

HONOR CODE MAGAZINE

FALL 2025



Academic Excellence

Student Success

Cultural Engagement

Table of CONTENTS

Meet the Honor Code Team 03-04

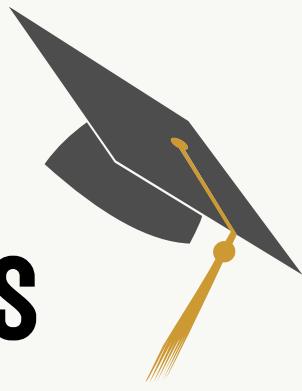
**A Message from our
Leadership Team 05-07**

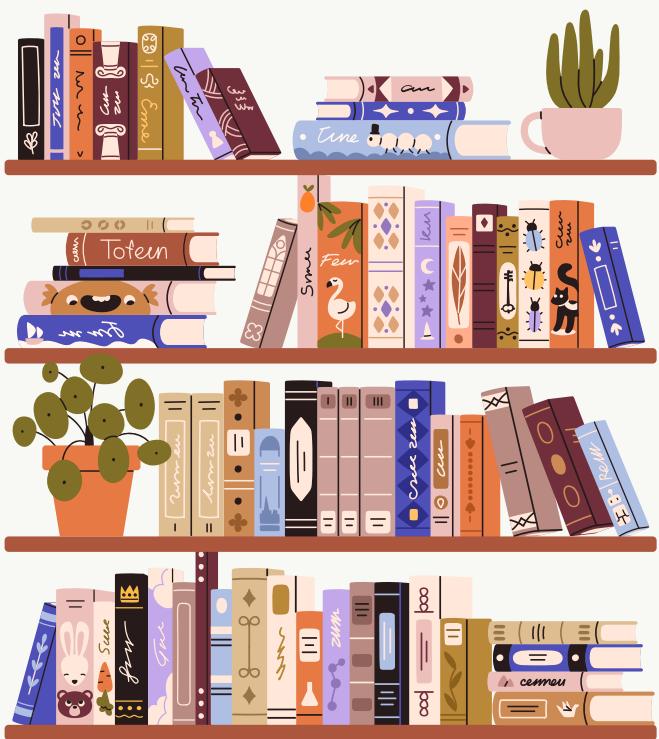
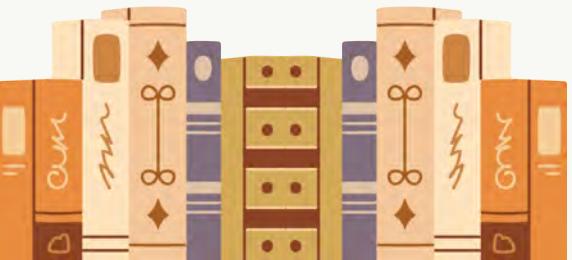
**Zine-Making Workshop:
Pride in Honors 08-11**

**Un Mes Para Millones:
Latine Heritage Month &
Latine in Honors 12-15**

**Finding Home Between
Legal Lines 16-19**

**Java with Jones:
Getting to Know The
Beach's Interim
President 20-23**





**Los Cerritos: Making
Yourself at Home is an** **24-26**
Honor

**Thou Must Live, Lose, and
Know – AEASP Internship** **27-30**
Retrospective

Hot Pot for Thanksgiving **31**

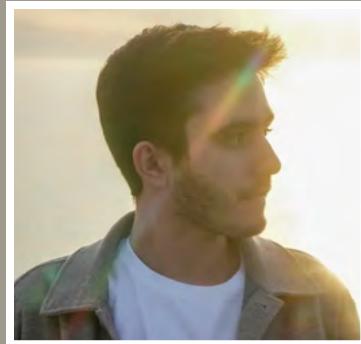
Color to the Bone **32**



MEET THE PRINT TEAM



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



SHAWN MARTINEZ
PRINT DESIGNER



MATILDA IEM
SENIOR EDITOR



JOSEPHINE NGUYEN
COPY EDITOR



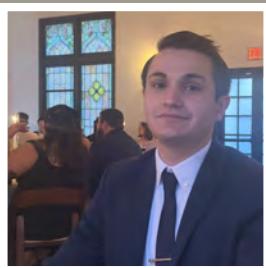
LEYLA CRAIL
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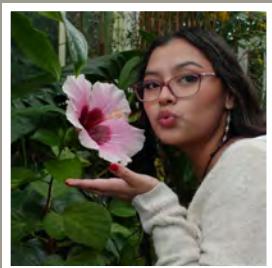
MARTINA
BRAJANOVSKA
PHOTOGRAPHER



AMELIA GUZMAN-
ANGUIANO
STAFF WRITER



JAYDEN
SANDSTROM
STAFF WRITER



ELAINE RIVERA
STAFF WRITER



KEANU HUA
STAFF WRITER

MEET THE MEDIA TEAM



ILIANA GUERENA
CONTENT EDITOR-
IN-CHIEF



JASLEEN PRADA
CONTENT CO-EDITOR-
IN-CHIEF



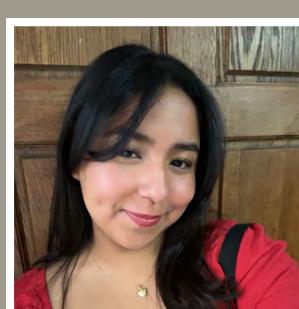
CLAIRE AGUILAR
CONTENT EDITOR



AALIYAH CRUZ
PHOTOGRAPHER



LIZETTE
NAJERA-PEREZ
CONTENT CREATOR



DARA MORENO
CONTENT CREATOR



ANNAREE PHATH
CONTENT CREATOR

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Community is a heartbeat. Healthy communities come alive when its people are bonded with one another, in solidarity with one another, and at home with one another. These connections form the beating heart of the collective. They are essential to nurturing and sustaining groups in various locations and over long periods of time.

But what happens when the lifelines of delight, care, and peace are disrupted? When conflict enters and threatens to destroy the previous harmony? Do communities crumble, or do we build new ones because of shared conflict?

This edition explores how we define community within Honors, as well as its formation and sustainment during difficult times. As institutional turmoil and the rapidly-changing political climate negatively impact students at California State University, Long Beach, Honors students have banded together to create new and unique collectives rooted in culture, identity, and the pursuit of academia; they also continue the legacy of and evolve existing groups. This issue reveals the labor of Honors students as they engage in acts of solidarity, art, research, and more in order to cultivate community during conflict.

We hope you enjoy this issue, dear reader, and consider where you can locate and develop community in your own life as you read along.

-Darya Jafarinejad

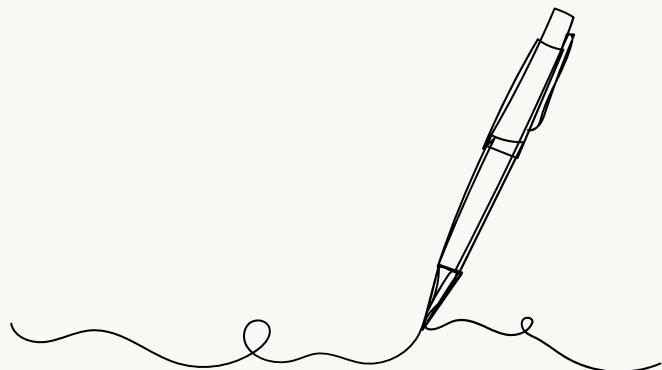


A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINT DESIGNER

This semester's edition of the Honor Code Magazine has been a true joy to design. We wanted to encapsulate the community we have on our wonderful campus and believe we did just that. From dorm life to the social life on campus, this magazine aims to highlight the inclusive and caring community we've cultivated in our University. I want to thank our very talented group of writers as well as our Senior Editor and our Editor in Chief, as the team made a wonderful magazine this semester. An incredible edition to our publications history, one that highlights honor student life and our honors community.

With this being my third year a part of the Honor Code Publication, I am very proud to continue informing and contributing to the honors community at the Beach.

-Shawn Martinez



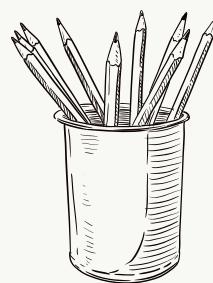
A MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR EDITOR

This issue marks my first semester working with the Print edition of the Honor Code Magazine. Prior to this, I helped manage the Online portion of the magazine.

Although I inevitably needed time to adjust to the different workflow and schedule, I found the job of being co-editor rather familiar to my prior role. I find it fulfilling to be able to engage with various student perspectives through their writing, since it serves as a more permanent and carefully-composed record of one's perspective than verbal speech. Literature and literacy are both valuable societal tools that can be pivotal in shaping our futures as individuals and a collective. Therefore, it's fitting that this Fall issue's theme is creating home and community.

Even though the phrase “unprecedented times” has gotten a little worn out these past 5 years, I hope that one of the biggest morals readers take away from these stories is that it takes a village to raise a village. The University Honors Program is built brick by brick by the effort of faculty and students alike, and individual demographics and ideas are essential elements of the discussion around continually improving the Program.

-Matilda Iem



Zine-Making Workshop: Pride in Honors

By Amelia Guzman-Anguiano

To be known is to be loved. OUTober, or alternatively LGBTQ+ History Month, facilitates an opportunity to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and foster understanding on university campuses nationwide. As Pride Month is historically observed in June, OUTober is meant to celebrate queer and trans students during the academic year. Understanding of and empathy for LGBTQ+ struggles necessitates more than a mention; it requires acknowledgment and willingness to change at a societal level. Today, OUTober events are essential to maintain proper and accurate representation of Pride at CSULB.

On October 16, 2025, the University Honors Program Student Association (UHPSA) hosted their Zine-Making Workshop at the Honors Center, inviting students to learn about the history behind zines and create their own. The event celebrated Pride, identity, and community in Honors, where everyone is welcomed. Annaree Phath, a UHPSA Member At-Large, shared that “Zines drew [UHPSA’s] attention because of their historical background being intertwined with [advocacy] and [connection] in the queer community, plus its outlet for creativity.”



PARTICIPANT OF THE ZINE-MAKING WORKSHOP SHARING PART OF THEIR WORK

Organizers from UHPSA presented a brief overview on the history of zines and their role in self expression. The term zine comes from “fanzine”, which refers to self-published science fiction magazines in the 1930s. Half a century later, the publications rose in popularity when punk music followers embraced zines as “part of their do-it-yourself [DIY] aesthetic.” Radway’s 2011 article, “Zines, Half-Lives, and Afterlives: On the Temporalities of Social and Political Change,” claims that zines fit perfectly with “punk’s defiant response to the commercialism of mainstream society.”



Naturally, zines became an instrument for advocacy. Underrepresented, particularly queer and trans, communities had the chance to speak their mind with little interference from a higher power and to share their thoughts with those willing to listen. Zines were not mass-produced, but rather handmade and traded amongst these communities. With the rise of the digital era, zines became more accessible and their subjects became increasingly diverse. Specifically, LGBTQ+ individuals began to express how other facets of their identities shaped their queer experiences. Talks of intersectionality, or how the various aspects of their lives led to unique challenges and privileges within the LGBTQ+ community, inspired others to speak out as well. The ongoing discussion continued to redefine their identities and promoted the development of causes to align themselves with.

The last phase of the Honors zine-making event involved students making their own zine. Here, students were encouraged to write about what they were interested in, regardless of how minor the topic may seem to them at first. This brainstorming can bring to light one's values and distinguish which lived experiences they can reflect on to create the nuanced perspective they wish to approach from. The beauty of creation can be found in the personalization and authenticity of the end result.

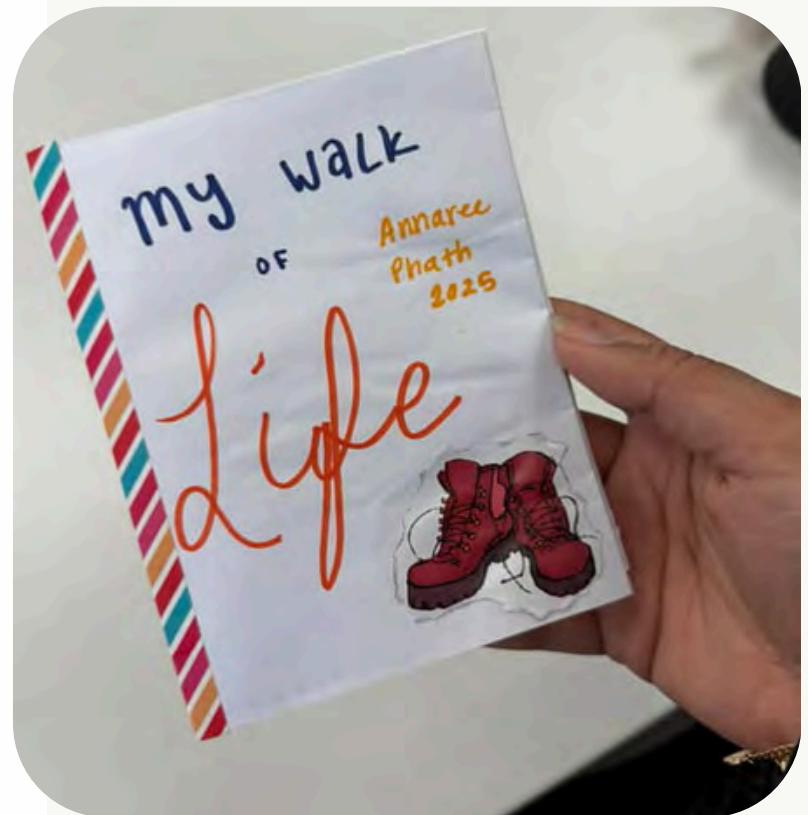
As Phath mentions, “the only step given to [her] and the other participants was how to fold up a blank piece of paper to form the booklet. After that, [they] had a beautiful opportunity to use the supplies provided by UHPSA to create a zine about anything [they] wanted.” The structure of the workshop fostered conversation between diverse groups, where students could share quick, personal feedback on ideas amongst themselves.

Societal improvement begins with open-mindedness and an understanding that it happens with the help of others. Listening to and comprehending information and experiences from people with different backgrounds and outlooks from us permits personal and behavioral growth. This is a transferable skill, one essential to unlearning unwarranted prejudice in all paths of life, that the Zine-Making Workshop hoped to stimulate in participants.

Phath stressed the importance of finding “comfort in similarity and unity in diversity, to truly be free to express our pride and identities.” It is important to find purpose outside of oneself, to advocate for a community beyond those who can immediately benefit them.



To create a welcoming environment in the spaces we occupy, we must acknowledge that security is not necessarily found in conformity. For instance, Honors affinity groups have emerged to better cater to minorities' needs and desires in university. In a recent meeting, Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi American (APIDA) in Honors invited all students to discuss what they feel is lacking in UHP and what steps can be taken to achieve accurate representation, even if those steps are not traditional of higher education institutions. Adopting the belief that every aspect of one's identity is a strength and motivating others to do the same makes the University Honors Program (UHP), and our wider communities, diverse spaces that are accepting and open to dialogue. To that end, the Zine-Making Workshop helped to bring out the numerous identities an Honors student can have. In UHP, many students often prioritize their "academic" identity in order to succeed during their time at CSULB.



THE COVER OF ANNAREE PHATH'S ZINE, WHERE SHE DETAILS A TIMELINE OF HER LIFE.

The Zine-Making Workshop encouraged students to learn about how queer and trans perseverance pushed for self expression and to tap into their “creative” side through self reflection on their own lived experiences. This resulted in a diverse range of zine topics, including artificial intelligence, crocheting, the phases of life, the beauty of flowers, and more. The students I spoke with found that zines were an accessible and simple way to convey the features of their identities they may have previously found hard to communicate, even if they didn’t think of themselves as “creative”. For LGBTQ+ Honors students, these projects can be an opportunity to express themselves freely and embrace the flexibility that community and Pride allows. Connections are far from simple and can be strengthened when one is honest with themselves and advocates for their truth.



STUDENTS MAKING ZINES IN THE HONORS LOUNGE



Un Mes Para Millones: Latine Heritage Month & Latine in Honors

By Elaine Rivera

California State University, Long Beach, is widely recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), giving students of color a space to excel for decades. It is crucial to acknowledge the stories that comprise HSIs, especially with the ongoing concerns regarding federal support that can potentially set back the progress that has been made since the 1960s in terms of Latine participation in college. Long Beach and its surrounding cities are also under attack by the ongoing ICE raids, leaving students anxious for their families and undocumented peers.

Latine students have a distinct identity within Honors. Their presence means that it is more than possible to succeed despite a government that is built against them.

Johanna Castañeda, a Mexican-American transfer student and member of the University Honors Program (UHP), shares her feelings of uncertainty in the face of the current political climate. In particular, she expresses her unease over the potential changes to FAFSA and HSI funding, for herself and for future generations to come. Lack of funding can prove to be a great obstacle, especially for students that may need help with affording college.



Johanna and her mother



These contentions speak to the history of Latine students in higher education, including Honors, and how they have always had to work twice as hard for the same recognition as their peers. For Latino men in particular, whose presence in higher education continues to dwindle, the push to become breadwinners straight out of high school is another barrier between students and long-term commitment. These processes, both historical and current, are exactly why Latine Heritage Month exists.

Latine Heritage Month initially started out as a week-long celebration, introduced as a result of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. During President H.W. Bush's administration, the celebration was extended into a month more than ten years after its initial introduction. Latine Heritage Month is observed from September 15 to October 15, and celebrates the impact of Hispanic and Latine communities on academic, professional, and social spaces in the United States.

Even these dates are significant. September 15 is the date that many Central American countries gained their independence—including El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. September 16 is Mexican Independence Day. This month is a means of separating our identities from colonialism, and looking back on how far we have come, while acknowledging the work that still needs to be done.

In UHP, Latine Heritage Month serves as a unifier for the Honors community. As Abigail Ramos, an Honors fourth-year Psychology major, puts it, “We come from different countries, experiences, and identities, yet we’re connected through shared values of family, resilience, and love for our culture. To me, it means celebrating our differences as strengths and learning from one another.”

During the month of September, the Honors Center hosted many events to honor the Latine Community.



The Latine Film Fest, hosted by UHPSA and Dr. Jose Miguel Palacios, Assistant Professor of Cinematic Arts, invited nuanced discussion about several short films, many covering traditionally taboo topics. The 1997 short film “Why Cybraceros?” depicts the irony of a migrant labor program in the 1940s, which hoped to capitalize on Mexican labor, yet rejected the laborer themselves. These creative endeavors bring to light the issues stemming from intersectionality that are frequently overlooked in Latine households, and reinforce that awareness is the first step towards facilitating change.



Professor Palacios leads a discussion with students at the Latine Film Fest

The Conchas & Community event, led by the Latine in Honors affinity group, helped students create connections outside of the classroom. Participants could bond over common childhood experiences while enjoying conchas, a traditional Hispanic pastry.



Carmen Cruz Castellanos, an Honors first-year accounting major, shares how the “close-knit” nature of the culture shaped her perspective on helping others and “[gravitating] towards a community that is understanding, kind, and helpful.” These events not only highlighted the significance of sharing one’s story, but also strengthened the presence of Latine students in Honors.

For many Latine first-generation students, representation in Honors means showing their blue-collar parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins that their sacrifices are worth it.

In Castañeda’s case, she has to be the example she never had. Her family typically aims for certificates or licenses, and many of her relatives could not finish college because they had to help their family by working or taking care of kids. She admits that she envies folks with resources that are out of reach for her. Participating in UHP has helped her break down some of that jealousy through meeting other students with similar circumstances.

Seeing other Latine students reaching for the stars within the Honors program “makes [her] want to work harder—to become something of [herself]”. If they can do it, she can do it too. So what does this say about how we approach our academics?

Being in UHP breaks down stereotypes that Latine folks are inherently uneducated. Politicians in legislation are threatened by their presence in the workforce, by their degrees, and by their drive to lead communities. Latine presence in universities, especially in their Honors departments, is inherently political, and, in the wake of immigrants and citizens being taken into custody by ICE, it is all the more profound that Latine students finish school and stand by their people.



One of many anti-ICE flyers posted around CSULB



Mia Gonzalez, an Honors third-year International business major, expresses, “Education is something no one can take away from you, and I believe in using it to uplift others and fight for what you believe in.”

In the future, Latine Heritage Month can be celebrated in other ways in Honors. To focus on academic excellence, events highlighting extracurricular opportunities for disadvantaged students or honoring outstanding Latine scholars could be a fresh method to celebrate the Latine populace in Honors. Moreover, Cruz Castellanos mentions an appreciation for the cultural dance Folklorico and her wish to see a potential collaboration between Honors and Grupo Folklorico Mexica.

Higher education is a crossroads of equal parts uncertainty and possibility. Castañeda urges us Latine Honors students to be gentle with ourselves, but to never forget the love for our roots. Ramos captures a widespread sentiment among Latinos, vocalizing, “Being Hispanic fills me with pride, and if I had the choice, I would choose to be Hispanic in every lifetime.”

Finding Home Between Legal Lines

By Jayden Sandstrom

As a first-gen student, Brenda Esquivias, a senior in the University Honors Program (UHP), dreamed of pursuing a college education to overcome socioeconomic barriers, but also felt pressured to do so.

When it came time to apply for FAFSA, she leaned heavily on her counselor. There wasn't anyone at home she could turn to for help. It was the same throughout school, where she often had to figure things out on her own. "Even though I was the middle child, I was always treated like an adult," she said. "Since my parents didn't speak English, I was the one helping my siblings with their school work."

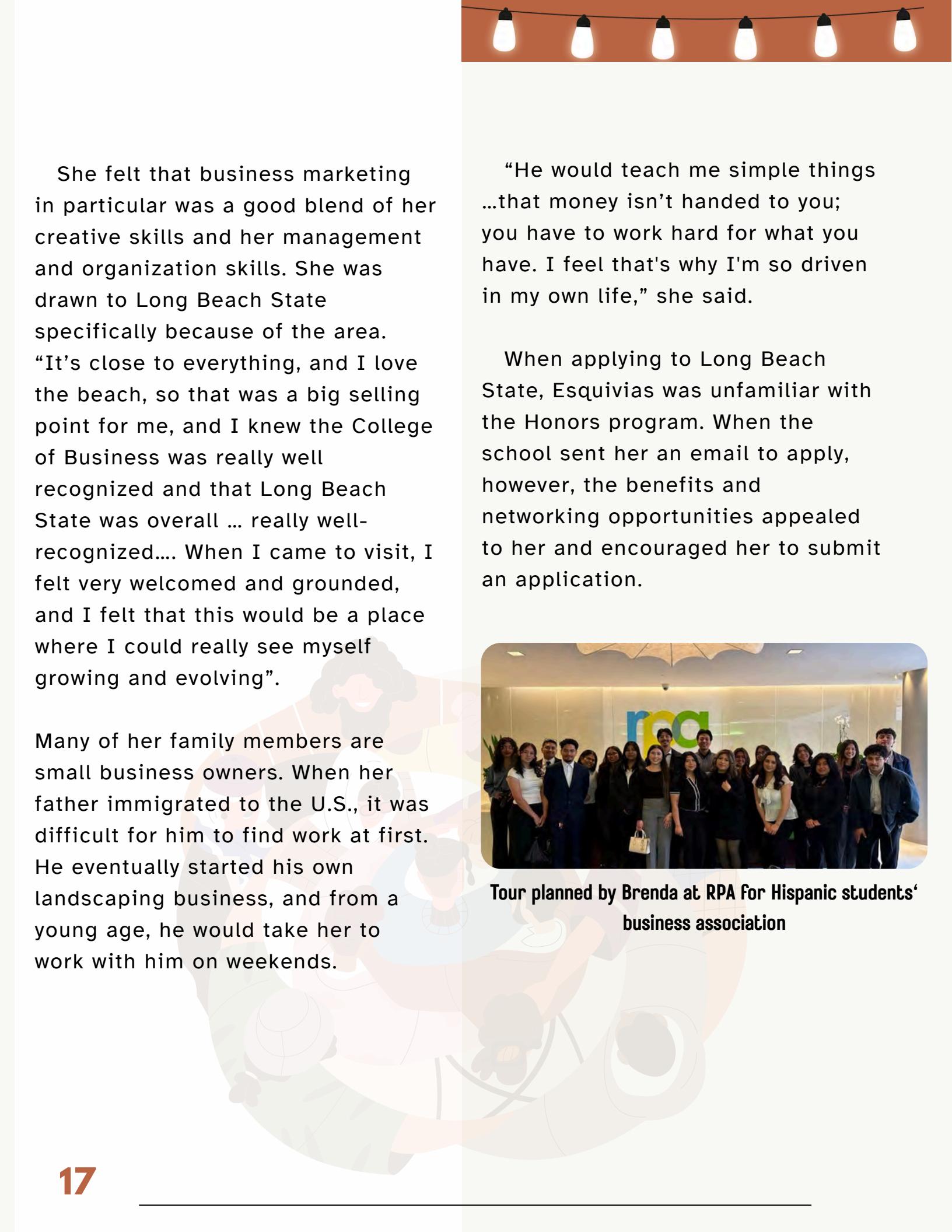
When Esquivias began applying to colleges, she already had a strong résumé.

She was active in extracurriculars, serving as Associated Student Body vice president, playing on the basketball team, and participating in her school's Criminal Justice Academy.

Throughout high school, she explored a wide range of interests, which eventually led her to a career and technical education program that offered electives in specialized fields. Esquivias chose a business course, where she was introduced to finance, accounting, and marketing subjects that would go on to shape her academic direction in the years that followed.

Esquivias graduated as her school's valedictorian with a 4.5 GPA, the highest in her class. She believes that all of these experiences and extracurriculars laid the foundation for her acceptance into UHP and for earning the presidential scholarship.

Loving the prior business-oriented opportunities she had in high school, Esquivias decided to apply to Long Beach State as a business major.



She felt that business marketing in particular was a good blend of her creative skills and her management and organization skills. She was drawn to Long Beach State specifically because of the area. “It’s close to everything, and I love the beach, so that was a big selling point for me, and I knew the College of Business was really well recognized and that Long Beach State was overall ... really well-recognized.... When I came to visit, I felt very welcomed and grounded, and I felt that this would be a place where I could really see myself growing and evolving”.

Many of her family members are small business owners. When her father immigrated to the U.S., it was difficult for him to find work at first. He eventually started his own landscaping business, and from a young age, he would take her to work with him on weekends.

“He would teach me simple things ...that money isn’t handed to you; you have to work hard for what you have. I feel that’s why I’m so driven in my own life,” she said.

When applying to Long Beach State, Esquivias was unfamiliar with the Honors program. When the school sent her an email to apply, however, the benefits and networking opportunities appealed to her and encouraged her to submit an application.



Tour planned by Brenda at RPA for Hispanic students' business association



Not long after she applied to the Honors program, Esquivias learned that she had received the Presidential Scholarship. The scholarship covered her housing and tuition. This made a major difference since moving away from home would have been a significant financial burden. Because of this, she was able to pursue many opportunities on campus without worrying about financial hardships.

During her time at Long Beach State, Esquivias served on the board of the Hispanic Student Business Association as the corporate director. In this position, she helped organize and lead tours and events, including a corporate connection event that featured guest speakers from various business professions such as finance, marketing, and accounting.



Brenda Reciving a Certificate of Appreciation

Esquivias is also a member of the American Marketing Association and joined ASI as an associate justice this year.

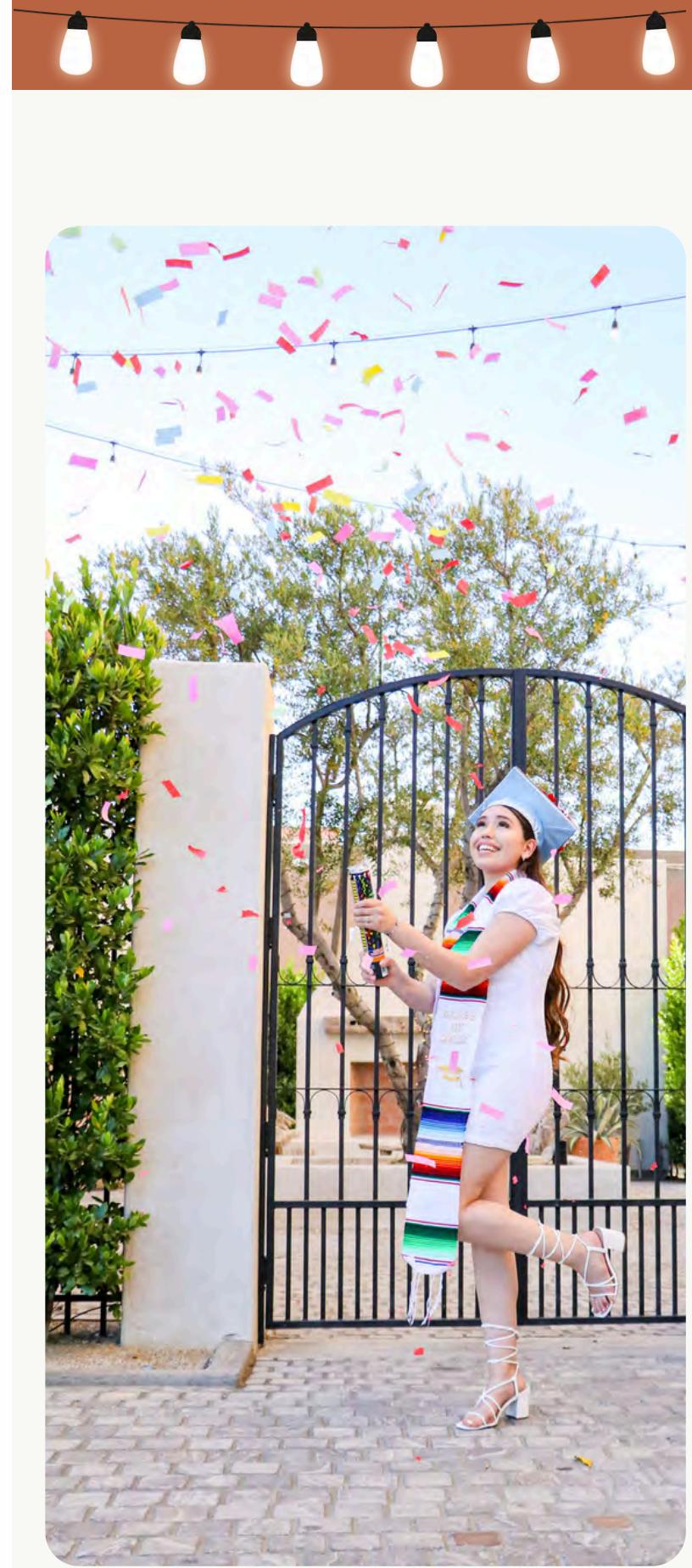
Beyond campus, Esquivias has gained professional experience through multiple internships. She previously worked as an account and social media management intern at Agency 241, as well as a campaign manager for K9HS. She is now interning in the office of a state assembly member, where she's learning the process behind state legislation while applying her marketing skills to improve community outreach and support public service initiatives

While Esquivias has a passion for marketing and for business, she also aspires to be an estate planning lawyer. She hopes to work in marketing and then apply to law school in the fall of 2026. She feels that marketing has prepared her well for law school by sharpening her critical thinking skills, helping her become more outspoken, and a better communicator overall.

Esquivias also shared that the summer she spent assisting with estate planning, working on wills and testaments, gave her a strong sense of purpose. She hopes to continue in that field and eventually start her own law firm, where her skills as a marketing major will be crucial to her success.

Esquivias said the University Honors Program has played a major role in preparing her for her future goals. She has attended several professional workshops hosted by the program and found the honors advisors especially helpful. However, she says the best part has been the people she's met through UHP.

"In college, it's hard to meet like-minded people sometimes," she said. "The honors program connected me with students who really enjoy school and are ambitious." Esquivias is grateful for UHP and the presidential scholarship, which has allowed her to earn her degree debt-free. She hopes to carry the same spirit of ambition and gratitude into the next chapter of her life.



Brenda at her high school graduation

Java with Jones: Getting to Know The Beach's Interim President

By Matilda Iem

It's easy to feel unheard as a college student, with your educational journey seemingly controlled by faceless forces inaccessible behind bureaucratic red tape. It's precisely why the UHP hosts an annual coffee and conversation event where Honors students can engage directly with our campus' current captain. It's a useful opportunity for connection, lending space for students to air concerns or seek advice. Last September, the University Honors Program hosted its latest edition — Java with Jones.



For this fall semester, fostering dialogue between the administration and the student population is especially important.

Recent developments have made it harder for students to manage frustration due to exacerbation of issues, such as limited accessibility to resources. According to the Vice President of Admissions and Enrollment Management in Susan L. Jacobs' article titled "CSULB Student Enrollment for Fall 2025 Climbs to Record Levels", our campus faces an unprecedented incoming undergraduate enrollment of 11,300. This means that a total student body of 42,355 is currently crowding parking lots, walkways, and class shopping carts right as ASI's Future U officially shuts down the historic University Student Union for a massive renovation estimated to last until 2028.

Simultaneously, the retirement of former CSULB President Jane Close Conoley has led to interim President Andrew Jones landing on our shores. While his successor brought experience in collegiate administration, Jones brings a lawyer's perspective, having served as a lawyer for the entire CSU system for over 25 years.

As a part of the CSU General Counsel, Jones managed cases surrounding labor, finance, and academic affairs in order to protect the rights of students and faculty alike.

Even though he's been away from Cal State Long Beach for a while, Jones says he still carries great pride in our campus as his alma mater of 1990 and inspiration for his career. In fact, Jones' appreciation for the campus pushed him to delay his retirement plans at the offer of becoming interim president. At Java with Jones, he used his background and passion to lead the discussion.



Interim President Andrew Jones speaks with a crowd of people

By his own admission, Jones didn't arrive with any specific plans prepared — especially due to the short notice of his appointment. However, he has been monitoring the federal government as they size up higher education and its funding. Jones champions higher education as a vital societal tool that teaches people to be both adaptable and active in an ever-changing world. As such, Jones states that his overall goal as acting president is to protect our campus' educational freedom and preserve our identity as a space that allows for civil debate and free discussion. As someone who's visited all 23 CSU campuses, Jones attests that CSULB is unique not just in its coastal location and fair weather, but most importantly in its diverse student populace. This diversity is an essential strength; it's the heart of our welcoming and caring community, which continues to stand beyond the shadows cast by conflicts.

Jones asserts that the most important aspect of leadership is the power of honesty, because it lays the foundation for the kind of trust that holds a team together and moves us forward. He argued that every good leader needs to be able

to put aside insecurities and ideas about superiority, and recognize that they stand on equal ground with their peers. This concept was modeled by Jones in his conversation at the Honors Lounge through his honesty about being new to the campus. No leader works in a vacuum, as our acting captain put it. Notably, Jones claims to have as much faith in the campus as he does in the people working on its grounds; having met those involved in the project, he has stated that he is optimistic that the USU renovation will proceed right on schedule, even with expectations around construction delays.

When asked about his own educational journey, Jones painted a portrait of his years as a first-generation undergraduate student pursuing a business major, initially unsure of where that would lead him. He recalls experimenting with a few different subjects and opportunities before settling on studying law.

Although he says he gained lots of experience from working with ASI, he ultimately attributes his inspiration to the support from one outspoken professor, who encouraged him to become a lawyer. After college, Jones went on to grow discontent with working in a law firm. He felt he simply didn't have a purpose at a place that focused on profits over tangible change. Thus, he followed his passion out the doors and into the position of being a CSU lawyer for the sake of preserving higher education. Now, after fighting the good fight for nearly three decades, he admits that his only regrets from his university days were not challenging his comfort zone more often.

Therefore, taking risks and getting involved is precisely what he encourages today's students to do. Jones reasons that college is the perfect time and place to learn, where students have plentiful leeway to make mistakes and start anew.



It would be nothing short of regretful if one missed out on the involvement opportunities and experiences available across campus, from the University Honors Program to the various clubs on campus. Even a single connection could be the perfect catalyst for personal change.

Jones' ultimate wisdom for incoming freshmen — those new to the school just like him — is simple: let your interests and passions be your compass. Though he relents that money is a vital factor, he asserts that it should never be where one lets their career and contentment plateau. He is adamant that earnestly being your own person will cut through stormy job markets and economic uncertainty.

All that potential begins here at The Beach, and interim President Andrew Jones is here for the year to guide it. He urges us to embrace discomfort as a part of life and the seeds to growth. As Jones assures, "The water's fine, you just have to jump in!"



Interim President Andrew Jones smiles for his portrait.



Los Cerritos: Making Yourself at Home is an Honor

By Martina Brajanovska



Pathway out of the Honors House

The University Honors Program is more than just advanced education; it is a community that is built upon the hard work of its students. The Honors House at CSULB is designed for connecting students who strive for academic excellence by fostering a welcoming community and sense of belonging.

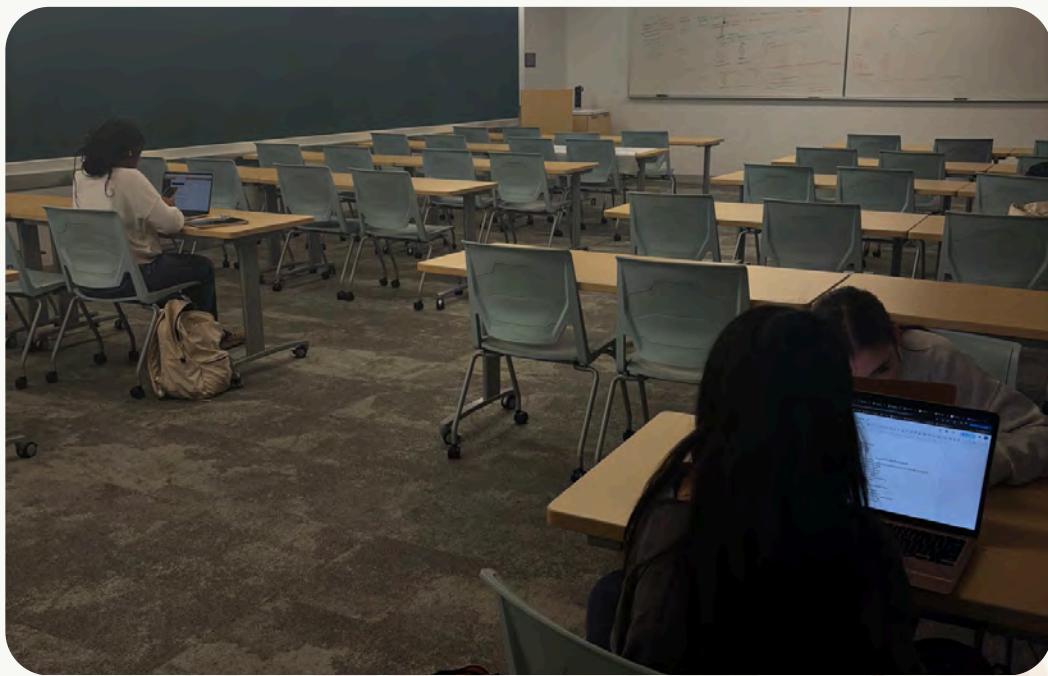
Multiple students gave their opinion on their experience in the Honors House so far.

Hannah Sanjuan, a second year student, explained that, “I lived in Los Alamitos before, so it’s pretty similar to Los Cerritos, just based on structure.” Hannah’s response shows the comfort that she experiences in the Honors House. Sanjuan was then asked how living in the Honors House has helped her adjust to college life at CSULB.

She responded with “I enjoy going to the classroom because it helps me to focus, like I’m in a classroom setting. Seeing other students just focusing on their work kind of influences me as I try to work hard.” Hannah’s insight on living in the Honors House exemplifies what the Honors community strives for: working hard.



**Hannah Sanjuan,
Second Year Honors Student**



Los Cerritos Honors Classroom

Alexa Hernandez, a second year Business major, concurred, stating that “Being able to use shared study places has really helped me feel a part of the community in the honors dorms. Seeing everyone focus on their own work but also being around other students really makes me feel that everybody is so focused.” Living in the Honors House has allowed students like Sanjuan and Hernandez to focus on their studies and progress towards achieving their goals.

“There hasn’t been one specific event that has made me feel welcomed, but seeing my friends from the hallway around campus or in the dining hall makes me feel like I am a part of a small family,” Hernandez described.



Alexa Hernandez, Second Year, Business Management Major

Through close relationships that are built within the dorms, students are able to feel that they are a part of a family.

Students are not only brought together through connection between themselves, but also through student leaders.

Residential Assistants play a large role in making the dorms feel like a home away from home. By creating a comfortable environment and offering support to students, RA's are able to contribute to a safe environment.

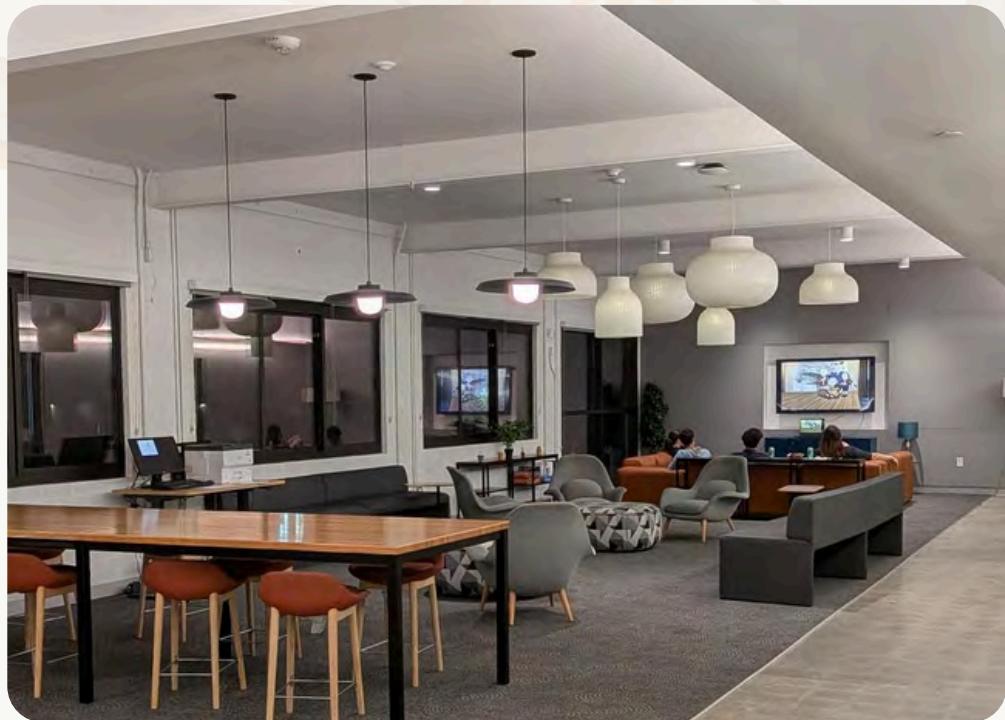
Manha Hasan, a fourth year Health Science major, stated, "My RA always texts our group chat to check in on us and help us with anything that we need help with. Everyone in our building helps push us to reach our goals, it really keeps me motivated."

Not just the community, but the Residential Assistants alone help keep the Honors House focused and encouraged to aim high.



**Manha Hasan, Fourth Year,
Health Science Major**

The Honors House has evidently created an environment where students are comfortable to grow and evolve in their personal and academic journeys. Through building connections within the house, students are able to build their comfort and feel more reassured to branch out and succeed in their goals.



Honors House Common Room Area

THOU MUST LIVE, LOSE, AND KNOW

Retrospective of AEASP Internship

By Keanu Hua

Summer break – a time rife with opportunities. Whether it be Research Experiences for Undergrads (REUs), summer courses, or internships, there's a choice among research and work experience, learning, and, of course, networking.

The American Economic Association Summer Program, or AEASP for short, is a fully-funded economics program combining all of the above at the illustrious Howard University in Washington D.C.. I juggled 12 units of coursework and an internship, listening to and connecting with the research and stories of academic professors and business or government economists. I became a part of a community of 40 ambitious students from all across the United States and Canada, from all walks of life. Highlights included a visit to the Federal Reserve and an hours-long conversation with Nobel Prize winner Dr. David Card.

It was truly an unforgettable experience. There were sleepless nights and difficult hours of deciphering arcane mathematics and code – once with several of us in one room, under a storm and a tornado warning.

At the end, we all presented our work, being either an internship or our own research task we completed throughout the summer. My project was with the Congressional Budget Office (CBO): with increasing partisanship in today's society, the CBO was interested in determining the most politically-contentious topics to find where they could best target their writing. With more than 30,000 unique searches, estimating bias and creating categories would not have been feasible nor desirable by hand, and so I learned and employed natural language processing packages in Python to do so, creating a product that CBO groups have continued to find interest in even after my departure.

My cohort all sought to use economics for some sort of wider meaning, which for me, meant unrecognized narratives, being willing and able to notice and question the way we talk about things such as community college and economic loss and stagnation. But times are changing.

AEASP, since its establishment in 1974, has been a DEI initiative. According to Robert Schultz and Anna Stansbury's 2022 working paper, Socioeconomic Diversity of Economics PhDs, economics is, statistically speaking, one of the most privileged and least diverse fields. When you count recent economics PhD graduates born in the US, no other field has as small of a percentage of PhD graduates coming from less-than-college parents, and no other field has as large of a percentage coming from PhD parents. Likewise, no other field has as small a proportion of underrepresented minorities, and economics has the smallest share of PhD graduates who trace their undergraduates to public institutions.

These monumental socioeconomic differences limit the perspectives, narratives, contexts, and thus questions and methods that the field takes interest in.

It's a stark reminder of how fundamentally inequitable, yet important, my cohort's position is in our journeys to become economists. Many of us were first-gen students of color who likely didn't attend some high-end private institution, whose parents likely didn't hold PhDs.

The irony of being in D.C. during a regime unsupportive of academia and diversity initiatives is not lost on me. Speakers, funds, and economists that ordinarily would have supported us were either lost or had to be replaced with others with weeks to spare, but this miracle did happen, as did many other miracles throughout the city. World Pride 2025, for example, still happened in D.C. – loud and rambunctious in street festivals and Twelfth Night, and only a little more sedate in parties and gatherings and a performance of Frankenstein. Same with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which was centered on an intriguing mix of youth culture and traditional trades.



The AEASP 2025 cohort's final picture.
Photography provided by enpphotography

One of those tradespeople was a window repairman, James Turner, from Detroit, one of the iconic cities when it comes to the idea of the discussion of loss – one of my topics of interest. I asked him as much, about that juxtaposition in repairing and maintaining those buildings that came before, that aged and perhaps declined alongside the city. When someone chooses to preserve or rebuild, what distinguishes preserving a historical loss versus preserving a community's dignity?

His answer was not direct, but it was better for that reason. To my understanding, it was more about giving people the tools to decide their fate, to rework their home. Maybe preserve and repair it, maybe rebuild it – what matters more is equipping someone with the skillset that lets them tell and understand their narrative, to steer their own community and their own fate, and thereby enrich themselves, their community, and the history that surrounds them. To have that agency is what gives hope.

I think that's what AEASP does best. It binds together a cohort of young economists from so many different backgrounds to create a supportive and supported community, all mentored by those who understood, often empathized with, and encouraged our journeys as economists. Every day in those dorms and classrooms and offices, we lived, we struggled, we learned, all so that, even amidst an environment less friendly to us, we could still gain the tools and community to determine our fate and the fates of those who we mentor and teach thereafter. It's about communities who – in spite of current events – manage to still grow and develop.

Hot Pot for Thanksgiving

By Matilda Iem

We grimace as autumn traditions beckon
From the forthcoming Thursday horizon.
Obese buttered turkeys roll out
On fleets of shopping carts
Rumbling like pompous infantry
Commanded by cold hearts.
Pumpkin spice wafts through
The air like stinging smoke
From the burning stubborn spirits
Of prudent, sentimental folk.

We shudder at the thought of any relative
To come waltzing, always unappreciative,
To badmouth the poor bird
We, the hosts, are expected,
With struggles left unheard,
To prepare besides a feast.
Like old beasts of mythology,
Mischiefous family feasts
Upon our stress and misery,
And we're fed up with the act.

Our personal, humble gas grill is fired up
For aromatic soup bubbling on our
tabletop
Featuring meats, greens,
and tiny eggs from quails.
Without potatoes or gravy,
Chosen company assails
Our conservative penitentiary.
The four of us, tightly knit,
Find that, for a feast of gratitude,
We're already the perfect fit.



Creative Submission

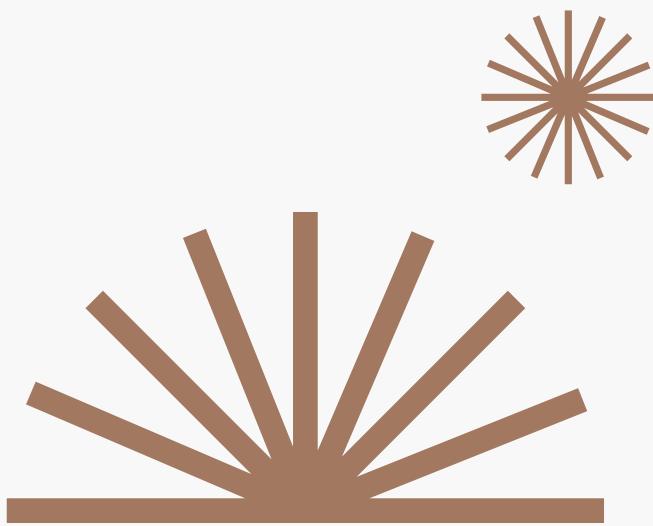
Color to the Bone

By Momena Uddin

The hours rapidly darken
The cold settles in
Chill engraved into our bones
It's that time of year again
It's time to go back home
Celebrate the wins and the losses
Enough food to fuel the soul
Enough memories to structure the heart

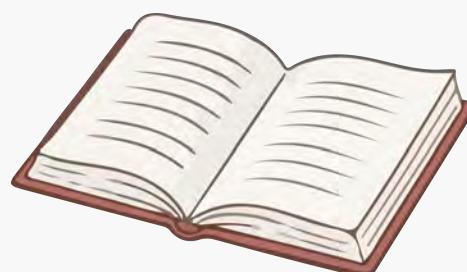
The ceiling reaches high
A roof, a shape meant to protect
Hot chai and biryani cook over the stove
The staples of our household

A dreary silence would fill the darken
Speak of your losses
It's engraved into our bones
Drenched in gray
Unlike any other



My friends call me over
One asks me to mend their clothes
Another to hear their words
Laugh their hearts out
Till no breath can escape
We speak of our wins
What comforts the soul
Over pizza, and day old cookies
We dress up, and sing songs
Creating warm hues
Engraved.

Bonds shape the heart
Giving a saffron-like glow
The chai over the stove
My friends are coming over
I hope this is home
Color to the bone.



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Cultivating



Community During Conflict

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