

PRIDE MARCH KICKS OFF LGBTQ HISTORY MONTH



Students, faculty and staff march together on the CSUF campus ahead of the Pride Flag Raising event on Oct. 11. PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

BUSINESS OF SPORTS

Graduate finds her niche: Honda Center, Ducks media buyer

Brackett credits her CSUF education

By **Jenelyn Russo**,
contributing writer

Cal State Fullerton alumna Lindsey Brackett envisioned a life in Orange County long before she landed her current job as a media buyer for Honda Center and the Anaheim Ducks.

A Bakersfield native, Brackett spent part of her elementary and middle school years in nearby Corona, and after starting her college education at Bakersfield College, she felt the pull to relocate to Orange County. CSUF’s College of Communications was her first choice.

“Cal State Fullerton was always number one,” Brackett said. “I knew that their communications department had a really, really good reputation ... and I had heard various success stories from people that had gone to Cal State Fuller-

ton and had been in the industry. I knew that if I went to Cal State Fullerton my possibilities would be endless ... and I would have a lot of things under my belt that I probably would not have experienced had I gone to any other school.”

Intrigued by the psychology behind what drives consumers to make their purchasing decisions, Brackett chose advertising as her bachelor’s degree emphasis, and she leaned into all the department curriculum had to offer. A required internship and a senior capstone project that featured a student-run agency were just a few of the opportunities that prepared Brackett for her post-college career path.

Despite graduating in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, Brackett was still able to take in much of the Titan experience by living on campus and serving as a social media assistant

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PHOTO BY DREW A. KELLEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Lindsey Brackett majored in advertising for her bachelor’s degree.

SPORTS

Titan Hall of Famer TJ Dillashaw reflects on his career in the ring

By **Brian Robin**,
contributing writer

It was the love of fear.

That seemingly oxymoronic combination put T.J. Dillashaw into a wrestling singlet. It made him a high school state runner-up, brought him a college scholarship he never conceived and made him a three-time NCAA qualifier.

The love of fear. It put Dillashaw in the UFC steel cage, brought him wealth, accolades and world titles incomprehensible to someone who grew up in a small Northern California town of 3,500, made him one of the poster boys for an entire sport and even caused UFC commentator Joe Rogan to gush in front of an international audience that Dillashaw put

in “the most spectacular performance I have ever seen. ...”

The love of fear. It also turned both of Dillashaw’s shoulders into hamburger, sent him to the surgeon’s table 11 times, caused him to make a decision he called “the biggest mistake of my career” and forced him out of the sport he loved before his time.

The love of fear. Eventually, it brought Dillashaw full circle, right into the Cal State Fullerton Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2023. The former Titans’ wrestler will join soccer goalkeeper Karen Bardsley, soccer forward Eddie Soto, golfer Martha Wilkinson-Kirouac, former director of sports medicine Julie Max and the 1979 Baseball Team in this year’s class.

“I was surprised. I didn’t expect a call,

I didn’t expect to be inducted because I didn’t have the type of career that I should have had when I was there,” he said. “I didn’t become an All-American. I didn’t become a national champion. I did good there, but I didn’t do great. Those expectations were something I try to hold myself to.”

This gives you a front-row seat to Dillashaw’s brutal level of self-awareness. You’ll find very few people, never mind professional athletes, honestly owning themselves like Dillashaw does. He is so honest, so open about his triumphs, mistakes, and yes, fear, that he thanked the interviewer “for the therapy session.” One that lasted an hour and 42 minutes.

That, too, comes with that love of fear that Dillashaw used as a motivational tool from the moment he first walked onto a wrestling mat. He was 8, following his wrestling coach father to his club practices. When he stepped onto the mat even at that age, Dillashaw realized several things before long. He realized he was pretty

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INNOVATIVE COUNSELING

Lab expands boundaries of traditional research methodologies

Providing support to marginalized communities

By **Lou Ponsi**,
contributing writer

As an initiative with Cal State Fullerton’s Department of Counseling, the Transformative Praxis Research Lab veers away from the confines of traditional research models by taking a collaborative approach in working with marginalized populations.

Founded by Ana Guadalupe Reyes, PHOTOVOICE » PAGE 5

1st in California

bachelor’s degrees earned at public universities

CSUF Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, 2021

Cal State Fullerton

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DIVERSITY

A love letter to jotería communities

Museum of Social Justice’s first LGBTQ-focused exhibit

By **Greg Hardesty**,
contributing writer

Since he was a child, Eddy Francisco Alvarez Jr. has been writing.

It was a creative outlet throughout a challenging upbringing.

Eddy and his two sisters, Gaby and Patty, all children of immigrant parents, grew up on welfare and in subsidized housing.

Their Cuban father was mentally disabled, and their Mexican mother stayed home to take care of him when she wasn’t cleaning houses or hotel rooms.

But challenges didn’t stifle the creative juices in Alvarez, who in addition to writing also considered acting before he discovered his sweet spot in academia.

Now, the associate professor in CSUF’s Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies is celebrating a first.

Based on his research into queer Latinx communities in Los Angeles (Eddy grew up in the San Fernando Valley), his exhibition continues its run (Aug. 24 through Jan. 28, 2024) at the Museum of Social Justice in downtown Los Angeles.

“Finding Sequins in the Rubble: Archives of Jotería Memories in Los Angeles” is the museum’s first LGBTQ-focused exhibition. It also marks Alvarez’s first time curating a public history project. And he had some help from students in two of his classes.

“It’s been very scary because I have so much love for my communities, and it’s been lots of work,” says Alvarez, a member of the queer Latinx community of L.A., “but it’s also been so much fun and a very memorable experience.”

Reclaimed empowerment

*Write your words
to leave a legacy, a history, a herstory,
a queerstory,
so that your words may create paths
to follow,
Recipes for self-love, self-healing, survival.*

The above is from Alvarez’s poem, “Write Your Words,” and he views the exhibition as a form of poetry.

“It’s a love letter to joteria communities in L.A. and everywhere,” says Alvarez, referring to the word derived from the derogatory terms Joto and Jota that historically have been used to describe people of Mexican descent who do not fit heteronormative standards.

Jotería now is a reclaimed term of empowerment for queer Latinx and indigenous people.

Alvarez’s exhibition was curated from images, artifacts and oral histories, and is designed to focus on the love, joy, activism and family that queer Latinx in Los Angeles have built.

Alvarez first pitched the idea to a former professor at Cal State University Northridge, where Alvarez, a first-generation college student and former elementary school teacher, earned a bachelor’s degree in Spanish (he earned master’s and doctorate degrees in Chicana and Chicano Studies at UC Santa Barbara).

It took a lot of support from former and current colleagues as well as students at CSUF, which Alvarez joined after teaching stints in New York and Portland, to make the exhibition a reality.

Alvarez even got his family involved. A niece helped him pick up artifacts across Los Angeles

Humbling and rewarding

For the exhibition, some of Alvarez’s Titan students transcribed, conducted oral histories, did background research, and put together timelines.

Esmeralda Llerenas, a first-year graduate student pursuing a master’s in counseling with an emphasis



PHOTO COURTESY OF EDDY FRANCISCO ALVAREZ JR.

Eddy Francisco Alvarez, associate professor in CSUF’s Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, curated the exhibit featuring stories from the queer Latinx community.

in the Latinx community, interviewed a good friend for the exhibit.

“Being able to share his story, and being given the trust to do so, was so humbling and rewarding,” she says.

Llerenas says Alvarez was a source of validation and comfort for her.

“I struggled with my imposter syndrome on this project,” she says. “But he made sure to always be available and supportive, while also providing feedback. I trusted him and his expertise to guide me in the right direction.”

Amalia Contreras, a recent graduate with a major in history and a double minor in Chicano studies with plans to become an educator or a journalist, collected data on oral history interviews that Alvarez conducted.

She organized data from those oral histories using a spreadsheet that pinpointed the places that document important locations of where folks realized their sexuality and had first met their first boyfriend or girlfriend.

“To me,” Contreras says, “Professor Alvarez is the most impactful educator and activist on campus. He has truly been a leader in every sense of the word.

He is the reason why I minored in Chicano studies. And his presence in higher education has contributed to so much healing in the Latinx/Chicanx community here at CSUF.”

‘It feels like home’

Alvarez is working on a book, “Finding Sequins in the Rubble: Memory, Space and Aesthetics in Queer Latinx Los Angeles,” an oral history and archival project that maps physical and ephemeral sites of memory and quotidian moments of pleasure and resistance for queer and trans Chicanx and Latinx communities in Los Angeles.

He also is working on a collection of essays and poems about growing up queer.

He’s thrilled to be at CSUF.

“It feels like home,” Alvarez says. “Many of my students have stories like mine, and they are so committed to their learning. Many of them juggle multiple jobs and families and go to school. And I’m lucky to have amazing and supportive colleagues.”

Visit museumofsocialjustice.org to learn more about Alvarez’s exhibit.

RECOGNITION

Cal State Fullerton ranks No. 2 in social mobility

Grads are set to work, serve community

By **Nicole Gregory**,
contributing writer

Cal State Fullerton has been named the No. 2 top performer for 2024 in social mobility among national universities by U.S. News & World Report, a jump from the No. 7 spot for 2023.

To rank for social mobility, U.S. News & World Report measured how well schools graduated Pell-awarded students and first-generation students. Of the 40,386 enrolled undergraduate students in fall 2022 at Cal State Fullerton, 16,931 were eligible for Pell Grants. More than 32%, or about 13,000 students, identified as first in their family to attend college.

“The ability to catapult them to that next level for me is a big point of pride,” said interim president Sylvia A. Alva. “We’re really saying yes to more diverse groups of students and admitting them, but also helping them achieve their goal at very high levels of performance.”

Alva calls this “authentic access,” or “making sure that when we admit a student, we’re committed to meeting them where they’re at, supporting them through the programs and services.”

She explained the college takes a holistic approach in supporting students, recognizing that academic success is important, as is the larger sense of self and identity. One example is addressing “the digital divide.”

“Here on the campus, we have a Center for Digital Access and Equity,” she explained. “If students need a laptop for an hour, a day, or a semester, they can check out a laptop that has the software that they need to do well in the courses that they’re enrolled in. That’s an example of an incredible resource that students who, without these tools, would not be able to do well in their academic fields.”

Ensuring that students are managing basic living needs is another ongoing effort. Students who show up at the campus food pantry for free food are discreetly asked about their struggles, Alva said, and are connected to free social services or programs that can help if necessary.

Support also includes helping students graduate without a burden of debt. “The issue of debt is a very inter-

esting one for the CSU,” Alva explained, “because we have had a longstanding institutional commitment, not just here at Fullerton but systemwide, that one-third of the tuition that we collect is redistributed back to students to support the students who have the highest level of financial need. Many of our students, the vast majority of them, graduate with very little or no debt.”

Courses are designed to prepare students for the careers of the future, Alva said. “I was just at a national convening where we were recognized for a program that we have in our social work masters where students are being prepared to be counselors in Spanish language and cultures that reflect the populations and communities that they’re very likely to be serving as social workers.”

This particular program is called Ánimo, which in Spanish means encouragement or can-do spirit, she explained. “It’s an example of how the curriculum is being updated to ensure that our students are ready to move into career opportunities where there’s demand.”

Being equipped with the relevant skills to step immediately into the workforce is another measure of success, Alva said. And this success benefits the wider community. “Most of our students stay in Southern California. I like to say we’re a powerful engine of social mobility, not just for our students and their families but for the communities that they come from and will return to.”

Alva was a first-generation student herself, so she understands the importance of finding meaningful employment upon graduating. “I really believe that if you’re first generation to go to college, you’re also first generation to have a career. We need to help our students compete, be ready to land that first job.”

A career closet on campus provides free professional clothing for job interviews, and students can get a free portrait taken of themselves for professional social media platforms.

“They come to the workforce ready to work, to work hard, to contribute,” said Alva of Cal State Fullerton graduates. “They don’t take what they have for granted. They’ve had to work really hard, and scrape and sacrifice to get where they’re at, and so there’s that sense of gratitude, that sense of opportunity that they aren’t going to squander. They really are committed to leveraging the power of their degree and what that means for them and their families. They’re grateful. They’re optimistic. They’re ambitious. And for me, attitude matters.”

The recognition from U.S. News & World Report reflects efforts that have been going on for years at Cal State Fullerton. “I’m really very proud of the work that we’re doing,” Alva said. “I see this as an honor and a wonderful way to celebrate a commitment that I see really embedded here at the institution.”

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OSCAR WINNER

Ke Huy Quan explains the power of unsung heroes in storytelling

CSUF News Media Services

From fleeing the Vietnam War by boat at 7 years old to winning an Academy Award, Ke Huy Quan committed himself to diverse Asian storytelling on Hollywood’s grand stage.

When Quan immigrated to Los Angeles with his parents and eight siblings, he frequented Chinatown theater, which played movies starring martial artists Jackie Chan and Sammo Hung.

“Little did I know that that was the very first seed planted in me wanting to be an actor,” Quan said. “A few years later, my fate came calling. I had the opportunity to audition for Steven Spielberg and George Lucas and work with Harrison Ford in ‘Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.’ That got me hooked.”

An award-winning actor and stunt choreographer, Quan is best known for his roles as Short Round in the 1984 blockbuster “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” and Data in the 1985 classic “Goonies.”

His portrayal of Waymond in the film “Everything Everywhere All at Once” garnered him the 2023 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor.

Quan spoke to the Cal State Fullerton community as part of the “Beyond the Conversation” speaker series, hosted by Associated Students Inc. and the Division of Student Affairs. The series invites speakers to campus to engage students in dialogue about diversity, equity and inclusion.

Previous speakers include actress Hunter Schafer, actors Danny Trejo and Daniel Dae Kim, political activist Angela Davis, Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, activist David Hogg and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones.

Following his role as a goofy husband and laundromat owner in the multi-verse film “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Quan self-taped auditions for many roles and didn’t receive a single callback. He lost hope and his health insurance.

As Asian representation diversified the silver screen, Quan said he felt the “nagging pressure” to leap into the spotlight again.

“The fear of regret gave me courage to return to acting,” said Quan. “It was the right moment.”

Fate came calling again, and Quan is embarking on a dream acting project with actor and executive producer Tom Hiddleston. On Oct. 5, Quan made his debut in Marvel Studios’ television series, “Loki 2,” on Disney+.

The series brings to center stage Loki, the god of mischief, who slips through unique timelines and realities. Quan said he enjoys how his role as a Time-Variance Authority archivist is race-interchangeable and fluid.

“There needs to be more opportunities for authentic stories and the portrayal of culture, nuances, triumphs and struggles. ‘Loki’ does that,” said Quan.

“The unsung heroes of a movie set come together not because the paycheck is big,” said Quan. “They come together because they are passionate about storytelling.”

At the USC School of Cinematic Art, Quan “found his footing and learned every



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Ke Huy Quan was awarded an Oscar for his performance in the hit 2022 film "Everything Everywhere All At Once."

aspect of how a movie is made.” Immediately after college, he struggled landing an acting role and invested time behind the camera. He received a call from Corey Yuen, Hong Kong action director and choreographer, who invited him to Toronto to work on the stunt choreography team for “X-Men.”

Experimenting in alternative fields and not being cynical are some keys to success, Quan said. Higher education is crucial as a means of hands-on learning, he added.

“When I graduated from college, I wanted to get out there to show the world what I can do,” said Quan. “Harness the power of awe and passion to energize you.”

“In our society there is so much emphasis on the alpha man and how men are measured by how big their biceps are, how tall they are, how good looking they are and how much weight they can lift,” said Quan. “If people can take away one thing from that is that it’s okay to be the beta man.”

For students in the arts aiming to reach stardom, Quan eased their anxieties. “I would tell my younger self to stop worrying,” he said. “Everything will work out. Better days lie ahead.”



Quan spoke about his experiences as an Asian actor and the changing face of the film industry.

TRAINING PROGRAM

CSUF student is 1 of 8 selected for Latinas Excelling at Doctoral Degrees

CSUF News Media Services

Growing up in East Los Angeles, Emely Espino Bardales was baffled by the stigmatization of mental health in the Latinx community. Espino Bardales noticed that therapy is taboo and vulnerability is masked behind machismo. Money and time are valuable, but wellness is often disregarded.

As a first-generation Latina student pursuing her bachelor’s degree in child and adolescent studies at Cal State Fullerton, Espino Bardales’ own mental health struggles inspired her to help others.

“I want to destigmatize mental health and support my community by providing professional assistance that is culturally aligned, so that kids and families are comfortable with accessing mental health resources,” she explained.

For her dedication to advancing mental health resources within the Latinx community, Espino Bardales was one of eight across the nation students selected for the 2023-24 Latinas Excelling at Doctoral Degrees training program.

Hosted by Rutgers University-New Brunswick, the program provides mentorship, monthly workshops, resources and networking opportunities for Latina students interested in pursuing doctoral degrees.

In Espino Bardales’ first workshop with LEADD, she shared the challenges of being a first-generation Latina college student.

“The eight LEADD mentors are teaching me about the power I hold as a Latina in higher education, which is fantastic because it influences me to want my doctorate even more,” said Espino Bardales.

When Espino Bardales enrolled in the Adelita lab, an independent study course directed by Guadalupe Díaz Lara, assistant professor of child and adoles-

cent studies, she expressed her interest in pursuing a doctorate degree.

The Adelita lab focuses on the educational experiences of Latinx students, dual language learners/English learners, and on elevating Latinx families’ strengths and needs. The lab’s symbolic origins stem from the Mexican Revolution, where Adelita women defied societal norms and fought alongside men. They were strong, brave and smart, paving the way for women to fight for their achievements, Díaz Lara shared.

“My lab focuses on the Latinx communities’ bravery, strength and resilience in education as well as Latinx parents’ leadership development and access to familial resources. The concept of Adelitas is not only representative of my lab, but also of the students’ bravery and strength,” Díaz Lara said. “In my lab, I want students to have an authentic mentorship experience in which they are developing their own research interests and achieving their goals.”

Initially terrified of delving into research as a freshman, Díaz Lara’s mentorship increased Espino Bardales’ confidence.

“Professor Díaz Lara has taught me how to code data, how to find good peer-reviewed articles, how to gather data in ethical ways and how to present my research projects,” said Espino Bardales. “She has taught me the basics of research and is mentoring me to be the best I can become.”

Beyond the classroom, Espino Bardales serves as a mental wellness peer educator for CSUF’s Counseling and Psychological Services. In this role, she helps to promote mental health services available for students.

“She has a strong dedication for learning, gaining new skills and a strong passion for finding ways to support her community. She also has an understanding of the challenges that she might be faced with as a woman of color in a graduate program,” said Díaz Lara.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Emely Espino Bardales, child and adolescent studies major

As Espino Bardales explores career paths, she said she is considering becoming a professor, corporate research analyst or community development worker.

“I want to help the Latinx community through one of these roles, and the research I learn from LEADD can help improve their quality of life,” said Espino Bardales.

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

CSUF expands partnerships in South Korea, Sweden, Vietnam

CSUF News Media Services

For decades, Cal State Fullerton has taken pride in its range and depth of outreach to countries across the world. Once the pandemic restrictions were lifted, the university began re-establishing relationships and developing new partnerships with global universities to provide opportunities for CSUF students to study abroad and allow international students access to the CSUF campus as well.

“CSUF has such a rich history of global involvement. The university’s mission of social mobility and focus on diversity and inclusion, position us to have a meaningful impact on our students, who may wish to study overseas as well as students who are studying overseas who may wish to enroll in CSUF through enrollment pathways with our international partners,” said Debra Leahy, Dean of Extension and Associate Vice President for International Programs.

To deepen and expand these global relations, a team of CSUF leaders traveled this summer to meet with 11 university partners in three countries: Vietnam, South Korea and Sweden. The meetings allowed opportunity to discuss academic and regional partnerships.

“The opportunity to develop trade relationships between Orange County businesses and firms in Vietnam and South Korea may have a significant economic impact regionally and overseas,” said Sridhar Sundaram, Dean of CSUF’s College of Business and Economics. “This, in turn, helps extend transformative learning opportunities for students.”

With the campus’s proximity to and engagement with the Little Saigon community in Orange County, CSUF has had a long-standing history with Vietnam.

“Beloved throughout Vietnam, Orange County’s Little Saigon community, home to the world’s largest overseas Vietnamese population, exerts even more influence over the future success of both nations,” said Tam Nguyen, chair of the Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation Board of Governors, who earned a master’s degree in business administration in 2005. “CSUF continues to forge partnerships in Vietnam that are mutually beneficial.”

Among the universities engaging with the CSUF delegation in Vietnam were Foreign Trade University, Hanoi,

and Fulbright University of Vietnam. The team committed to an exchange of students and faculty members to learn, teach and conduct research in both countries. The team also held exploratory meetings with the University of Economics and Law, Hanoi and the University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City.

While the delegation was in Vietnam, it also had an opportunity to meet with groups of CSUF alumni, and more targeted meetings onsite with alumni who are now running successful businesses in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

“Graduates of Cal State Fullerton are contributing to the economies of both countries with critical investments of capital, ingenuity, knowledge, creativity and ethics,” said Nguyen.

In South Korea, CSUF leaders met with partners at Korea University and Ewha Womans University to determine ways to enhance these partnerships and open access to more students. In meeting with new partner, Woosong University, and its Solbridge International School of Business, the team explored increasing pathways, disciplines and creative opportunities for students to study at one another’s respective universities.

In Sweden, the delegation met with its counterparts at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and Luleå University of Technology in Luleå. Reciprocal exchanges, enrollment pathways, expanded study abroad options were discussed as well as opening opportunities for students to enroll in CSUF’s Summer Session.

“When considering study abroad and student/faculty/staff exchanges, we strive to forge alliances and develop programs that position students to examine social structures and cultural views beyond their own experiences,” said Leahy.

“Ultimately, these partnerships are built around reciprocity and aligning with the goals and needs of our respective universities,” she said.

In fact, three of the universities that were part of this delegation visit will be visiting CSUF during the 2023-24 academic year.

Soon, the university hopes to not only expand opportunities for students at CSUF and abroad but create a wide spectrum of educational opportunities and cultivate a network of international alumni.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

From left are Dean of the College of Business and Economics Sri Sundaram; Dean of Extension and Associate Vice President for International Programs Debra Leahy; Ewha University alumna Aeri Christine; Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, CSU Chancellor’s Office Dilcie Perez; Professor Inhan Kim at Ewha University in Korea; Executive Director of International Affairs, CSU Chancellor’s Office Shankar Raman.



Joshua Park, left, dean of SolBridge International School of Business, meets with the CSUF delegation including Debra Leahy and Sri Sundaram.

APPLYING RESEARCH

Public health students create change in an elementary school

CSUF News Media Services

When Cal State Fullerton public health student Karisa Andert first visited Skyview School, she was an intern in the elementary school’s food pantry.

Interacting with students and stocking the shelves with healthy food for the kids to take home, Andert’s passion for nutrition, sustainability and community-based health began to grow.

“Skyview School is a K-8 system that serves children who are experiencing home insecurity,” explained Laura Chandler, associate professor of public health and Andert’s mentor. “Karisa was understanding of the children’s needs and was passionate about working with them. During her internship, she started talking to administrators about how they could improve the children’s nutritional habits.”

Inspired by her experience in the field, Andert joined Cal State Fullerton’s Leveraging Nutritional Knowledge Program, where she conducted research on the nutritional health and well-being of at-risk youth in Orange County and developed a plan that addresses food insecurity at Skyview.

Funded by a grant from the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture, the program teaches students about nutrition and chronic disease prevention in Latinx communities while preparing them for careers in public health, health science and kinesiology.

LINK scholars conduct research alongside a faculty mentor, gain field experience, find solutions to public health issues and intern with such organizations as the Orange County Health Agency and Kaiser Permanente, said Lilia Espinoza, associate professor of public health and the program’s co-investigator.

Under the guidance of Chandler, Andert and Yerenni Tenorio, who earned a bachelor’s degree in public health in 2023 at CSUF, researched physical activity and nutritional habits among children who experience home insecurity.

Previous studies found that less than 30% of students aged 6-17 meet the national recommendation of 60 minutes of physical activity per day. This can lead to childhood obesity and the development of mental illnesses, explained Tenorio. When she expanded her research into physical activity habits, specifically among home insecure youth, Tenorio found a gap in existing literature.

“When you have a child who doesn’t have a stable home, that risk of childhood obesity becomes significantly higher,” she explained.

Her research found that many students were inactive because they didn’t have an outdoor space or a safe area to play when they were at home. Those habits were replicated at school, where Tenorio saw that many kids continued to sit on the sidelines during recess.



Yerenni Tenorio graduated in 2023 with a degree in public health.

Interviewing teachers and surveying the kids, the aspiring public health researcher designed and implemented a physical activity plan for K-8 grade Skyview students. Engaging them with games and obstacle courses, Tenorio said she could see the difference as students went from being apprehensive of the physical activities to happily participating in them.

“They were very enthusiastic about wanting to be active,” Tenorio said. “We helped provide guidelines for how they can continue that activity engagement with their friends and school community.”

While Tenorio worked with the kids on the playground, Andert turned her focus to how the kids fuel their bodies, finding that children from low-income families are at a higher risk of developing obesity.

With interactive, hands-on planting activities about nutrition and sustainable farming, Andert introduced the students to garden concepts in the elementary school curriculum, cultivating positive attitudes toward fruit and vegetable consumption.

“We created this culture of gardening at the school that was not there before,” said Andert. “The kids were so excited. Even now, when I go to the school, they’re still telling me about the plants that they potted and grew.”

Inspired by her work with the LINK program, Andert said she will keep working with the district and the school’s garden planning committee next year to build a large campus garden at Skyview.

As aspiring researchers interested in community health and well-being, An-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Laura Chandler, left, professor of public health, with CSUF students



The Leveraging Nutritional Knowledge program is aimed at improving the nutritional health of at-risk youth and addressing food insecurity.

dert and Tenorio said one of the unique aspects of this program is that it provides students the opportunity to apply their research in the communities they want to serve.

“It’s like planting seeds. In the classroom, they learned about childhood obesity and the factors that contribute to it, but when they visit the school, interact with the kids and see everything firsthand, they start to blossom as researchers,” said Chandler.

Throughout their studies, both students gained valuable research experi-

ence in the field, identifying gaps in existing literature, interviewing subjects, conducting surveys and adapting plans that yielded positive results.

“They have to talk to administrators and present their research to convince others that this is a necessary change,” said Chandler. “There are a lot of hoops you have to jump through, and we need young, passionate, inspired people to carry that change forward like they have and continue to do this amazing work that is needed in our field and communities.”

Photovoice

FROM PAGE 1

assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, the TPRL is open to all graduate students who are interested in learning more about research within those under-represented groups.

“Our main aim is to really transform the hierarchy of research,” Guadalupe Reyes said. “We want to support communities in learning about research so that they can become co-researchers and top partners in the process of how we collaboratively create and disseminate knowledge.”

Guadalupe Reyes began cultivating the concept in November 2022, and counseling students were immediately on board.

The TPRL officially opened in January 2023 with eight students and has since increased membership to 14, they said.

This “bottom-up” approach to conducting research not only provides support to marginalized communities, but the research itself can be healing, Guadalupe Reyes said.

“These are critical research skills that students are learning and they can be applied across marginalized communities,” Guadalupe Reyes said. “So it’s not only specific to one community. These are foundational skills that students can build on and really tailor to their specific communities.”

A recent TPRL project that exemplified the collaborative approach was a photo exhibit: “Through Our Lens: Queer Womxn of Color’s Experiences of Healing and Liberation.”

The exhibit was unveiled at Titan Student Union on Oct. 11, National Coming Out Day, and featured a collection of photographs and narratives from nine queer women of color, which amplified their voices and experiences of self-discovery and healing.

“They were deeply touched throughout the experience,” Guadalupe Reyes said. “And there were moments of tears, and moments of sadness, and moments of deep reflection.” And through this process, I’m helping students in role modeling how we can do research in a very different way.”

Projects such as this are the reason the TPRL was recently nominated for a 2024 Research Innovations in Counseling Practice and Counselor Education Award for its focus on liberatory and transformative research.

Awarded by the National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. and Affiliates, the award recognizes “researchers and/or counseling programs or research teams who have engaged in innovative, transformative research recognized by peers, colleagues, or the professional community as having potential for long-range impacts on mental health services, counselor preparation, or clinical practice in spaces where counselors serve.”

The awardees will be notified by the end of December.



PHOTOS BY DREW A. KELLEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The photography exhibit “Through Our Lens: Queer Womxn of Color’s Experiences of Healing and Liberation,” on display at Cal State Fullerton

Sydney Herring-Alderete works as a graduate assistant in the TPRL and is on course to earn a master’s in counseling after the fall 2024 semester.

Herring-Alderete managed research labs at another university but said the vibe was colder and “just didn’t feel right,” compared to her work at the TPRL.

“By learning about the TPRL and how we can practice anti-oppressive and liberatory research by elevating clients to co-researchers and just changing the language and reframing things and really acknowledging that we wouldn’t have research without these participants, we’re giving them the power and the acknowledgment that they deserve,” she said.

Tiffany Perry-Wilson is a second-year doctoral student at George Washington University’s Graduate School of Education and Human Development Department and has been a Graduate Student Researcher in the TPRL since January.

Perry-Wilson was drawn to TPRL’s collaborative research model, particularly in working with queer women of color.

“So, I definitely wanted to learn more from Ana to then be able to gain further understanding to be able to work with this population as well for myself,” Perry-Wilson said. “Ana has assisted us with learning how to approach these community members in respectable ways to really honor and play spotlight on their voices compared to, let’s say, traditional



The exhibit features a collection of photographs and narratives from queer women of color.

research where the individual isn’t recognized.”

The TPRL was awarded a research grant from the Society for Sexual, Affective, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities.

Guadalupe Reyes and other members of the TPRL were also invited to present their research findings at professional conferences, including the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Conference, Oct. 11-15 in Denver.

Alum

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for Associated Students, Inc.

“I think that the advertising department specifically provides such a wide variety of different classes that hit on all of the points that you would see in an agency,” Brackett said. “There are faculty and staff that have the connections and the experience to be able to provide us with a plethora of networking opportunities or just general insight on the industry.”

Brackett’s priority after graduation was to gain agency experience, and she did that by working for Horizon Media on its Constellation Brands account that handles the Corona brand family of beers, a growth opportunity she was grateful to have.

But always in the back of her mind was the “farfetched idea” of working in sports entertainment. So when an opening for a media buyer position for Honda Center and the Anaheim Ducks became available, Brackett took a leap of faith and found a niche in the industry that she loves.

As a media buyer, Brackett handles placement of all forms of advertising for both Honda Center and the Anaheim Ducks, from ads on YouTube and Hulu to traditional television and radio spots. For those commuting on the 57 freeway, the three billboards seen from the road promoting the Ducks’ 30th anniversary season that begins this month are part of her handiwork.

Brackett’s media purchasing reach spans beyond Ducks hockey and into the entertainment landscape through most of the events hosted at Honda Center, including Gwen Stefani’s concert last month that kicked off the venue’s 30th-anniversary celebration. Shows such as Nitro Circus, Disney on Ice and an upcoming visit by comedian Adam Sandler also fall under her media buying purview.

In the near future, Brackett’s role will expand to include ocV!BE, a \$4 billion, 100-acre, mixed-use development planned for the area surrounding Honda Center that will include entertainment, residential, dining, hotel and retail spaces. The first phase of the project is scheduled for completion in 2026.

Although her origins are from outside OC, Brackett feels more like an “Orange County transplant native,” and it is the core relationship she has developed with the local community through un-



PHOTO BY DREW A. KELLEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Lindsey Brackett wanted to work in the sports entertainment field, and she was ready when an opportunity opened up.

derstanding what makes Orange County unique that has been the highlight of her professional career thus far.

“Since starting here, I’ve been way more integrated in the community and all of the different entertainment options that we have to offer,” Brackett said. “It’s nice to see the people that are coming to a show that you and your team ran ... seeing the smiles on every-

body’s faces. I truly understand that my industry and the work that I’m doing have such a huge impact on that sentiment, and that’s why I love what I do.”

Brackett acknowledges that her passion for her field would not be possible without the foundation built during her time at CSUF, and she holds a tremendous amount of love and respect for the campus and culture that have shaped

her path.

“Cal State Fullerton has definitely put itself on the map ... and I know how much talent has gone through those classrooms and how much talent has come from the students that have gone there,” Brackett said. “I’m super proud to be a Titan ... and if I would have gone anywhere else, I truly don’t believe that I would be where I’m at right now.”

Sports

FROM PAGE 1

good, that the competition fed and nourished him like few other things in life, and that his talent brought a side order of self-worth.

And yes, as he got older, Dillashaw realized something else.

“I grew up in a competitive family. When you’re out there on that mat, it’s all on you. It makes you feel alive,” he said. “It’s fear, to be honest. You’re so scared of not doing it to your fullest potential that it makes you feel alive. To be successful in any individual sport, wrestling, MMA fighting, you have to love the fear.”

It also gave Dillashaw victories. He was all-state as a junior and a senior, losing in the state finals at 119 pounds his senior year. Still, Dillashaw didn’t plan on going to college until he went to the Dream Team Duals in Clovis. That tournament pits the country’s best wrestlers against the top wrestlers from a given state. Each year, that state rotates. It happened to land on California Dillashaw’s senior year.

Aside from that love of fear, Dillashaw’s career has featured several fortunate moments. This was one of them. At the duals, he beat Charlie Falk, the nation’s top wrestler and a future All-American at Iowa.

As Dillashaw said, that started the college offers. Fresno State, Columbia, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo all chimed in. But when Dillashaw visited Fullerton, it was game over. He liked the area, liked coach Dan Hicks, liked the brotherhood formed with his teammates — all of it.

“I became the man I am today because of Cal State Fullerton. I’m pleased and grateful for everything I learned there and because of my experiences there,” he said.

Dillashaw went 14-16 (10-8 in dual meets) as a freshman and 17-14 (11-4 in duals) as a sophomore. He qualified three times for the NCAAAs, turning in, by all accounts, a distinguished career.

It was only the beginning.

Dillashaw enrolled in graduate school with the idea of being a physician’s assistant. Instead, he met MMA standout Urijah Faber while working for then-CSUF assistant wrestling coach Mark Munoz at a wrestling camp.

Munoz wasted little time planting the seed of Dillashaw’s next career.

“You know what, T.J.? You’d be a great fighter. I think fighting would be a great outlet for you,” Dillashaw said Munoz told him.

After talking to his then-girlfriend, now wife, Rebecca, Dillashaw moved to Sacramento, renting a room from Faber and training at Faber’s gym.

“I gave myself a year. If I was good at it, I’d stick with it. Otherwise, I’d go back to school,” he said. “It was that love of fear again. I was scared. I’m going to go into this gym and I’ve never thrown a punch in my life. I’ve never kicked or punched, and I’m going into this gym with world-class athletes. There were two guys: Faber and Joseph Benavidez, who were ranked No. 2 and 3 in the world in my weight class. There were a ton of great fighters, and I had to throw myself to the wolves and learn this sport as fast as I could.

“I remember my first day of practice boxing, sparring. I’ve got to go against Joseph, the No. 3 guy in the world, and I’m bleeding out of my nose and getting beat up. They used to call me ‘Lieutenant Dan’ from Forrest Gump, because of the part where he’s yelling at the storm to ‘come and get him.’ That was me in my first sparring match.”

Dillashaw was a natural. Within a year, he was on the Ultimate Fighter TV show, where he finished second. That earned him a UFC contract right after that group bought WEC, home of the lighter-weight classes. That fortuitous break led to another one: a revelatory chat with cornerman Justin Buckels before a fight with Mike Easton in January 2014 about turning his love of fear into something else.

“I was my nervous self warming up. My cornerman said, ‘Hey man. Enjoy the moment. You’re in the UFC right now. There’s millions of people watching TV right now, watching you walk out, who would pay to be in your position right now.’ That resonated with me,” Dillashaw said. “I had a lot of fun that night. It was different than other fights. I saw Shaquille O’Neal in the front row. ... I was into having fun instead of being aggro. I picked up the guy and said, ‘This is for you, Shaq,’ and body-slammed the guy.

“When I decided to relax and have fun, everything happened great. I learned to be a better athlete.”

The breaks kept coming. In May 2014, Dillashaw was supposed to face Takeya Mizugaki. But when Matt Whiteman — who was on the main event — broke his rib, Dillashaw was given the opportunity to fight Renan Barão for the UFC Bantamweight Championship. Barão was one of the top five pound-for-pound fighters in the world and the reigning Bantamweight champion.

Dillashaw? He was an unknown 8-1 underdog who — all of a sudden — found his face on marquees and billboards all over Las Vegas. He was a media darling, doing interview after interview and soaking up the moment.

It worked. Dillashaw loved the moment instead of the fear. Barely 40 seconds in, Dillashaw landed an overhand right that dropped Barão. Everything clicked, up to the point in the fifth



PHOTO BY HANS GUTKNECHT/LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS
TJ Dillashaw, right, battles Raphael Assuncao during UFC 200 on July 9, 2016, at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. Dillashaw won via judges’ decision.

round where Dillashaw flattened Barão with a combo of kicks and an overhand left. Just like that, the fifth-round TKO made Dillashaw the UFC Bantamweight Champion.

“It was crazy. The seconds after the fight, I blacked out. People were screaming and I was telling everyone it was my destiny to beat this guy,” he said.

Dillashaw defended his title three times. He owns the second-highest number of title bouts (seven) in UFC Bantamweight history. His seven knockouts are the most in division history, and he’s recognized as one of the greatest bantamweights in UFC history.

And yet, there’s the what-ifs. In 2019, Dillashaw was suspended for two years in his prime after testing positive for a banned substance, what he called “the worst mistake of his career.” He won his comeback fight over Cory Sandhagen in May 2021.

But the injuries finally caught up to him. A knee injury and shoulder surgery that didn’t take followed him into a title bout against Aljamain Sterling in October 2022. Going into the fight, Dillashaw’s left shoulder kept popping out, but he was 36 years old and didn’t know how many chances he’d get.

This was the last one. Dillashaw’s body answered that question for him.

“Pulling out wasn’t an option. I thought I could take him,” Dillashaw said. “Then, it popped out 30 seconds into the first round. I got it back in before the doctors came. Thirty seconds into the second round, it popped out again. I knew it would happen. In the world I live in, wrestling and fighting, you have to be super optimistic. You overwhelm negative thoughts with positive. But I should have been more realistic. I had one arm. I did a lot of damage to my shoulder I’m paying for now.”

Again, there’s his self-awareness, which now serves Dillashaw well in retirement. He’s finally at peace with his reluctant retirement, the byproduct of his suspension. Instead, his love of fear was replaced with a love of entrepreneurship. He and a partner started Wild Society, a protein health-food company that allows Dillashaw’s restless, competitive nature to flourish in literally a natural environment.

“This refocused me. The same way I fell into the identity of being a wrestler, fell into an identity of being a fighter. I have to find a new worth. I can’t stop. If I stop, I’m going to lose it.”

#3

Enrolling

TRANSFER STUDENTS

in California

■ U.S. News & World Report, 2023

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