoping to study dermatology. Thinking towards the future, she is currently shadowing a dermatologist. This has given her a better understanding of the daily responsibilities of a dermatologist and the significant role they play in their patients' lives.

On top of her career experience, Ha's diverse honors coursework highlights the interdisciplinary study that the Honors program encourages. Her favorite honors class she has taken thus far is a Romance German Russian Language (RGR) course in which she learned about cities like Berlin and Paris. That course inspired her to take a similar course the following semester that focused on Paris. Although Ha might be used to STEM classes, the broad options given to her through the UHP pushed her to think outside her comfort zone and expand her knowledge.

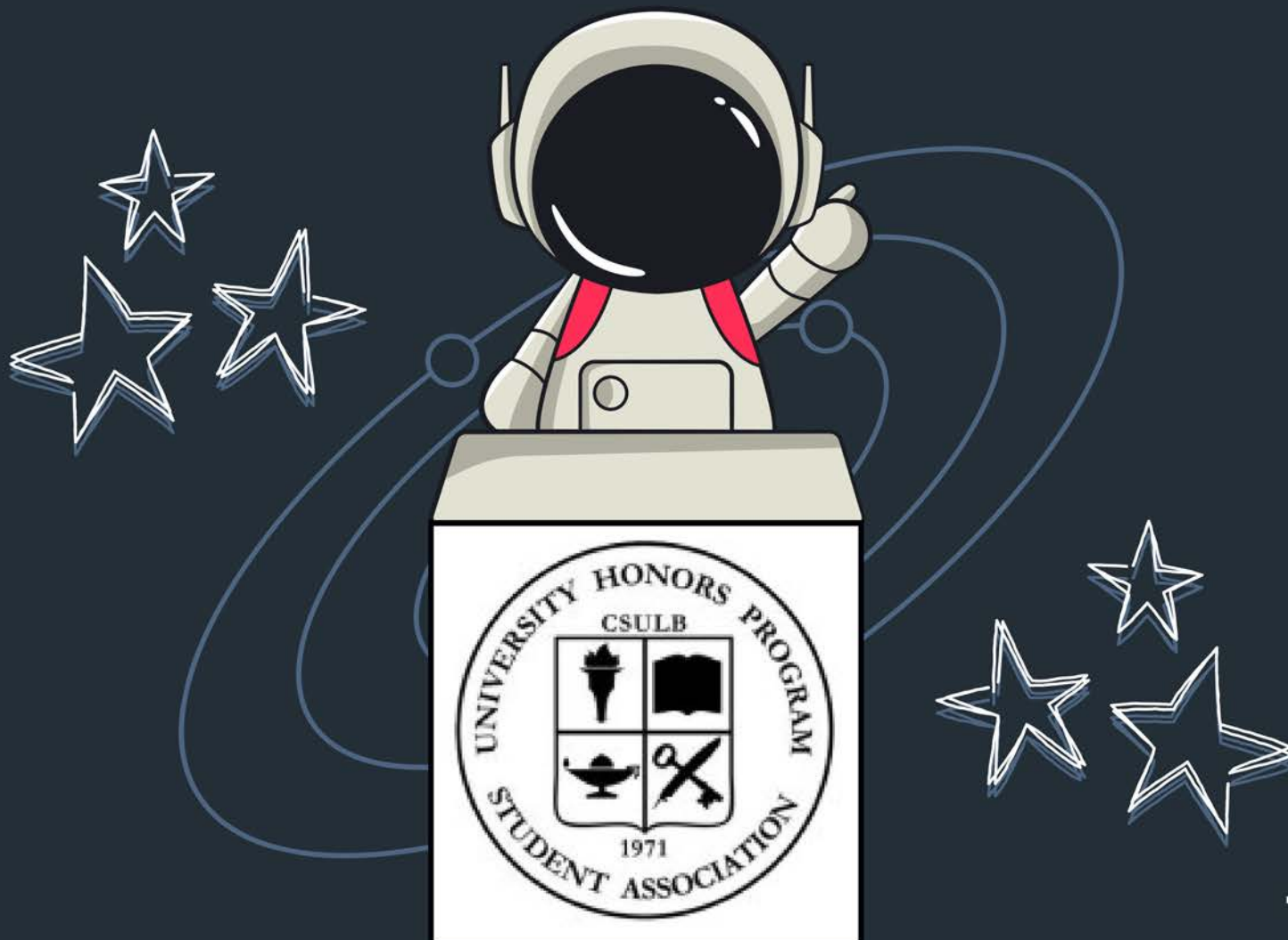


Challenging herself is second nature to her and it's part of why Ha chose to apply to become the newest UHPSA President. In the 2022-2023 school year, she served on the UHPSA board as the Social Media Representative. After a year in that position, Ha left wanting more. She saw how the President that year had the opportunity to interact on a more personal level with the program advisors. After she considered remaining in the social media role, Ha shares, "But then I just thought that I wanted to step up and have a challenge." So Ha decided to apply for President.

In a typical week as the President, Ha meets with advisors and her fellow board members. She frequently works with Dr. Cherell Johnson-Davis, the Associate Director for Leadership and Engagement in UHP. After having an in-depth planning meeting with Dr. Johnson-Davis, Ha relays the information to the board members and they start organizing events.

The UHPSA's main role is to foster connections between honors students on campus. "We organize activities for honors students, [including] for educational purposes such as having guest speakers, and for social and fun activities, we would like to create a bond and community with these events," Ha explains. Some activities they set up this past fall included a bowling night in the USU and a Halloween movie night. Aside from being fun, the events also help fulfill the new honors badge requirements.

Overall, Alanna Ha is incredibly grateful for the opportunities that she's been given through UHPSA and the overall UHP. Her involvement has helped her find various opportunities as well as make connections with other students and faculty. "I'm... grateful for how [the program can] give me so many great opportunities," Ha shared. Ha's journey highlights the academic diversity and excellence that the UHP encourages to enrich the lives and learning of students.



FINDING SPACE FOR YOU



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AT CSULB

BY NATHALIE (GRACE) WESTERVELT

Honors students are known to be driven, diverse, and dedicated to their education. With all of the benefits provided to us, it's easy to overfill our schedules. Steven Pham, a scholar from Western Michigan University, writes, "Honors students benefit from smaller class sizes and more personalized attention from instructors, but also potentially face a greater workload, more rigorous competition from their peers, and other various stressors that may influence the onset of mental illness" (Pham, 2017). Pham emphasizes a phenomenon I have found to be true in my own life: with higher expectations comes more stress, both internally and externally.

Mental illness can seem like an intimidating and permanent label. Even if you don't identify with having a mental illness, tending to your mental health is just as important as caring for your physical health. Thankfully, CSULB has resources students can use to care for their mental health. Here are a few options to consider if you're feeling overwhelmed.

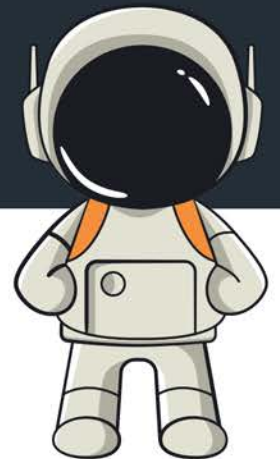
The Counseling and Psychological Services Center (CAPS): CAPS is a fantastic resource on campus for students to receive short-term counseling services. Free for registered students, they help with career, individual, and group counseling. Whether it be final assignments piling up or impostor syndrome kicking in, CAPS is used to helping students cope with the emotional challenges that come at a university level. To get help from CAPS, you can visit www.csulb.edu/student-affairs/counseling-and-psychological-services, go to their office on campus in Brotman Hall (Room 226), or call them at 562-985-4001.

University Honors Program (UHP) Advisors: This is a resource you may not expect to help in reducing stress; help often comes in the form of an expert. Reducing the uncertainty that students feel when scheduling and completing their courses is what UHP advisors are here for. Honors student Emily Jasso shared about her positive experiences with her advisor. "I feel that the UHP has been good at reminding me to give myself grace, especially when I met with my UHP Advisor... she reminded me that college isn't a race." Jasso used her counselor's advice to pause and care for herself, learning to complete her resources without being overwhelmed or burning out. In addition to her lifestyle advice, Honors advisors can help students navigate course selection, completion, degree paths, and their overall experience at CSULB. If interested in meeting with an Honors advisor, students can schedule meetings through the Beach Connect icon on the Single Sign-On (SSO) portal. There is also virtual



CAPS

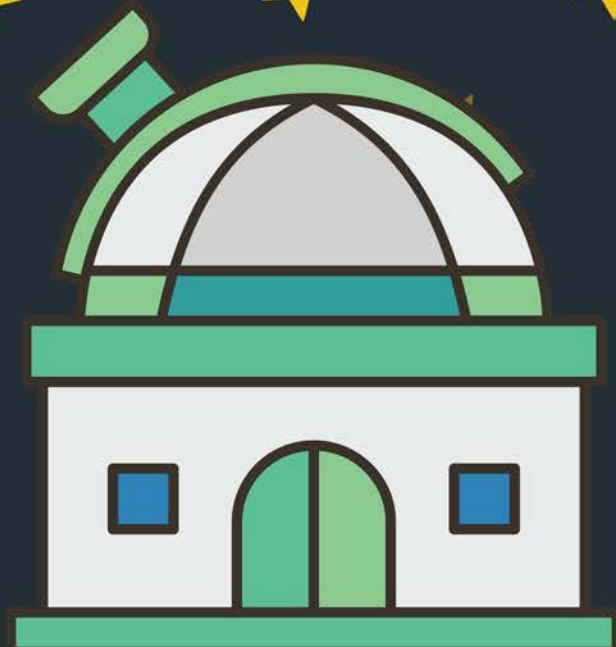
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY LONG BEACH



drop-in advising available. Visit www.csulb.edu/university-honors/honors-advising for the current weekly schedule.

CSULB Community Clinic: The clinic has been “the setting for affordable counseling, academic intervention, and psychoeducational assessment services for over 50 years” (CSULB Community Clinic). The program is an opportunity to train students in the Counseling Psychology Master’s program and offers affordable therapy to students and community members. Visiting the clinic does not need to take up a lot of time to positively impact your life. These sessions are a great opportunity to talk to someone in your life about issues without feeling guilty about burdening them. Counseling appointments are available through registration on their website and are fifteen dollars a session for adults and youths. For a more immediate, intense care option, the Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation for Students (CARES) team is on campus to help. If you’re worried about a friend or classmate, they can be referred to CARES to get help. Don’t be afraid to speak up if you see something that worries you. To contact the CARES staff, you may go to their virtual drop-in office hours, refer a student by phone, email CARES@csulb.edu, or visit www.csulb.edu/student-affairs/cares.

These resources aren’t the only things in the community that can help you. Beyond these options, you can always lean on family and friends for support and spend time doing things you love. Purdue Global also suggests eating well, exercising, participating in a hobby, and positive thinking to help college students manage stress (Purdue Global, 2020). The main thing to remember is that stress affects us all, but it’s manageable. Take a moment to reflect on how you could improve your mental health for a happier, healthier you!



THE STAR THAT WENT BEYOND

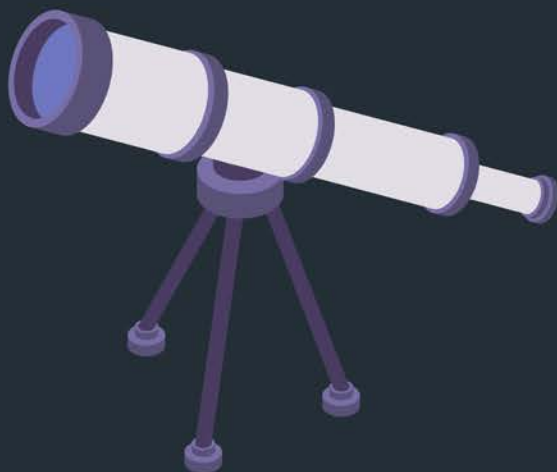


JONATHAN AGUILAR


BY TONI ENSLEY

The term non-traditional student is a broad definition for those who don't pursue the "normal" college route of beginning college immediately after graduating high school. Going outside the norm poses its challenges for these students, but it also shows their perseverance in navigating the challenging environment of college later down the road. Honors student Jonathan Aguilar is a prime example of a nontraditional student who has experienced abundant success at CSULB. Majoring in biochemistry, this soon-to-be graduate did not begin college straight out of high school, unlike many of his peers. Instead, with support from his loved ones, he pursued his desire of entering the Marines in 2017, in which he served for four years. During his service, he found his passion for medicine, which ultimately led him to begin his academic journey here at Cal State Long Beach.

Before making his way to CSULB for his undergraduate degree, he attended a few community colleges while in the Marines. Most recently, he attended Santa Monica College, in which he ended his Marine contract in 2020 to become a full-time college student. The transition from working full-time to the life of a full time college student was difficult, yet he used his time management skills, and go-getter mentality learned over his time in the Marines to counter these challenges. Leaving his past was a bittersweet experience, as he missed the sense of comradery that the Marines provided. Fortunately, he found a similar sense of community attending CSULB with the friends he has made after transferring.

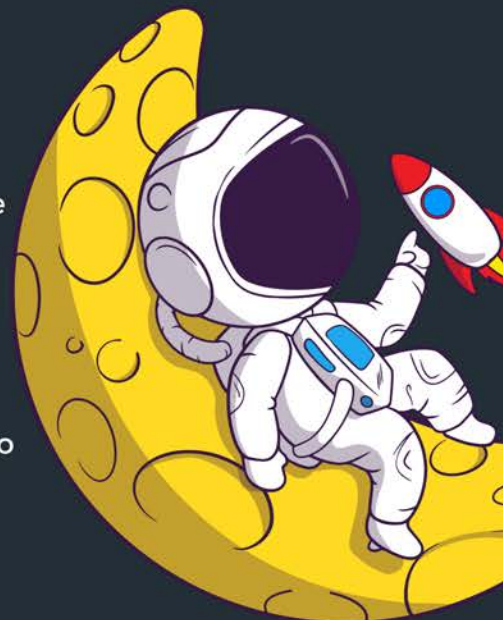


Jonathan helping out at a local clinic



The application process to CSULB was a bit more difficult as he required all his transcript information from his previous community college courses. Through communicating with his academic advisors, he was able to curb the rocky transition and is on track to graduate Spring 2024. This semester, Jonathan is diligently tackling 19 units in order to graduate on time. His everyday life as a college student consists of rigorous studying, as this semester's hefty workload has required him to focus primarily on school.

His future plans involve him graduating next semester and applying to medical school. In efforts to stay involved in his community he ideally wants to get into Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, a community outreach-oriented university. Familiar with the health disparities in his hometown of Compton, he aspires to get involved and advocate for his community's struggles. For those coming from similar backgrounds, he encourages them to connect with advisors as they are intent on helping students succeed. Most importantly, he states, "It's okay to feel like you are left behind from the rest of your peers, but everyone is on their own track. Just ... focus on you. Do the best you can while you are in your classes, and enjoy it."



FUTURE PLANS

***JONATHAN WOULD
LIKE TO STAY LOCAL
AND PLANS TO
START HIS MEDICAL
DEGREE WHILE
STAYING INVOLVED
IN HIS COMMUNITY
AND GIVING BACK
TO THE SCHOOL***

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page featuring a white star at the top, with a dotted line trailing down and curving to the left, ending in a smaller star. There are also some smaller white stars scattered around.

ILLUSTRATING THE WONDERS OF THE GALAXIES



BY TONI ENSLEY



The Honors Program has recently expanded the bounds of the senior thesis to encourage creative projects, and Honors student Maddie Aub has taken the reins on this opportunity. Majoring in illustration, Maddie has a love for writing children's books and telling stories through visual art. One of her most admired children's authors, Shel Silverstein, has been an inspiration for her senior thesis project. Maddie has taken on the challenge of both designing and writing her own children's book based on a message she feels is symbolic of her life. The main theme



MADDIE AUB



of her book is a representation of how to persist when life knocks one down and the process of rediscovering oneself. This storyline will be catered to younger audiences, with the focal point of simple yet meaningful illustrations to drive the story.

This concept was not an idea that sprouted easily, but rather was a long process of filtering through numerous story lines and ideas. During an interview with Maddie, the challenges surrounding her project were discussed. In fact, her creative project was altered only a week before the time of her interview, showing just how delicate and dynamic of a process it is. Over time, she has become a perfectionist, motivated by the dedication to excel in her passion of book illustration.



One of the guidelines of the senior thesis process is to obtain a mentor to aid in the making of the project. Maddie has received support from her project mentors, for which she



stated how having their support has helped to keep her on track and accountable for getting her project done. She has also taken advice from her previous classes stating, "Don't just do the assignment, do something that can be a part of your personal project." Following that advice, she has made her project to promote the start of her career in illustration.

She envisions the future of her finished product to be printed and published in time to be showcased at an upcoming children's book convention. By presenting at the convention, she hopes it will help establish her name into the illustration industry. The project is currently still in the works, but she aspires for the book to be independently sold in bookstores. Hard at work, Maddie advises other Honors student artists who are thinking of pursuing a creative senior thesis project to do something they find interesting, and work to find the people who will support them for that.

Keep on the lookout for Maddie's book soon to enter the children's section of bookstores. You can find her at @artofmaddieaub on Instagram. You can also check out her website, ArtofMaddieAub.com, and purchase her works as well as follow along with her illustration journey.



CREATIVE SUBMISSIONS



FROM THE UHP

COMMUNITY



FOREVER 21



by Chiara Aleman

Perfume department still finds a way to my nose
And lingers when I listen to the ring of my mom's phone
My red eyes raised and puffed as mom nods
Her ear to her phone
Your mom is on the phone with mine
The call ends
"We need to pick out a dress for her"
Don't worry my friend, we've played dress up before

A Forever 21 dress against the white velvet bed
A wet n wild eyeliner you stole when your parents weren't looking
You'll have wings either way
Those scuffed Doc Martens you wore when you ran
And ran
And ran
All the way to Riverside
Those Box dye black locks against porcelain doll cheeks
Red Mac lipstick your mom let you have, and will let you keep

Always a walk away from the mall
Sipping coffee from the same straw
This walk I now take alone
To the register to buy you your last dress
And my first black one
Don't worry my friend, we've played dress up before
Let's play it again.

IN MEMORY OF SONYA ISABELLA BLUSH
"We were girls together"

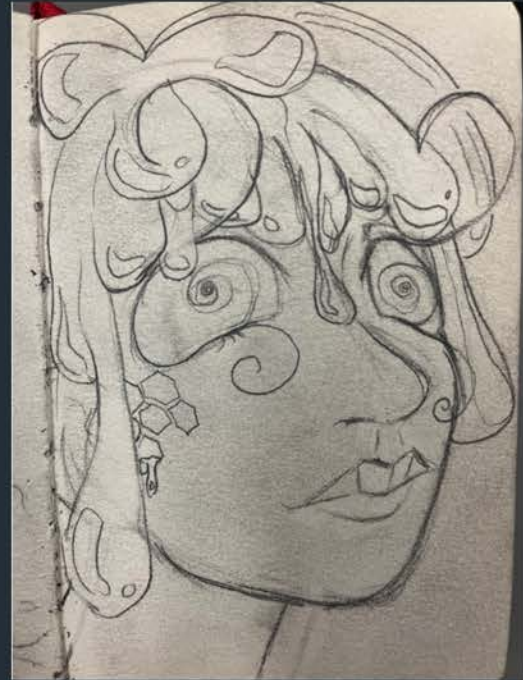


PENCIL PRACTICE QUEST

by Febronia Genidy



My inspiration for the drawing practice that I participated in from September to the start of November was to draw as good as actual artists drawing beautiful human and character figures, wanting to have that same detail in my art one day.



This is a brief collection of anatomy practice, figure drawing and sketches over a two month period. To go with the collection of art is a short write up of my experience doing this project.



LIVE BLUE CRAB

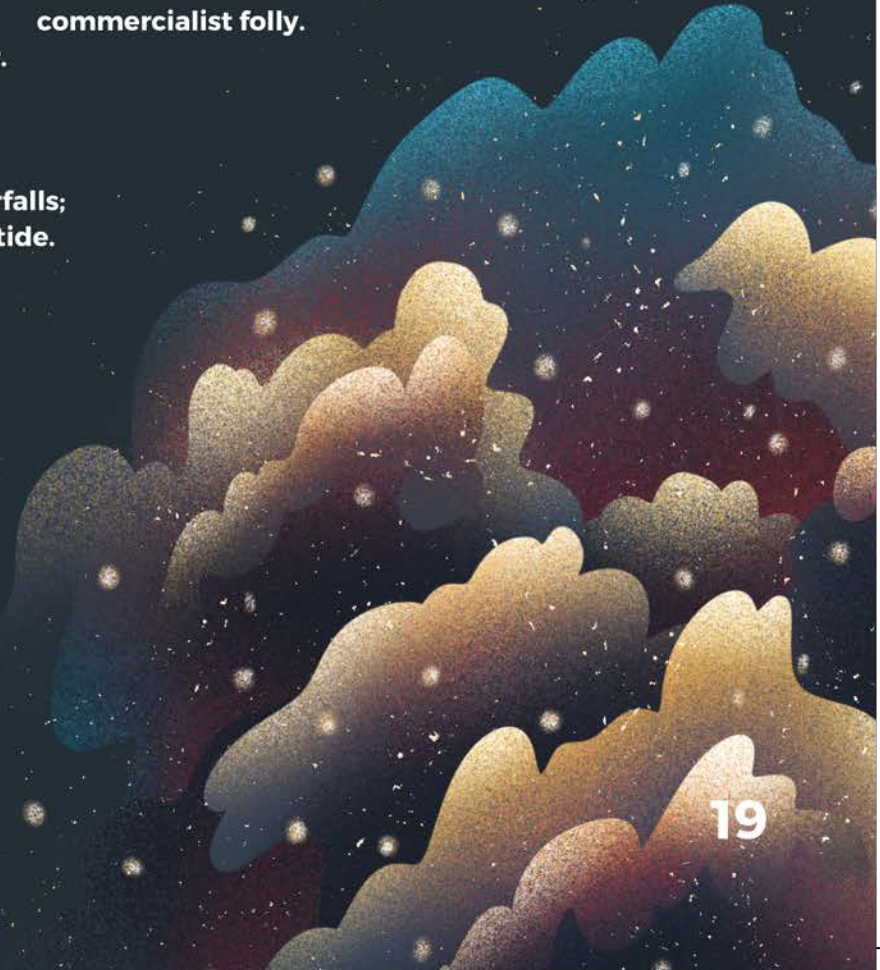
by Matilda Iern

She wears a carapace like a clam,
tinted blue and green like the sea
whose ever-shifting tides and shores
her ancestors have called a humble home
for god knows how many millennia.
Crustaceans like her predate prehistory.
Her stalk eyes peer out of an armor
as smooth and streamlined as it can be,
eroded like a stone treading the currents
swirling through the waves of the Atlantic.
Evolution has been kind to her people.

She walks on seven finned legs,
tottering over bumpy terrain
with the steady pace of a seastar.
The barbs and knots of her claws
glistened white, blue, and gold
like a nostalgic beachside horizon.
At home, under the sun's golden reflection
rippling atop the wilds of the great ocean,
her mighty claws might've contended with
the likewise jagged jaws of a ravenous eel.
At home, under the sand's bronze surface
stretching below a tidal pool's silence,
her wily claws would've caught and cut open
the similarly hardy helmet of a hapless oyster.
To us lumbering apes, she is just a crab—
an aquatic foodstuff, a simpleton shellfish—
but to the animal kingdom, she is victory;
like salmon fighting eagles, bears, and waterfalls;
like sea turtles fighting gulls, sharks, and the tide.
She is a triumph for our planet's ecosystem.

I wonder what the journey was like;
the one that landed her here, under
the cold sunbeams of stark, polished,
bone-white fluorescent lights.
She finds herself buried in the chatter
tumbling around a shop's seafood aisle—
a static noise sharper and rougher
than the soft rumbling roars of the sea.
She walks on shifting, writhing ground—
ground that waves claws and stalk eyes
back at her, as it tries not to dry out
in the ever-shifting, yet still stagnant, air.

Maybe she met a net, kicking up dust, debris
and trouble as it crawled along the seafloor.
Maybe she saw a crab pot, singing sweet
siren melodies, as it beckoned into its maw.
She was dragged up from the depths,
on her way to a hell on a boat's cold, hard hull.
She was pulled down to rest in a crate,
on her way to sleepless travels on the bed of a truck.
Finally, light flooded in when the lid was thrown
open
and she was thrown overboard into the drought
of a barren wasteland of a table, a plot
by creatures that stand eldritch to her.
Does she realize that the metallic spoonbill beak
that pecks at her dull, dirt-like carapace
is a pair of tongs, wielded by bored children
who laugh in the face of evolution's handiwork?
They are beings desensitized to seeing the ocean's
treasures
dug up and displayed like a museum's gift shop
bounty.
It doesn't matter that she's been muddied by a
lifetime of battles;
she has been felled not by fair fate, but by
commercialist folly.



KAFKA'S ACADEMIA

by Matilda Iem

Academia is an idealist's religion
Seeking the salvation of a million
Minds discontented and desensitized.
Academia seeks to craft a world comprised
Of creative, open minds prime to unite,
To lead, to question, to build a saving light.

Yet I regret to say the academia I was made
To worship dutifully for over a decade
Neglected its students' creative senses
In favor of erecting chain link fences
Plastered with plaques and placards
Painting innovations as disobedient hazards.

The reality of the realist's academia
Is that it instills an anxious mania
For the enforcement of obligated obedience—
Unblinking, unquestioning compliance—
In the face of relentless assignments
And infuriating grading requirements.

In this scholarly system, the minds of tomorrow
Are oversaturated with insecurities and sorrow
From a world that dictates their worth is tied
To whether or not their sovereignty has died.
Products of this process lack individuality,
Cut with stencils for low-level functionality.

Our academia is a Kafkaesque industry,
Infamous for superficial, sleazy monotony.
Rather than foster and teach, it discourages;
Rather than build and heal, it ravages
The confidences of countless youths
Shackled to desks, detentions, and false truths.



**Academia is an idealist's religion,
Heralded with the hope and imagination
That there could be a world meant
To foster the thought to invent
An antidote to the world's many poisons,
So that the world may befit future generations.**

**In the end, this dissonance is a great, disappointing tragedy;
A tragedy outdone only by a widespread, callous, highbrow laxity
At times when a student dares to claim that today's measurements—
The system's favorite concrete, standardized judgements—
Are little else but restrictive, counterproductive heresies
To the freethinking ideals of intellectual visionaries.**

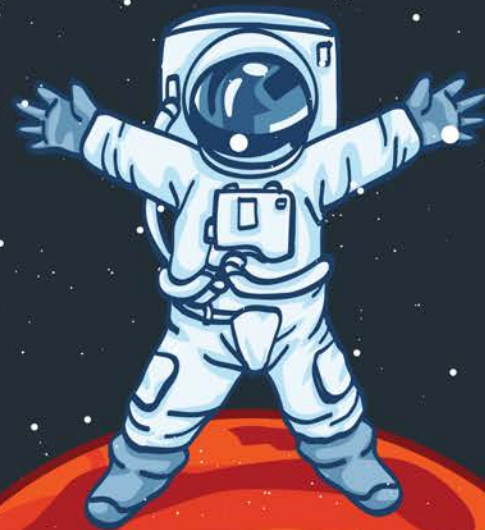




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