

# The Sundial

Issue 4 | Spring 2025



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# Letter from the *editor*



## The Sundial

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Dear Sundial readers,

The Sundial has been seeing considerable changes in recent semesters. In the fall, the publication said farewell to our advisor and the 2024 graduating class, which made up almost our entire staff. That's where I came in as Editor-in-Chief. When I wasn't traveling over the summer, my time was spent on Zoom, interviewing new candidates and structuring a newsroom with the cards we were dealt.

We saw increased representation through our reporting, provided live updates every 15 minutes on Election Day and took home several awards at the Associated Collegiate Press Fall Convention.

Through ups and downs, our staff stepped into the role of student journalists. Now, momentum is building for this semester and we wanted to share this sentiment for our January issue. The theme is "to close one chapter and begin anew." By reflecting on the past, we allow ourselves to grow.

Our first issue of 2025 will highlight the successes of the previous semester and will act as a promise for the semester to come. California State University, Northridge, is not perfect, no college is, but those within its halls make the school special.

As our mission statement says, we are CSUN's only student-run publication. Our values are truth, accountability, transparency and equity. We will address issues of diversity, reporting on national issues by telling stories through a localized lens. When covering racial injustices, we will report on social unrest and deep dive into how this issue affects our community.

This is my promise to you: as the Editor-in-Chief, your story is safe in the hands of The Sundial.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Quinn Alexander". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Quinn Alexander  
Editor-in-Chief

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# We've got you covered

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## CALENDAR


FOMO no more thanks to our event calendar, featuring the latest happenings on and around campus

## NEWSLETTER


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# CSUN 2024 Achievements:

WRITTEN BY ALYSSA ALVAREZ, JESSE ILLANES AND ZIPPORAH PRUITT

As another year passes into the history books, CSUN has made great strides to become one of the top colleges in California. Here are some examples of amazing strides from our eight colleges that all offer a multitude of degrees and certificate programs.

## College of Health and Human Development

The College of Health and Human Development (HHD) at CSUN has made significant strides in 2024 with key achievements and initiatives. Notable events include the inaugural HHD Heroes Award, presented to Mike Paciello, chief accessibility officer at Audio Eye, an accessibility innovator who has impacted the field of assistive technology. The HHD Research Excellence and Innovation Conference showcased student, faculty and staff research with a focus on diversity and collaboration.

Current fundraising initiatives include support for the Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing, which promotes mindfulness and stress reduction programs. As well as the Consumer Resource Center (Family and Consumer Sciences), which offers financial literacy and mentoring programs to empower students. The HHD Scholarship Fund continues to assist students to help sustain enrollment and provide financial aid to those facing challenges in their education.

HHD's diverse academic programs and community-centered initiatives support students and the local community of Northridge as well as Los Angeles and Ventura counties. In 2025, HHD will continue to prioritize scholarships, innovative projects and technology and deep-impact learning experiences.

## College of Engineering and Computer Sciences

The Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) department has launched a new Master of Science degree in Biomedical Engineering. The program focuses on biomedical devices and signal processing, incorporating machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL) techniques. Professors John Valdovinos and Xiyi Hang have secured grants from NASA, The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Medtronic for research on deep learning, congenital heart patients and glucose monitors. Professor Kourosh Sedghisigarchi received funding from California Climate Action Grants for a UCLA collaboration, while professor S. K. Ramesh was awarded a \$3 million grant for fostering culturally responsive environments.

The Civil Engineering and Construction Management Department (CECM) has seen significant growth and success in 2024, including the launch of the Construction Management Master's program with a 40% increase in first-year enrollments. Notable achievements include American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Steel Bridge Team placing 3rd and ASCE GeoWall 4th at nationals.

In 2024, the Computer Science Department celebrated key achievements: Luis Olmos co-authored a paper on course scheduling optimization at the 2024 International Conference on Computational Science and Computational Intelligence (CSCI), while Gustavo Flores presented a paper on smartphone gyroscopes at 2024 IEEE Conference Consumer Communications and Networking (CCNC). Marjan Asadinia secured a \$146,368 grant for her National Science Foundation (NSF) funded Phase Change Main Memory (PCM) project and led her students to first place at CSUNposium. Spencer Yang served as the Principal Investigator (PI) on the project.

## College of Humanities

Being part of the College of Humanities, Melissa Weininger, assistant professor of Jewish Studies, and Jennifer Thompson, director of the Jewish Studies Program, gave insight on what the program accomplished in 2024. One of their achievements was a "peacemaking" series of events, which was supported by a DEI grant from CSUN. The events the Jewish Studies Program hosted this year include "Transforming conflict - a conversation with Aaron Hahn Tapper," a talk with the founder of Abraham's Vision, "a conflict transformation organization that ran educational programs within and between the Muslim, Jewish, Palestinian, and Israeli communities." They also hosted an event titled "Breaking Barriers, Building Hope - a conversation with Adnan Jaber & Michal Greenfield" that was about "Standing together - a co-existence organization that builds community between Jews and Palestinians in Israel." Thompson talked about these achievements when she said, "Amid [the community's] diversity, their messages all boil down to a few important takeaways: peacebuilding is about relationships between individuals; we have to know ourselves well and focus on our own self-improvement to be able to build peace; and building relationships is a long-term process, not something that can be accomplished on a schedule."

# Retrospective and Future

## College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

As we take a look at the achievements from the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Kimberly Olguin, the administrative support assistant for the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies, discussed a variety of accomplishments her department saw this year. Fourteen Criminology & Justice Studies majors traveled to San Francisco for The American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting on Nov. 13-16. The department also partnered with the food pantry and received over 2,000 pounds of food and toiletries for homelessness awareness.

Lastly, two directors and three subjects of the 2024 documentary, "The Strike," attended the department's screening, as the film focused on incarcerated individuals who launched "a small hunger strike against solitary confinement at Pelican Bay prison turned into a massive statewide protest." The screening had an outstanding turnout of over 130 attendees at the screening, set up by the department.

## College of Science and Mathematics

The College of Science and Mathematics had a former CSUN student, Akemi Hinzer, prepared the launch of the NASA Europa Clipper to Jupiter, "the largest the agency has ever built for a planetary mission," in October, and the probe is set to reach Jupiter in 2030.

In May, Robinson Cecil, professor of Geological Sciences, was elected as a new Fellow of The Geological Society of America, "a scientific society with members from academia, government, and industry in more than 100 countries." Also, Ravinder Arbol, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, was awarded a one-year U.S. National Science Foundation - Pathways to Enable Open-Source Ecosystems (POSE) grant, that "is to support further development of the open source 3D molecular structure viewer iCn3D into software with more features. The grant is for one year, and is worth \$200,000 in direct costs."

## David Nazarian College of Business and Economics

David Nazarian College of Business and Economics marked a year of achievements and forward-thinking initiatives. On Nov. 19, 2024, the Workforce of the Future Symposium at The Soroya featured global artificial intelligence (AI) leaders, including IBM Consulting's global managing partner Jesus Mantas, who was the keynote speaker and gave a panel discussion and Q&A on AI in industries.

The Creator Economy held an Open House Mixer on Oct. 29, which connected content creators with faculty and advertising executives, encouraging collaboration through CSUN's REACH, AAF, AMA and PRSSA student clubs.

Dean Chandra Subramaniam was honored as one of the Greater Valley Region's most impactful and powerful leaders for 2024. The fourth issue of Nazarian College Magazine was released, focusing on AI's role in business education. The college also launched a strategic plan using AI to analyze feedback from 5,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni and community leaders to make room for improvement.

A proposed new building that will house the college's current and graduate students is intended to complement Bookstein Hall by enhancing the operational capabilities of its centers and supporting high-quality graduate programs.

## Michael D. Eisner College of Education

Michael D. Eisner College of Education is one of the largest public colleges of education in the state, and is a leader in grants that recruit and provide scholarships to men of color for an educational teaching profession. This year, Joshua Einhorn and his graduate school class began campaigning to raise funds for teachers at India's Saraswati Free School.

In September 2024, StrengthUnited, a CSUN community organization within the college, was named one of the best places to work in Southern California. They were featured on the "Best Companies Group website and Best Places to Work in Southern California" digital publication, presenting exposure to 700,000 business leaders across the country.

By April 2024, Shereen Allison, Deborah Buttitta and Josh Einhorn of the College of Education all received grants to support community-based learning projects.

*Story continued on pg. 19*

# Plant Yourself in Campus Life: Join the Community Garden



WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY NYAN GAVINO

Among the many resources around campus that students use to escape from classes, there is one tucked away in the Sequoia Hall Courtyard that stands out. Populated with growing fruits and vegetables, along with lush greenery and contrasting flowers, is the Marilyn Magaram Center (MMC). The MMC Wellness Garden is a spot where visitors can immerse in nature and learn about gardening and nutrition through hands-on experiences.

“To me, the mission of the MMC Wellness Garden is two-tiered: 1) To use sustainable and pesticide-free garden techniques and practices to grow a variety of native flowers, herbs and produces to nourish the CSUN community and 2) To provide hands-on gardening education and trainings (i.e. Healthy Growers Training certificate) through volunteer and paid experiences that promote sustainability and growth towards a healthier lifestyle,” said MMC Associate Director

Jenica Smith.

The center strives to have a garden in every school to promote the healthy growth of both people and plants. The garden was created in 2016, with help from donations and a campus quality fee grant, according to their virtual tour. Annette Besnilian is the executive director of the Marilyn Magaram Center, as well as the Dietetic Internship Director who teaches nutrition and dietetic classes at CSUN. The MMC grows a variety of different plants, including fruits, vegetables, herbs and grains. It is also recognized as a pollinator garden, due to flowers on site attracting pollination from bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.

The garden utilizes two different composting systems to fertilize their plants. One being through the use of composted food scraps and the second being through worm composting. The MMC also utilizes aquaponics, a system



where both fish and plants work together for cultivation. A pump brings water from the fish tank to a bed that aids plants in absorbing nutrients.

“CSUN students should know that the MMC has a variety of programming to help them gain experience within Nutrition, Dietetics, Food Science and Gardening. The MMC Internship program is open to all majors and accepts interns during the fall, spring and summer semesters,” said Smith. “The goal of the MMC Internship Program is to provide real-world, hands-on and experiential learning experiences for future nutrition and food science professionals, so that they may gain knowledge and practice skills.”

She explained that the programs offered by the center were created to highlight the issues that are often missed in classrooms and the MMC hopes to fix that through student learning and participation. As more students become engaged, they hope to close that gap.

“Other programming available to CSUN students include cooking workshops, gardening workshops, our Tea Haven Project’s workshops, as well as our services (ex. Nutrition counseling, diet and recipe analysis, and body composition testing), products made with Matador pride (available for purchase at the CSUN Bookstore and through the MMC Website), WIC on campus, our CalFresh Healthy Living

program, our Whole Body Health Program’s free cancer toolkit and our Nutrition Experts website, which provides free recipes, blogs and tons of nutrition resources on various topics,” said Smith.

The MMC accepts volunteers throughout the academic year and urges those who are interested in getting involved to reach out. The center offers many opportunities for participation, with no specific majors required.

“The MMC received a lot of student participants/ volunteers through the MMC Internship Program and service-learning projects from the Family and Consumer Sciences department, Public Health department, U100 freshman seminars as well as through MMC workshops and programming offered throughout the academic year,” said Smith.

She noted that CSUN students can follow the MMC on Instagram and Facebook, join their newsletter or visit their website for updates on available programs and workshops.

“We are the trusted source for food, nutrition and cooking resources for the global community. For any questions... CSUN students can email [magaram.center@csun.edu](mailto:magaram.center@csun.edu),” said Smith. “We look forward to welcoming you into the world of the MMC.”

# CSUN Men's Basketball Races Out To Best Season Opening Since 2007-08

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY GABRIEL DUARTE

The excitement for the CSUN men's basketball team came back after a revival year last season, as the Matadors finished with a 19-15 record. This season, the Matadors haven't slowed down and jumped out to a 6-2 record, their best start since the 2007-08 season.

The Matadors beat four Division I opponents en route to their five game winning streak after dropping their season opener to St. Bonaventure.

CSUN spent the Thanksgiving weekend in the state of Montana, participating in the Stew Morrill Classic at the University of Montana and playing a game at Montana State. The Matadors would go 2-1 in the Stew Morrill Classic, defeating Utah Tech and Denver on back-to-back nights on Nov. 24 and 25. Two days later, CSUN would be defeated by Montana, snapping their win streak. They would bounce back with a win over Montana State on Nov. 30 to end their weeklong trip to the Treasure State.

CSUN head coach Andy Newman completely reworked the roster over the offseason, bringing in 13 new players. One of the best additions to the team has been sophomore forward Marcus Adams Jr. The BYU transfer quickly found his role as the team's sixth man. Adams is the team's leading scorer with 16 points per game. Coming off the bench, he is second on the team with 28.1 minutes per game.

Another impactful addition to the team is California Baptist transfer Scotty Washington. The redshirt junior guard has been a scoring machine for the Matadors. He averages 13 points per game, but has gone over 20 points twice in his eight starts. Washington scored 21 points in CSUN's win over Le Moyne on Nov. 4. He reached a career-high of 27 points when he led

the Matadors to a 16-point comeback win over Sacramento State on Nov. 16.

Newman retained a trio of players that were big contributors to the team last season. The best of the returners, senior forward Keonte Jones, was a preseason All-Big West selection. Jones is the team's second leading scorer with 15.6 points per game. He's averaging nearly a double-double with his 9.1 rebounds per game, a team-high.

The Matadors were projected to finish sixth in the Big West conference according to the preseason coaches poll. CSUN will head into the conference opener vs. UC Riverside on Dec. 5, tied as the No. 4 team in the conference with a 6-2 record.



CSUN forward Grady Lewis (21) and guard PJ Fuller (4) talking about their assignments vs. Cal Poly on Dec 7, 2024



## Keonte Jones

Jones has lived up to the high expectations bestowed upon him in the pre-season. He nearly broke his career-high in points (24) with a 23-point game vs. Utah Tech. Through eight games played, Jones put up four double-doubles. Through 34 games last season, he had five double-doubles.



## Marcus Adams Jr.

Adams has burst onto the scene for CSUN after transferring over from BYU. The California native appeared in only one game last season for the Cougars. Since coming over from CSUN, Adams has gone off for at least 15 points in six games out of eight games played.

# Cantando

WRITTEN BY PAMELA GARCIA



© Pure Noise Records

**Golden Years**  
State Champs

This bumping pop-punk track from State Champs brings new meaning to enjoying your life's "Golden Years" and staying true to yourself. The themes especially stand out in the song's bridge: "Facing what's up ahead / I hope I never forget me, forget me."



© 8123 Records

**Someone's Disaster**  
Beach Weather

Beach Weather's euphoric track "Someone's Disaster," is the perfect song to welcome in a year filled with possibilities of love and living with your favorite people. The indie rock song creates a lively soundtrack for trying out new things this year through its instrumentals and strong vocals from frontman Nick Santino.



© 10K Projects

**Growing Song**  
COIN

Staying on the theme of new beginnings, this mellow track by COIN explores the feelings of becoming a new version of yourself. It is the ninth track off their newest album "I'm Not Afraid of Music Anymore," themed around the members' personal growth over the course of their 10 years being a band.



© Columbia Records

**GONE, GONE / THANK YOU**  
Tyler, The Creator

One of the classic tracks off "IGOR" follows Tyler, The Creator as he reflects on finding peace and the good times after things didn't go quite his way with a relationship. It serves as a reminder that while life will have its ups and downs, embracing the good with the bad is important.

# Matador Marquee

WRITTEN BY JESSE ILLANES

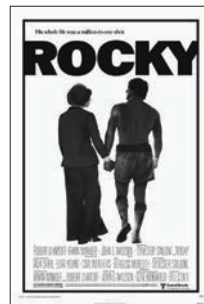
In welcoming the new year comes big changes, whether it is with jobs, the upcoming semester or personal changes you hope to aspire to. With this in mind, there are films and music albums that are set to inspire you and give new meaning to your goals in 2025.



© Golden Harvest

## "Fist of Fury"

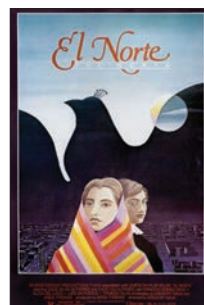
In Bruce Lee's second leading role, he plays Chen Zhen, who learns his martial arts master passed away. When a Japanese dojo taunts his master's death, Chen Zhen seeks revenge. He fights through oppression, including a famous scene where he kicks a racist park sign stating "No Dogs and Chinese Allowed."



© Chartoff-Winkler Productions

## "Rocky"

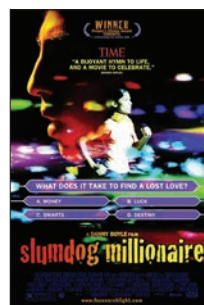
Rocky Balboa, an up-and-coming boxer, is given the opportunity of a lifetime to fight the heavyweight champion of the world. With doubts being cast on the "nobody" challenger, Rocky is a fighter with a heart of gold, caring for the people around him as much as he prepares for his title fight.



© American Playhouse

## "El Norte"

Amidst the Guatemalan Civil War, a brother and sister flee to the United States for better lives. With the film being three chapters—life in Guatemala, their journey to the north and living in the U.S. — the film shows the struggle these pair of siblings go through and it is the definition of determination.



© Warner Bros. Pictures

## "Slumdog Millionaire"

A young man, living in a slum in Mumbai, becomes a contestant on the Hindi version of "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" As he comes close to winning the million, he is accused of cheating. During police questioning, he recounts his life story, which leads to how he answers each question.



# Creating Space for Queer Students of Color: One Black Student's Fight for Inclusion

WRITTEN BY ALYSSA ALVAREZ

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALIYAH HINCKLEY

Being Black, Indigenous or a person of color while also being queer on a college campus means navigating two worlds of systemic discrimination. For one Black and nonbinary student, the challenges of existing at this intersection have inspired a mission: to promote a safe, empowering space for Queer Students of Color.

Quinn Island, vice president of Queer Students of Color (QSOC), utilizes these overlapping identities to build connections and create community. By owning their

identities and experiences, they were able to create a space where students like them can find community, support and a platform to address the struggles unique to their intersectional identities.

“Our mission is more towards community and safe spaces for intersectionality... because being queer and being POC, they both have unique challenges,” said Island. “We have to focus on everybody and it’s not just one specific group of people, you know? Just a space of community, and even

being able to come together, and [for queer POC to] maybe start to talk about those experiences that they may not get to talk about..."

Merriam-Webster defines intersectionality as "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism and classism) combine, overlap or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups."

The concept of intersectionality acknowledges that people from marginalized communities face unique experiences formed by their identities, with discrimination and oppression often tied to their identities.

As someone who is Black, Native American, nonbinary, gender-fluid and neurodivergent, Island has faced many challenges. Conversations about intersectionality are deeply personal for them, yet they opened up about the discrimination they have encountered throughout their life.

"I have experienced direct discrimination from professors— to a really intense level to where I've had to really report professors and you know, it's not fun," said Island.

"And I've experienced a lot of racism early on in life... the youngest I've been [where I] experienced very, very blatant racism was probably seven or eight years old. Everything from slurs to physical violence... I mean like I was pushed into f-ing mud."

Island's experience with discrimination at a young age is a common occurrence for many BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth.

According to a 2021 article from the American Psychological Association, "Non-White youth still face high levels of discrimination." Among Native American children 20.5% said they were treated unfairly and discriminated against by peers, compared to 20.1% of Black children, 10.9% of Asian/Pacific Islander children, 13% of Latino/Hispanic children and 8.9% of white children who said the same.

In 2022, The Trevor Project conducted a national survey on LGBTQ+ youth, where it was found that 73% of LGBTQ+ youth reported having experienced discrimination based on their gender and sexual identities at least once.

Island hopes that those uneducated on BIPOC and LGBTQ+ issues will dissect their biases and learn to respect those different from them, in order to create a safe world for people to express their identities without fear of hate or judgement. "Whether or not you understand those walks of life, respect is a very good way to even bridge that gap of understanding," Island said.

Despite the harsh realities of navigating life as a BIPOC and LGBTQ+ student, Island refuses to let these challenges define them. Instead,

they choose to look at the glass half full.

"I like to focus on the ways in which I'm privileged. If I focus too much on the negatives, it can get me in a bad headspace. I like to count my blessings... I'm in college, I'm educated, I'm neurodivergent, but I'm still pushing through," said Island.

Being a part of QSOC has empowered Island, as it provides a safe environment on campus where BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students can share their experiences and support one another. Through their community, Island has been able to connect with others, relate to their personal stories and build meaningful relationships.

"Certain people have confided in me about how I may have helped them realize their identity," said Island. "It's just given me the ability to connect on a deeper level with people who I've never seen represented on TV or whatever... I still feel quite privileged to be able to have a part of my identity resonate with people enough to where I can form deeper connections and bond over queerness— or just specific life experiences that not everybody has and to me, that's been very meaningful."

To serve the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ community, QSOC hosts events and meetings to create community recreation. One recent highlight was the President's Ball, a formal event where members had the freedom to express their identities and dress comfortably. The event featured live music, performances, food, refreshments and space for students to dance and enjoy each other's company.

"Next semester, we are going to add some other kinds of events and get-togethers. I'm planning a monthly 'Let's Talk,' where we go over specific subjects or questions and dissect and get deep into what it means to be ourselves and create an emotionally safe environment," said Island.



*Race for* \_\_\_\_\_  
***REPRESENTATION***

WRITTEN BY EMILY TOMIMITSU • ILLUSTRATION BY TANIA HUERTA





Photos courtesy by Emily Tomimitsu

On February 23, 2020, Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man, was tragically shot and killed while jogging in a Georgia neighborhood. His murder sparked outrage and amplified calls to address systemic racism and injustices affecting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

In the aftermath, Jeff Dengage, the “runner-in-chief” of Runner’s World magazine, wrote:

...recent protests and activism have brought into clear focus the systemic racism and social injustice that affects everyday life for BIPOC. But it’s also evident that running, as a sport, activity, and industry, too, has failed Black America for too long. And that includes us: In our 54-year history, Runner’s World has not featured BIPOC runners nearly often enough. We should have done better, sooner... no runner should feel like they can’t picture themselves on that front page.

Dengage’s statement sheds light on a pervasive issue: the underrepresentation of BIPOC individuals in running publications, which poses real dangers for minorities.

Recent research underscores the stark reality of underrepresentation in running media. A 2021 content analysis by Seyidoglu et al. revealed that only 15 percent of athletes depicted on Runner’s World covers were BIPOC. This lack of representation shapes perceptions of who can rightfully participate in long-distance running and who remains invisible in the narrative.

To address this gap, publications must work to reflect the full spectrum of running experiences, from casual joggers to ultramarathoners, while incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and community-specific concerns. This is not just about ensuring accurate representation, but also about creating a more inclusive and accessible environment for

BIPOC runners.

My studies in CSUN’s Mass Communications program have helped me gain a deeper understanding of the powerful role media representation plays in our society. Speaking to Latina runners and reading their stories in this magazine has been deeply moving. Their experiences echo my own and highlight how the lack of representation shapes how we see ourselves in the running world.

As author and activist Alison Mariella Désir stated in her novel *Running While Black*, “The more we are seen and heard, the more our voices and bodies are part of the daily running narrative, the faster we’ll move toward normalizing Black people running in our society.” Similarly, the more we feature Latina runners and uplift our voices in the running industry, the more we normalize our looks, experiences, and journeys in the greater running narrative.

Arbery’s tragic murder serves as a somber reminder of the dangers still faced by BIPOC communities when engaging in simple, everyday activities like jogging.

There is a clear need for authentic and inclusive representation in running media and the broader running community. By amplifying diverse voices and experiences, we can foster a more welcoming, equitable, and safe environment for BIPOC runners.

Learn more at [Race4Representation.com](https://Race4Representation.com)

# Gerardo's Journey: 'Don't judge a book by its cover'



Gerardo Lemus Ramos poses for a photo at the National Center On Deafness (NCOD) at CSUN Dec. 4, 2024

WRITTEN BY ALYSSA ALVAREZ • PHOTOS BY ALIYAH HINCKLEY

As a full-time student at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), Gerardo Lemus Ramos, a hard-of-hearing student who uses a wheelchair, navigates campus life just like any other student. He participates in campus activities, enjoys hanging out with friends and is active in creating meaningful connections, proving that disability does not define a person's ability to lead a fulfilling college experience.

Ramos knows how to advocate for his needs and believes that disabilities should not be seen as limitations. His experience at CSUN reflects his belief in not judging others based on appearances or abilities.

He studies criminal justice and forensic science and enjoys problem-solving. "I like to figure out and solve

puzzles related to crimes, like seeing what happens after someone breaks a law, analyzing specific things and what influences people," Ramos said. His goal is to make an impact in criminal justice and forensics using analytical skills.

While attending CSUN, Ramos has faced unique obstacles. As someone who uses a wheelchair due to asthma, he is often tired from walking long distances. However, he has never let his disability define his college experience. "I don't think my disabilities have influenced my experiences in college. I'm happy that I go to CSUN, I don't go without accessibility here," he says.

Ramos advocates for himself to make sure that his experience is never less than perfect. He explained

having to be more proactive, saying that if he notices an accessibility issue, he ensures to report it so that it is resolved quickly.

As the only hard-of-hearing and disabled person in his family, Ramos learned to become comfortable in speaking up for himself. “I am aware that I am the only Deaf and disabled person in my family... I’m pretty comfortable with it,” he said.

Although dinner-table syndrome, the phenomenon in which deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals are often excluded from conversations at mealtimes, is still an occurrence, he is able to advocate for himself to be accommodated. He does not shy away from asking people to repeat themselves, for explanations of the conversation and for hand-written notes.

Ramos is accustomed to having understanding and patience for those who might not know how to work with people of disabilities and diverse backgrounds. He recalled a memory from high school in which a classmate had difficulties working on a project with Ramos due to his physical differences.

“I didn’t really get upset. I was more patient in the situation, kind of trying to figure out how to connect with the student,” he said. Ramos successfully found common ground with the student, and the two were able to complete their project. He noted that it is important to have this kind of patience and understanding for those who might be unaware or ignorant, because this is how people learn.

Now in college, he credits CSUN’s accessible services for making his experience positive. From Matador Nights to holiday events, he is grateful that CSUN’s environment has been inclusive for him and his friends.

Despite living in a world that is often made inaccessible, Ramos surrounds himself with the right crowd in order to maintain motivation and inspiration.

“Having friends in your life is the key to keep things rolling. Family as well, and choosing the right major, just making sure you have the right people around you to keep things moving forward,” said Ramos.

He emphasized the importance of proactive communication while offering advice for those who might be in positions similar to his. “Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Be more proactive; if you feel there is an issue, say something to make sure it can be resolved,” said Ramos.

His message was clear: people with disabilities, those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or use mobility aids, should not be judged based on their appearance. “Don’t judge something that you see or don’t see. You can’t judge people based on their capabilities, and what skills they have or what they don’t have for that manner,” he said.

Looking forward, Ramos hopes for a world where disabled people and people from diverse backgrounds support each other. “I would hope for people to try to build more connections with other people,” he said. His vision for the future includes a society that is effortlessly inclusive, where disabled people, people of color and allies are able to collaborate and work together effectively.

Ramos’s story is also a call for more patience and understanding from society. “I wish that more people had patience and were more open-minded, and don’t ignore [disabled] people or students thinking they can’t do something, when they actually can. Don’t judge a book by its cover.”



# CSUN and Los Angeles React to the Election and Critical Race Theory

WRITTEN BY ZIPPORAH PRUITT



Public defender George A. Turner Jr.  
(Photo by Aliyah Hinckley)

As two months have passed since the 2024 General Election, which saw Donald Trump re-elected as the 47th POTUS, people at CSUN and Los Angeles County have many opinions due to the intense election season. Political science major Logan Fisher, political science professor Jennifer De Maio and Judge George A. Turner Jr., a public defender recently elected to the Superior Court for California's 39th district, shared their perspectives on the recent election.

De Maio, a CSUN faculty member for 18 years shared her perspective on how the election has affected the political climate on campus, "The 2024 election has provided an important opportunity for classroom discussions about political and social justice as well as about the economy and the impact of policy decisions on the electorate. Students seem to have been more politically engaged during the election," De Maio said.

De Maio speaks on how the university must balance free speech with safety, which is a difficult topic to balance

equally. On the topic of critical race theory (CRT) and its influence on political science, "Some students may have a limited or inaccurate understanding of what CRT is. This could create challenges to discussing race and justice in the classroom, but it also provides an important opportunity to foster critical thinking and dialogue about race, power and justice. It challenges students to question and think deeply about how race intersects with politics, law and policy," De Maio said.

On how Fisher navigates the political dynamics on campus, "holding space for students who are devastated is really important, like especially students who are in the communities that are going to be directly affected, like our queer students and our undocumented students," Fisher said.

On Critical Race Theory, "I know that it's an academic theory basically used to look at race within the context of American history, you know, within the context of like slavery, white supremacy and how those systems of



Senior Political Science Major Logan Fisher  
(Photo by Kate Peterson)

oppression still continue to affect people today,” Fisher said.

As political discussions can be overwhelming, Fisher offers a way for how people can engage with complex issues that foster constructive dialogue, “It’s important to approach with a sense of empathy. Try and understand where the person’s coming from. However, if they are saying stuff about other groups of people and in a discriminatory way or looking down upon them, you do need to hold them accountable,” Fisher said.

Turner is a public defender and newly elected superior court judge who participated in a campus panel on CRT and justice in October. On following a career in law, “It’s a lot of things that led me to become a public defender. It wasn’t just one individual thing, but it’s a lot of things. I guess the straw that broke the camel’s back or the final thing, the final story that I tell is I was in law school already,” Turner said. “I had already studied critical race studies. I had already grown up during the era of mass incarceration and saw friends and family and community members go into prison. I had



CSUN Professor of Political Science Dr. Jennifer De Maio  
(Photograph courtesy of Dr. Jennifer De Maio)

already seen a sort of impact that jury trials can have on my community through the ‘92 uprising... I represent that young man or that young woman or that person of color who’s being pulled out of the car and I’m a zealous advocate for them.” While he was happy about the outcome of his election, he felt apprehensive about the local propositions that failed and other parts of the election.

On CRT, “My concentration was in critical race studies, but critical race theory is, literally, the story of the interaction between race and law in society. So it’s about how the law has helped to create our understanding of race and how race has helped to understand our relationship with the law,” Turner said.

While this political season was very divisive, the students, alumni, professors and allies of CSUN’s political science department have given space and resources for students to make themselves heard continuously, regardless of election year or not.

# Blue State, Red Nation: The Role of California during a Trump Presidency

WRITTEN BY TEAGAN DAVIDGE • ILLUSTRATED BY TANIA HUERTA

**P**resident-elect Donald Trump has made his intentions clear: push the United States further to the right. That's why the results of the November election left many Californians reeling.

How does a blue state persist when it feels like the country is moving backwards?

Despite Trump's public denials of involvement, many of his appointees are closely linked to Project 2025, a conservative roadmap created by the Heritage Foundation that details plans to downsize the federal government and "return the government to the people."

This dangerous agenda calls for abolishing the teaching of 'critical race theory' and 'gender ideology' in public schools, cutting federal funding for Planned Parenthood and all other abortion providers, significantly reducing foreign student visas and reducing basic benefits for low-income individuals and families.

According to Reuters, "many of Trump's closest policy advisers and some of those who are taking high-ranking positions in his administration are heavily involved."

Apart from Project 2025, Trump's personal plans include mass deportations and rolling back progressive policies regarding education and health care.

Despite the federal government's upcoming conservative shift, California must remain a beacon of progressive values.

The state has implemented ambitious climate policy, such as the goal to achieve net zero carbon pollution by 2045. California is also a leader in maintaining LGBTQ+ rights, with anti-discrimination laws including the right to teach and discuss LGBTQ+ issues in schools and the right to use the restrooms consistent with your gender identity, according to the California Department of Justice.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has been vocal about continuing California's progressive trajectory, regardless of Trump's plans.

In a statement announcing a special session of the California Legislature with the purpose of preparing legal defenses against Trump, Newsom said, "The freedoms we hold dear in California are under attack — and we won't sit idle."

After threats from Trump suggesting withholding of emergency wildfire aid, Newsom and other officials are working to establish a state disaster fund in case federal aid is denied, according to Politico.

But what can Californians do to continue forward during another Trump presidency?

## **Vote in local and state elections.**

The earliest upcoming elections in Los Angeles County are March 4, 2025, for Redondo Beach City and Redondo Beach Unified School District, as well as Cerritos City. Look out for elections happening in your home county and make sure you are registered to vote! The next statewide primary election is June 2, 2026.

## **Advocate for voting reforms.**

Ranked choice voting allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference. The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and voters who ranked that candidate as their first choice will have their votes count for their next choice. This way, voters can choose their top candidate without fear of wasting their vote.

## **Engage in activism.**

Raise awareness about issues that are important to you. This could mean different things for different people, like joining a women's rights march or using social media to share resources for undocumented students.

Now more than ever, it's crucial that blue Californians stand firm in their ideals. By taking these actions, our state can continue to be a nationwide leader in progressive policy, inspiring Democrats in other states to keep going in hard times.



**Mike Curb College of Arts,  
Media and Communication**

The Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication experienced growth in all its departments. Department of Communication Studies student Mitul Kalra received the Wolfson Scholar Award.

The CSUN Forensics Speech and Debate team won every tournament they competed in, including the Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association Spring Championship.

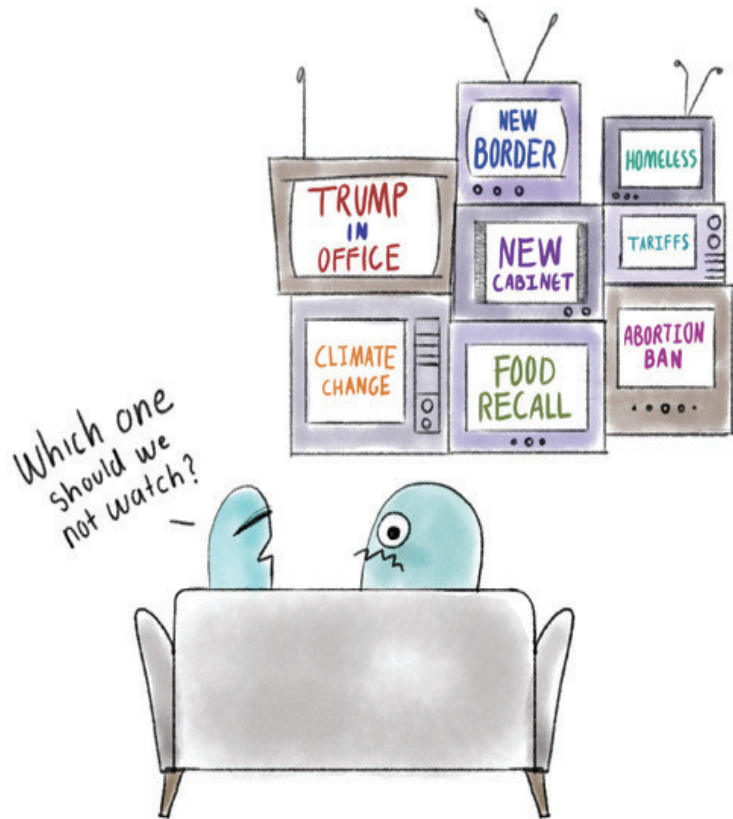
The CSUN Theatre Department had a record-breaking year, attracting over 4,500 patrons with sold-out productions like A Midsummer Night's Dream and The SpongeBob Musical. The Teenage Drama Workshop celebrated its 68th season.

With funding from the Golden Globe Foundation, the Journalism Department sent nine students to Uvalde, Texas, in January 2024 following the aftermath of the Robb Elementary School shooting.

The Art & Design Department received re-accreditation, hosted the inaugural Create Path Summit, and welcomed The Kalli Arte Collective as the Virginia A. Orndorff Artist-in-Residence. The department also placed 3rd in the CORE at CSUN (Championing our Racial Equity at CSUN) challenge.

# “All Eyes On January”

ILLUSTRATION BY TANIA HUERTA



## Games Solutions (pg. 21)

7	3	6	8	5	2	4	9	1
9	1	2	6	4	7	3	5	8
5	4	8	3	9	1	6	7	2
1	9	3	4	8	5	2	6	7
2	7	5	9	1	6	8	3	4
6	8	4	7	2	3	5	1	9
3	5	9	2	7	8	1	4	6
8	6	7	1	3	4	9	2	5
4	2	1	5	6	9	7	8	3

**Sudoku: Hard**

6	2	1	5	8	3	7	9	4
7	9	4	2	1	6	5	8	3
3	8	5	7	9	4	2	1	6
5	7	8	6	3	1	4	2	9
1	3	9	8	4	2	6	5	7
4	6	2	9	7	5	8	3	1
2	5	7	1	6	9	3	4	8
8	1	3	4	5	7	9	6	2
9	4	6	3	2	8	1	7	5

**Sudoku: Easy**

Z	E	I	D	B	E	D	S	S	D	P	N	S	P
E	F	N	E	A	A	H	A	L	S	T	E	D	B
D	V	U	H	I	R	L	R	L	A	I	I	Z	S
L	S	I	P	L	F	B	R	U	I	O	A	O	A
S	H	C	R	F	P	Y	L	P	H	D	L	T	
M	E	A	A	E	A	Y	F	D	L	O	N	Y	A
E	Z	D	Z	T	N	I	D	D	U	E	A	S	I
D	L	E	L	L	M	N	R	E	M	S	W	L	L
E	L	A	S	S	E	N	E	I	M	L	I	E	I
I	R	A	I	M	B	Z	I	S	E	O	T	T	L
P	L	I	N	D	L	E	Y	A	R	R	E	L	E
S	E	E	N	O	S	A	O	L	P	E	L	F	E
N	L	C	N	O	R	D	H	O	F	F	S	A	Z
D	E	L	S	A	R	E	S	E	D	A	H	L	D

**Streets of CSUN  
Word Search**

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**DAILY SUNDIAL**

# Staff Highlight

The students who make the Sundial possible

WRITTEN BY QUINN ALEXANDER



## Ashley Sanchez

With the 2024 graduating class causing almost every copy editor to leave the Sundial, a new wave of students had to step in; Ashley Sanchez was one of them. Through her leadership skills and dedication to the publication, Sanchez assumed the role of copy chief before officially taking the title a few weeks into the fall semester.

“I appreciate Ashley’s willingness to improve everyone’s work. Her dedication to The Sundial is admirable. She has been incredibly helpful in building a sense of community at the college newspaper and providing workshops for the rest of the staff,” says Sundial Advisor Eduard Cauch.

In five years, Sanchez sees herself in a bi-lingual newsroom, exploring both written and broadcast news. Her goal is to attend her first market or be accepted into a fellowship right out of college.



## Jesse Illanes

The Sundial was very familiar with Jesse Illanes’ work before he assumed the role of culture editor in the fall. Illanes began his journey within the publication in the final year of his undergraduate, primarily writing music and game reviews. Now, as a mass communications master’s student, he leads his team to provide a healthy mix of culture and pop culture surrounding CSUN and its communities.

“Jesse is an excellent writer who thinks outside the box when covering the entertainment industry. As a culture editor, Jesse has also helped many student reporters shape and improve their stories,” says Cauch.

In five years, Illanes sees himself at a publication focused on entertainment, specifically in gaming, movies, music or pop culture. If that doesn’t pan out, he would like to write in-depth analyses and reviews of games and films, since engaging with both communities is his passion.



## Aliyah Hinckley

A necessary quality in an editor is their dependability and Aliyah Hinckley is as reliable as they come. Beginning her third and final semester as the Sundial’s photo editor, Hinckley has ensured that every story is not without a visual.

“Aliyah’s photography talent and interest in the sports and entertainment industry make her a great asset for The Sundial. Her commitment to the student newspaper has been inspiring, and she has a positive attitude and eagerness to work in a team environment,” says Cauch.

In five years, Hinckley sees herself as an entertainment and music photographer based in California. She aims to work for a magazine or as an artists’ photographer. Additionally, she can see herself as a writer or cinematographer, basically wherever the cards take her.

# Word Search

## Streets of CSUN

Z	E	I	D	B	E	D	S	S	D	P	N	S	P
E	F	N	E	A	A	H	A	L	S	T	E	D	B
D	V	U	H	I	R	L	R	L	A	I	I	Z	S
L	S	I	P	L	F	B	R	U	I	O	A	O	A
S	H	H	C	R	F	P	Y	L	P	H	D	L	T
M	E	A	A	E	A	Y	F	D	L	O	N	Y	A
E	Z	D	Z	T	N	I	D	D	U	E	A	S	I
D	L	E	L	L	M	N	R	E	M	S	W	L	L
E	L	A	S	S	E	N	E	I	M	L	I	E	I
I	R	A	I	M	B	Z	I	S	E	O	T	T	L
P	L	I	N	D	L	E	Y	A	R	R	E	L	E
S	E	E	N	O	S	A	O	L	P	E	L	F	E
N	L	C	N	O	R	D	H	O	F	F	S	A	Z
D	E	L	S	A	R	E	S	E	D	A	H	L	D

ETIWANDA  
 PLUMMER  
 NORDHOFF  
 VICENNES  
 DARBY  
 LASSEN  
 RESEDA  
 HALSTED  
 PRAIRIE  
 ZELZAH  
 LINDLEY

*\*Answers on pg. 19*

# Sudoku

**How to play:** Each 9x9 square must be filled in with numbers from 1-9 with no repeated numbers in each line, horizontally or vertically. There are also 3x3 squares marked out in the grid; each of these squares cannot have any repeat numbers.

*\*Answers on pg. 19*

	2			8	3		9	4
	9	4	2	1		5		3
3		5	7	9	4	2		6
						4		
	3			4	2		5	
	6		9	7	5	8		
2		7					4	
8				5			6	
			3	2			7	

**Difficulty: Easy**

								1
	1	2					5	8
						6		2
	9	3		8	5	2	6	
		5				8		
			7		3			9
		9	2			1		
8	6							5
		1	5	6		7		3

**Difficulty: Hard**



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## FEATURED EVENTS



**VRC: Veterans Welcome**  
 Saturday, Jan 18: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
 📍 Lake View Terrace Room



**DREAM Center Open House**  
 Tuesday, Jan. 21 – Friday, Jan. 24  
 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
 📍 DREAM Center



**Spring Fest**  
 Wednesday, Jan. 29  
 📍 University Student Union



**Pride Center: Rainbow Reception**  
 Wednesday, Jan. 29: Noon – 3 p.m.  
 📍 Lake View Terrace Room

## CHECK OUT



**Games Room Tournaments**  
 Stay up-to-date with our exciting and competitive tournaments throughout the semester.  
 (discord.com/invite/MEG&Abs)



**Oasis: Love in Every Drop**  
 From Feb. 11 through Feb. 13, Craft a custom essential oil blend.



**SRC: Intramural Sports**  
 Enjoy friendly competition this semester with Intramural Sports at the SRC! Contact Intramurals via email at srcintramurals@csun.edu for more information.