The Sundial

Spring 2022 | Issue 6

CSUN

JOURNALISM

INNOVATING FOR A DIGITAL WORLD

CSUN Student Journalism

Agency 398
www.agency398.com

El Nuevo Sol
www.elnuevosol.net

KCSN News
https://sundial.csun.edu/kcsn-news-updates

On Point
www.csuntvnews.com

Pop-Up Newsroom
www.twitter.com/popupnewsroom

Scene Magazine
www.csunscene.net

The Sundial
https://sundial.csun.edu

Valley View News
www.csunvalleyview.com
www.youtube.com/user/valleyviewnews

CSUN JOURNALISM

JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT
Manzanita Hall 210 ▪ www.csun.edu/journalism

@csunjournalism

Contents

Spring 2022 | Volume 62, Issue 6

Cover illustration by Carolyn Burt

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

When people picture a college student as a young adult who's attending school, lives on campus, and pays for their education with help from their parents or guardians, as the average college student it can be limiting. But now in my last year of college, I realize this was never me or any of my peers. While I attended college straight out of high school, I have always worked multiple jobs as hard as I could to make sure my bills were paid. Being a full-time student was difficult.

On my campus I am surrounded by parents, returning students, commuters, first-generation students and transfers. In some ways we are all nontraditional. Traditionalism is something we only really see on TV, as we are all working, going to school, taking care of our parents or even taking a semester off. None of us fit the mold, but in college no one should. CSUN can be seen as a hub for students of all backgrounds to attend: to not have to live on campus if they choose not to while having access to ample parking spots, having a day care center for students who have kids, and even the accessibility of online, weekend or night classes.

There are so many accommodation options for students at our university, but some may argue it's not enough. This issue will take a look at what nontraditional truly means and how CSUN can be an example for this category of students on campus. As times change and nontraditional becomes the new norm, it's important these students have a voice in solving their challenges.

Michaella Huck

The Sundial

Shannon Carter
Editor-in-Chief

Carolyn Burt
Managing Editor

Michaella Huck
Print Editor

Mercedes Cannon-Tran
Print Managing Editor

Angel Peña
Lead Designer

Maia Aslaksen
Michael Goldsmith
Copy Editors

Grace Da Rocha
Culture Editor

Marissa Roberts
News Editor

Trevor Morgan
Online Editor

Ashley Orellana
Opinion Editor

Kaitlyn Lavo
Photo Editor

Jordan Puente
Sports Editor

Thomas Bravo
Clarissa Corral
Lane Lawhead
Lorena Salinas
Briana Walden
Staff

Arvli Ward
Publisher

Jody Holcomb
General Manager

Sandra Tan
Business Manager

Published by the
Department of Journalism,
California State University Northridge
Manzanita Hall 140
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8258

Editorial
hello@sundial.csun.edu • (818) 677-2915

Advertising
ads@csun.edu • (818) 677-2998

Matadors Community Credit Union

Get $200 Cash Back with a Car Loan from MCCU!

as low as **1.74% APR**[1]

- No payment due for 90 Days[2]
- New/Used/Refinances eligible
- Free, no-hassle Car Buying Services available
- Get a free quote for auto insurance[3]

Apply at MATADORS.ORG or call 818.993.6328!

[1] APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Rates as of 11/01/2021 and are subject to change at any time. Must meet credit and income criteria. Rate quoted is the preferred rate for a new auto loan with a 36-month term. Subject to credit approval and membership eligibility. Other rates and terms available. Monthly payments at 1.74% APR for a 36-month term are estimated at $28.53 per $1,000 borrowed. Refinancing of existing MCCU Auto Loans not eligible. Rate reflects Automatic Payment discount of .50% and Platinum Membership discount of .50%. Restrictions may apply. Membership required. $15,000 minimum loan required for cash back. This promotion is effective 11/1/2021 and can be cancelled by the Credit Union at any time. Visit matadors.org for more details on cash back promotion.

[2] Interest accrues from date of funding.

[3] TruStage® Auto Insurance program is offered by TruStage Insurance Agency, LLC and issued by leading insurance companies. Discounts are not available in all states and discounts vary by state. The insurance offered is not a deposit and is not federally insured. This coverage is not sold or guaranteed by your credit union.© TruStage Insurance Agency 2021


CSUN

Briana Walden | Thomas Bravo

Shining Example?

Is CSUN Doing Enough for Nontraditional Students?

From its founding as San Fernando Valley State in 1958 when classes were offered in portable buildings, CSUN was designed to be a commuter school that served students who lived nearby, just like many of the other California State University campuses built in urban areas.

Today, commuters are one of CSUN's three largest nontraditional student populations — working students and parents being the other two — that have helped shape the university since its founding.

Like many other CSU campuses, CSUN offered classes at times that working students and student parents could attend. While administrators have made class times more flexible to students, limited parking and child care capacity may pose challenges.

Despite the challenges CSUN, with its focus on nontraditional students, the school might be a model for the future of higher education.

Traditional students come to college directly after high school and devote four years to studying. Nontraditional students may be older, tend to work and may be parents. Many of them will be the first in their families to attend college.

In the late 1980s, CSUN expanded student housing in hopes of emulating traditional campuses like University of California, Los Angeles or University of Southern California. After quadrupling dorm capacity over a few years, CSUN quit building new on-campus housing, seeming to accept a role as a commuter campus.

CSUN remains primarily a commuter campus today as less than 10% of the student body is housed on campus. An estimated 95% of the 39,000 students drive an average of 12.5 miles each way to campus, according to an annual report on commuting behavior by CSUN's Institute for Sustainability.

The report suggested that 14,500 students, faculty and staff commuters come to campus on the busiest days. CSUN's parking lots can accommodate about 13,500 vehicles each day. Many of those commuters may use alternative transportation or carpool, so the numbers are not exact.

Parking has such a poor reputation that a former computer science major created a "CSUN Parking Complaint Generator," an automated Twitter account that captures many of the common complaints about parking.

"The day that I find parking at CSUN is the day that I buy a lottery ticket," read one recent tweet.

The interim manager for CSUN's Parking and Transportation Services, Emanuel Campos, believes that the university has done a "great" job in its ability to park all of its students.

Administrators understand that the department, which is a self-supporting entity that raises its own operating funds, needs to provide ample parking.

After opening a 1,500-space lot recently, the campus will not build more facilities for another seven to 10 years, according to Campos.

The university also hopes to ease the parking problem by incentivizing the use of other methods of transportation, including subsidizing passes for public transit.

Another group of nontraditional students at CSUN are working students. More than 70% of CSUN students have jobs, according to CSUN Counts, and work an average of more than 22 hours per week. Nearly a third of them work as many as 30 hours per week. Seven out of 10 students work off campus; only 13% have campus jobs.

First-generation college students tend to be employed at a higher rate (75%) than their counterparts (67%). According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly three-quarters of

“Parents get a lot of parenting education from us. They’ll succeed in their education better if we help them become better parents”

- Elsa Lewis

student parents work.

Working students may have a tougher time academically and run the risk of taking longer than six years to graduate. A Georgetown University study reported that 47% of students who worked more than 15 hours a week had GPAs of C or lower.

CSUN administrators are careful to keep working students in mind when creating the schedule of courses, which is why the university offers a variety of daily class times.

When it comes to the planning schedules, CSUN Provost Mary Beth Walker, the university’s chief academic officer, said the key principle is “being responsive to student demand and doing our best to accommodate that while maintaining quality programs.”

CSUN has classes that are scheduled outside of the typical school day, and many students attend classes in the evenings and weekends. The university has time blocks for classes as late as 7 p.m. In comparison, the more traditional UCLA has classes that cap at 3:30 p.m., while offering fewer weekend courses.

“We have generally tried to pay close attention to student demand at various times during the days, including the weekends, and have moved classes around to be responsive to that demand,” Walker said.

The large community of parents is an area to which the university may have room to further adapt.

While affordable, child care at CSUN has a limited amount of spaces available.

The university’s main facility that is designed to provide child care for faculty, students and staff is the Associated Students Children’s Center. It was founded in 1973, and its first priority is “to provide affordable child development services that enable student families to reach their academic goals, while their children receive high-quality child care,” according to the center’s website.

The director of the Children’s Center, Pearl Kurpjuweit, recognizes how important it is to support student parents.

According to a study done at University of California, Davis, 13.4% of the 1.5 million students who applied for financial aid in California in 2019 were parents. If that math were applied to CSUN’s student body, it would mean that there were more than 5,000 student parents.

Current campus child care services address a fraction of that possible demand. The Children’s Center can serve 136 children, but the capacity was cut in half because of COVID-19 restrictions. Before the pandemic, there were waiting lists for the Children’s Center. A spokesperson for the Center said she did not know exactly how many parents were on the list, but described it as “steady.” However, priority was given to student parents.

“Being a student parent is difficult … We want to mainly serve our student parents so they can focus on work and their studies. We provide a dual role here not only as a day care but also for child development and education,” said Kurpjuweit.

Support is given to parents in the form of parenting tips and advice from the center staff.

“Parents get a lot of parenting education from us. They’ll succeed in their education better if we help them become better parents,” said Elsa Lewis, the assistant director of the Children’s Center.

The growth of nontraditional students attending the university has forced its administrators to find new ways to adapt and support the community. Nontraditional students will continue to reshape CSUN.

Judith Lopez | Lorena Salinas & Clarissa Corral

1st Generation

Overcoming Obstacles on the Path to Success

Judith Lopez will be the first person in her family to graduate from college. It hasn't been easy.

Despite her plans, Lopez did not enroll in college after graduating high school. Her parents divorced, and as the oldest of three children, she had to help take care of her siblings because her mother was working in a factory for roughly 12 hours a day. College had to wait.

At 21, Lopez became a single mother, which set her back another five years.

Lopez is now 31 and on the brink of achieving her dream of graduating after turning obstacles into the personal motivation she needed to complete her degree at CSUN.

The pressures of being a single mother were compounded by the difficulty of having to steer through the college system with no map.

"My biggest struggle as a first-generation student is finding guidance and support," said Lopez. "It's hard navigating this alone without getting any feedback from my family, who does not understand what the process looks like."

Her daughter Camilia is now 10, and Lopez is set to graduate later this year.

"It's going to be the best accomplishment of my life. Being able to earn this degree and pay for it out of my own pocket while raising a child makes me feel like I can do it all," said Lopez.

Lopez's journey was full of detours. She dealt with issues common to all first-generation students such as a lack of money, college preparedness and role models who could advise her.

First-generation students are typically defined as the first in their families to earn a degree. They also often come from low-income immigrant households and are predominantly non-white, according to the think tank Postsecondary National Policy Institute.

As part of a growing population, first-generation students make up about 60% of the country's college students, according to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. With total undergraduates at just under 20 million, that would mean there are almost 12 million first-generation students at colleges today.

Nearly half of CSUN's 35,000 undergraduates are first-generation students, according to the CSUN Counts data dashboard.

The Latino community is driving the change. About 12,000 of CSUN's Latino student body of 19,000 are first-generation students.

As the president of The Campaign for College Opportunity, a non-profit organization that uses research and policy advocacy to help first-generation students succeed, Michele Siqueiros has devoted her career to helping students, especially Latinos. Siqueiros is motivated by her own experience as a first-generation college student.

Siqueiros believes that first-generation students have a tremendous impact on society, and can change their families trajectories by earning a college degree and increasing the amount of opportunities available to them.

The challenges they face are well studied, but Siqueiros thinks that conversation misses the point.

"We talk about first-generation students as if all they bring are deficits. And the reality is that first-generation students bring a ton of assets," said Siqueiros.

"My biggest struggle as a first-generation student is finding guidance and support"

- Judith Lopez

Beyond creating change for the futures of their families, first-generation graduates are also crucial to the future of California's economy.

More Latino graduates are needed to support California's position as the world's fifth-largest economy, according to a study done by The Campaign for College Opportunity.

In order to meet the demand for educated employees, California needs 60% of its adult population to have a degree by 2030, but it won't be able to meet that number until more Latinos earn degrees.

"It's not just a personal good, but an absolute societal good," said Siqueiros.

But first-generation students must overcome the triple threat of financial struggles, poor college preparation and inexperience with the college system before they can begin to reach their full potential.

Many students have to work and are forced to take out loans. About 65% of first-generation college graduates accumulate $25,000 or more in debt, according to the Pew Research Center.

The schools they attend often offer fewer college preparatory classes, are staffed by inexperienced teachers and college counselors, and lack preparatory courses for college entrance exams.

As a result, when Latino students enroll they are more likely to be placed in remedial classes that are linked to lower college-completion rates.

"I was a top student but I was put in a remedial writing course when I started college. That can be pretty devastating," said Siqueiros. "You feel like you've done everything asked of you, and yet you're in an environment that tells you … you're not quite ready."

Less than 40% of students placed in remedial courses will earn a degree or transfer from a community college to a four-year university, according to The Campaign for College Opportunity.

Being a first-generation student can be a difficult journey for someone who cannot turn to their parents for guidance. It is more common for these students to help their parents, many of whom may not speak English or understand school-related forms and other documents.

Lopez felt lost on many occasions in college, so she sought out the comfort of her peers with similar experiences.

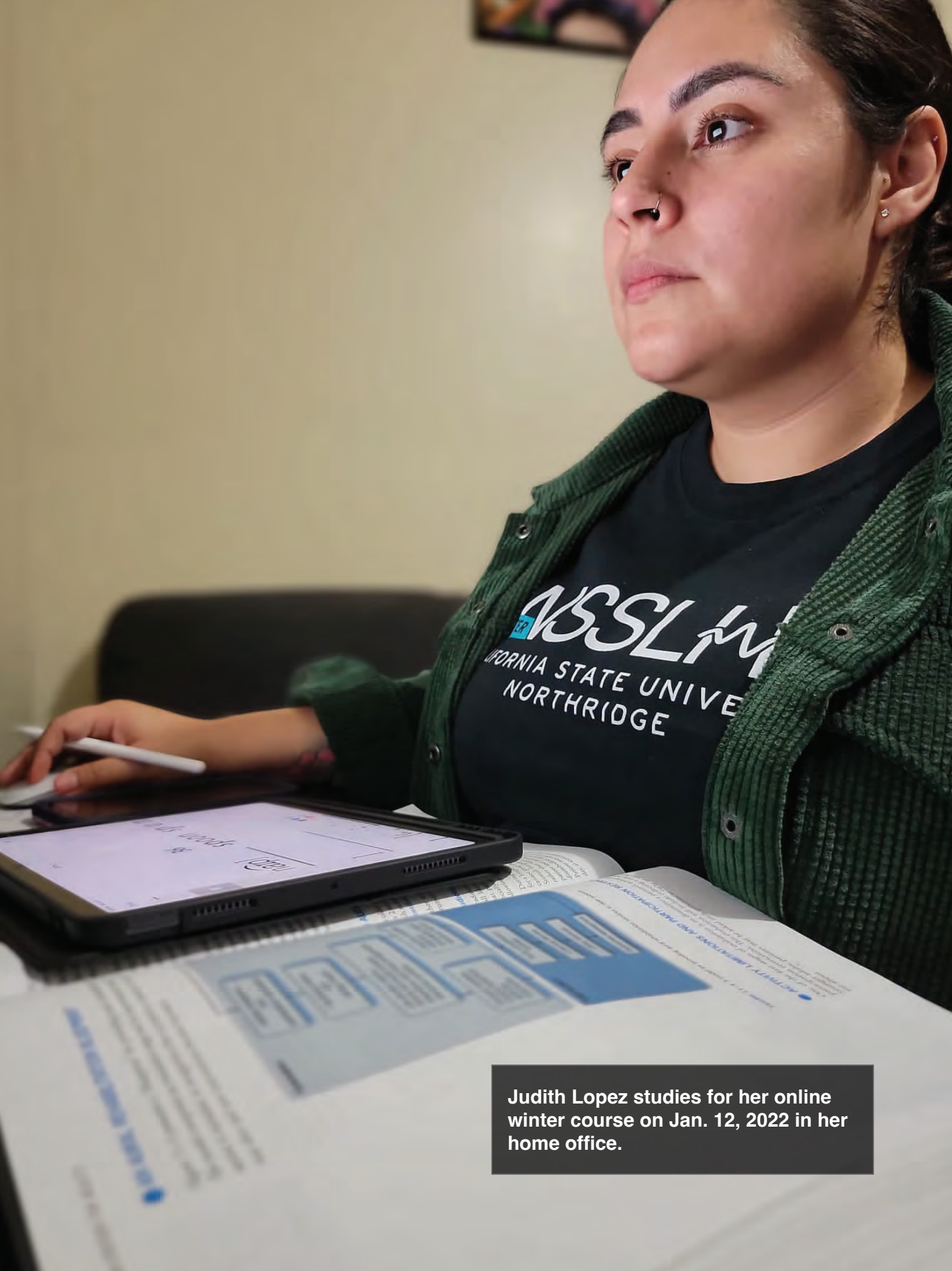
"We lean on each other a lot. We have become our own little family always checking in, helping with applications or sharing resources," said Lopez. "Because we are the first in our family, our family does not provide this support but we find it in each other."

Siqueiros acknowledges that navigating college without help is hard.

"When you're going to get your driver's license what do you do? You get in the car with someone who is an experienced driver and they show you," said Siqueiros. "First-gen students don't have any of that. They're figuring it out as they go."

Lopez is proud of the foundation she has created for her daughter's future. She will be mentored by a college graduate in her family — something Lopez didn't have.

Camila, who attended class with Lopez when a babysitter was not available, will be able to ask her mother for college advice when preparing for her future in higher education.



Judith Lopez studies for her online winter course on Jan. 12, 2022 in her home office.

From Minority to Majority:

Why the Term Nontraditional is no Longer Needed

As the world of higher education is constantly changing and evolving, a new wave of students is being integrated into colleges. Many of these students don't fall into the category that a traditional student does. Traditional students often are seen as coming to college straight out of high school and indulge their college careers into student life.

In a report published by the University of Denver, 40% of undergraduate students in the United States are considered nontraditional. This category most often consists of students over the age of 25, parents or guardians of children, those who have taken time off from education, and those who work full time and attend school only part time.

Professor of urban studies and planning at CSUN, Henrik P. Minassians, feels the divide between traditional and nontraditional is very apparent in the academic world and has an impact on the way a student goes about their education.

"The students I teach are nontraditional, because of their busy schedules, such as jobs or families, most classes are at night or weekends. This takes away from the 'college experience' that is traditionally the main focus of a university."

Beth A. Lasky, professor of special education at CSUN, stated that while nontraditional students fall into many categories, "It's important to mention that there is also an intersection." This means that many students will fall into multiple groups, which is a large part of the reason CSUN has so many nontraditional students.

In recent years, those who would have been nontraditional have put up the argument that since nearly half of the college's population is in this nontraditional category, it actually makes it a new normal. With these factors in mind, a large majority of colleges offer services to students who need accommodations.

Some of these services include child care, night classes and online studies. Lasky thinks it's "important to be aware that some people come to our campus who may not have the same experiences, backgrounds, and skills as other students." She feels the job at a college is to embrace every background and not consider anyone a minority or majority, but instead an individual student with equal possibilities.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics one in 10 college students are at least 40-years-old, and at this rate that number will increase to 3.3 million college students by 2027. Minassians brought up the point that this large population of older students can feel isolated and unable to "get the college experience" with colleges' youth-targeted experiences. Minassians recalls being a nontraditional student when he studied at Santa Monica College, with English being his third language — this made content presented in class a struggle to understand. While he took English as a second language courses, the language barrier still added an extra year to his education.

With the changes in the educational system, it's become apparent this question of someone being a traditional or nontraditional student is not applicable when you look at how many students fall into both categories. This classic full-time student who enters college out of high school and has support from others is no longer the traditional student, but rather just one part of the big community of many different students at universities.

WHO EVEN IS A "TRADITIONAL" STUDENT ANYWAY?

Mercedes Cannon-Tran | Mercedes Cannon-Tran

Many things come to mind when the topic of a non-traditional student is brought up. Does this mean an older student, a student parent, a first-time student, or could the term "non-traditional" be making a change towards a new majority?

I challenge almost every traditional convention of a college student and what that image can generally be perceived to represent. This idea is that you attend a four-year college fresh out of high school and graduate in just four quick years. That path was never an option for me, for instead there was an almost epic journey of sorts.

In the fall of 2010, I did in fact begin college, just at a community level fresh out of high school. I had to jump through many hoops to obtain an education.

As the first college graduate of my family, I navigated the often treacherous waters of registering for classes, filling out FAFSA paperwork and paying for college by myself. I encountered a lot of misleading answers and downright false information before I was able to get the hang of things.

By the time I left community college in 2017, after satisfying what seemed like an insurmountable list of transfer requirements, I was 26 years old and very bitter towards higher education. What is normally supposed to take just two years to complete had taken me seven. To say I felt that I had just played a very discouraging game was an understatement.

After paying for nearly all seven years out of pocket, working multiple jobs, and having to take forced pauses in my education due to limited availability of classes, I still made the decision to continue on with a bachelor's degree in journalism from California State University, Long Beach.

My first day at CSULB was unforgettable. I sat down and looked around my classroom, realizing I was the only student present over 21. At times I felt I had more in common with my professors than my classmates.

Over time the age factor was a barrier that came down as I began to realize there was more to being a non-traditional student than just age. Among my peers were parents, first-generation students and a lot of long-distance commuters like myself.

The more I spoke to others, even outside my major, the more I realized the traditional straight from high school route was seemingly the minority. Growing up, there was this almost enforced standard across the board of how to pursue a college education. Even though I was enrolled in college preparatory classes such as Advanced Via Individual Determination in high school, the path of community college and transfer was never presented as a favorable option.

The path I chose was not the easiest one. This is largely due to the location I attended and lack of resources. I also felt an unusual sense of disappointment at the beginning for choosing a non-traditional route, as if I would somehow miss out on the college experience one looks forward to.

In the position I am in today, I wouldn't have changed my decision on choosing the non-traditional path. I worked hard, gained job experience and went debt free for many years by only taking what I could afford. I feel the maturity and perseverance I gained along this journey are invaluable.

My educational adventures are far from over as I finish a graduate degree this year. The path I traveled is one I am finding to be something many others are choosing as well. So I propose the thought that maybe this isn't truly about non-traditional versus traditional students, but more about the need to customize and adapt educational journeys based on the times.

Higher education is something that can seem daunting and unobtainable, especially for those like myself who come from challenged economic backgrounds. Perhaps celebrating the different ways to traverse the path instead of singling out "success" stories, as if this method wasn't meant to succeed, would be more helpful.

From one non-traditional student to another my advice is to go at your own pace. You are in competition with no one else or any timeline but your own. Achieve your goals and never feel guilty about how long it may take you to get somewhere.

"Too Close for Comfort" is a section where our audience and editors give firsthand accounts of issues that relate to them. If you have a story about an incident that's too close for comfort, please email us at toocloseforcomfort.sundial@gmail.com.

dailysundial.com

Your everyday source for what's happening on and around campus

DAILY SUNDIAL

Publishing since 1957

We've got you covered

Get even more news about
your campus community
from the Daily Sundial

ONLINE

Publishing the latest news, culture, Matador sports and more at **dailysundial.com**

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow us for fresh feed content.

@dailysundial

dailysundial

@thesundial

dailysundial

Got something to say?

If you have a tip or a burning question,
email us at **hello@sundial.csun.edu**

If you want to join our award-winning
team of student journalists,
email us at **recruiting@sundial.csun.edu**

Daily Sundial | Manzanita Hall 140 | hello@sundial.csun.edu | (818) 677-2998

WELCOME TO YOUR
UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION
WHERE MATADORS BELONG

MAXIMIZE YOUR MATADOR EXPERIENCE AT THE USU!

THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION INCLUDES

- Computer Lab
- DREAM Center
- East Conference Center
- Games Room
- Northridge Center
- Oasis Wellness Center
- Pride Center
- Reservations & Event Services
- Student Recreation Center
- USU Board of Directors
- USU Programs
- Veterans Resource Center

AND YOU!

SCAN THE QR CODE TO VISIT THE FULL USU CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Events subject to change

Check our calendar often for more information about our wide range of virtual and in-person events, programs and services for you at the University Student Union... Where Matadors Belong!

CSUN.EDU/USU

University Student Union at CSUN | csun_usu | csun_usu | csunusu | University Student Union, CSUN | csun_usu

Txt 'CSUN' to 52855

CSUN | UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION