



California poppies bloom at the Arboretum and Botanical Garden at Cal State Fullerton.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

## INNOVATION

# ARBORETUM'S NEW NAME REFLECTS ITS MISSION AS A LIVING LABORATORY

## Opportunities for hands-on learning

By **Jenelyn Russo**,  
contributing writer

The 26-acre, world-class arboretum on the campus of Cal State Fullerton recently received a new name to more accurately align with its mission and focus.

The Arboretum and Botanical Garden at Cal State Fullerton aims to support the academic mission of CSUF by serving as a living laboratory for Titans from across the university's eight colleges. With a focus on education, research and

conservation, the CSUF-owned arboretum provides unique opportunities for students and faculty in a one-of-a-kind setting.

"We work with all of the colleges here," said Arboretum director Greg Dymant. "Whether that be engineering, the arts, natural sciences, you name the college, there are classes that meet out here."

Formerly an orange grove at the north end of CSUF's campus that had succumbed to disease and was originally slated to become a parking lot, the concept to convert the land into an arboretum originated in 1970 from Titan fac-

ulty and students. With the backing of fundraising and community support, the idea was brought to life when the Fullerton Arboretum opened in October 1979.

In December 2020, the Arboretum transitioned from its 40-year Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Fullerton to university governance as a fully integrated department within CSUF's Extension and International Programs.

Today, Titan students can be seen on the Arboretum grounds in a variety of capacities, such as discovering methods to generate electricity through wind

turbines, researching ways to divert and collect water during rain events or installing artwork exhibits for the public to view.

The Arboretum also hosts the Engaging Environmental Experiences (E3) Internship program, a pathway for CSUF students to receive hands-on opportunities to train in the areas of science, conservation and environmental education through real-world projects while under the mentorship of Arboretum staff members.

"We take very seriously this place, this Arboretum, being the lab for all the

SPRING » PAGE 5

## STUDIES

### Conference looks at sport through a sociocultural lens

Academics present variety of research

By **Lou Ponsi**,  
contributing writer

Scholars from across the nation and around the world converged at Cal State Fullerton recently for the Center for Sociocultural Sport and Olympic Research's Sixth Annual Conference.

Held since 2018, the conference offers the opportunity for academics to present research on a variety of topics related to sport and the Olympics from a sociocultural perspective.

The conference, held March 14-15, is hosted by

CONFERENCE » PAGE 5



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARLÉN RÍOS-HERNÁNDEZ  
Marlén Ríos-Hernández, assistant professor of Chicana and Chicano studies at Cal State Fullerton

## PUNK ROCK SPIRIT

### PunkCon, an all-day celebration, will champion social justice

Event a blend of academia, entertainment

By **Greg Hardesty**,  
contributing writer

Where to turn to in trying times?

Punk rock — specifically, the punk spirit of uplifting and empowering marginalized communities at a time when society at large seems to be spiraling out of control.

That's the thinking behind "PunkCon," an all-day event May 4 at Cal State Fullerton that is free and open to the public and will feature a blend of academic panels, poster and multimedia presentations, vendors, bands, drag shows, workshops, roundtables, and activism.

PUNKCON » PAGE 2

## TITAN OF EMPOWERMENT

Combining her interests in true crime and photography, **Cassandra Caldwell** created six photographic installations on campus to encourage viewers to think like detectives.

Empowered by **Cal State Fullerton's Darryl Curran Creative Photography Scholarship**, Caldwell brought her senior thesis project to life through photographs, 3D sculptures and found materials.

Now an alumna of the art program, Caldwell is pursuing creative opportunities and aspires to teach photography at the university level.

Cal State Fullerton.





## TITAN VOICES

# The transformative power of role models

We all need role models. They give us a glimpse into what is possible and spark potential within each of us.

As Women's History Month draws to a close, I am reminded of a transformative encounter that redefined my perspective on leadership and possibility. It was a chance meeting, but its impact has reverberated through my professional journey ever since.

About 30 years ago, Rosa Parks had been the keynote speaker at a conference I attended. She was a key figure of the Civil Rights Movement, whose role in the Montgomery bus boycott from 1955 to 1956, changed the course of history in our country. I was inspired by her speech from afar, and unbeknownst to me, we boarded the same shuttle bus back to the hotel.

We had a nice conversation on that short trip back to the hotel. She was kind, thoughtful and her petite stature belied the monumental impact she had on American history.

When I got back to my hotel room, I began to reflect on the historic effect she had on our nation's civil rights journey. Our country was changed for the better because of her actions and those of others who are working hard to create a more perfect union; a more inclusive and just union.

At that stage of my career, I rarely saw other Latinas in leadership roles in higher education.

As the daughter of immigrants and the first in my family to graduate from college, I often have felt like a square peg in a round hole. I have often been, "the first" and "the only."

It can be exhausting, taxing and challenging at times to be your full and authentic self when you are the first or the only one in the room. It helps to have



**Sylvia A. Alva**  
CSUF president



Sculpture of Rosa Parks inside a bus at the National Civil Rights Museum and the site of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr in Memphis, Tenn.

role models when you are navigating uncharted waters. Representation matters.

She helped me see that leaders can be kind, thoughtful and powerful; that effective leaders can be female, equity-minded and that we can lead with the principles of social justice and equity, in our own authentic way.

These values are essential to counter the headwinds that women often face. The wage gap is one example. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women make 84 cents on the dollar compared with men. The wage gap is larger for women of color.

As the third female president of Cal State Fullerton, I stand on the shoulders of giants, and I am deeply committed to educational equity and inclusive excel-

lence. Long before I began serving as president, Cal State Fullerton made important strides for gender equity.

More than half of Cal State Fullerton's students are women. That is nearly 21,000 Titans. We often lead the CSU with the highest number of bachelor and doctoral degrees awarded to female students. Our four-year graduation rate for female students has never been higher.

Programs like the College of Business and Economics Women's Leadership Program are preparing students of all genders to remove or overcome barriers to the advancement of women into top leadership positions.

I see this progress at our university and in our community. I recently attended an Orange County Board of Supervi-

sors meeting where they recognized female county leaders on Equal Pay Day (March 12) and then voted to establish a Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

We need all these efforts and more.

Cal State Fullerton is a transformational leader because our students build on opportunities to become the role models we seek, and they will inspire future generations to reach greater heights and shatter the glass ceilings in their path.

I am grateful to Rosa Parks for being an inspiring role model and for helping me become a courageous leader and champion of gender equity.

*Sylvia A. Alva began leading Cal State Fullerton as president in August 2023.*

## PunkCon

FROM PAGE 1

It's a celebration, say organizers, including Marlén Ríos-Hernández, an assistant professor of Chicana and Chicano studies at CSUF, of members of non-mainstream communities who refuse to be silenced.

Ríos-Hernández founded the event in 2019 at UC Riverside with Susana "Susy Riot" Sepulveda, an assistant professor in residence of gender and sexuality at University of Nevada in Las Vegas. Back then, the biennial event was known as "USC PunkCon."

Next month's event is the third PunkCon and the first time it is being held at CSUF, running from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Humanities Building.

"When Susy and I were crafting a theme for this year's event," Ríos-Hernández said, "we had in mind the political climate of the moment. We're activists in our own right. We do social justice work."

"The heart of PunkCon has always centered around social justice and championing social justice causes, so this year we were thinking about the ways that punk is thriving at a time we feel we are at our most nihilistic."

"This is not a fun time. We wanted to hear from folks about how punk thrives in what to us feels like the end of times."

### Team members

Expected to attract 100 people, PunkCon 2024 boasts a tight circle of organizers beyond Ríos-Hernández and Sepulveda.

Arianna Washington, a CSUF undergrad, is serving as lead archivist.

Another undergraduate — Kimby Ruiz, who is majoring in computer animation and has designed a logo for the event, is the social media manager.

"It's been my pleasure to be part of this — especially as an undergrad," Ruiz said. "Being somebody at a very confusing time in their life, especially when the world is at its most confusing, it feels nice to know that this event is happening."

"Punk is something I've been a part of for a very long time, and to know it's being welcomed into an institution I never thought it would be gives me a lot of hope and the feeling that maybe people aren't as uptight as I thought they were."

Ruiz pointed to the huge history of punk in Orange County, including seminal bands such as Social Distortion.

"We just want to acknowledge punk and nurture it more in these academic spaces because there's always the stereotype of the ignorant

punk — the punk that doesn't go to college, the druggie, and I feel we're a lot more than that."

Adri Garcia earned her master's degree from CSUF in cultural anthropology in 2023. Garcia, who is serving as vendor/tabling coordinator for PunkCon, studied ties between women of color, patriarchal norms, independence, and what those connections mean to Orange County punk.

"Especially during this challenging political climate, I really believe punk deserves a seat at the academic table," Garcia said. "If you look at academia, it's a community that challenges you to think outside the box and come up with your own concepts and theories. Studying punk through an academic lens is so important, and there are a lot of us out here doing it."

### Standing for something

Josie Wreck is a transgender Xicanx solo artist born and raised in Santa Ana who has been performing on the local music scene for nearly two decades. She describes her sound as chaotic Western post-punk with a side of no wave and a splash of punk noise.

"With PunkCon," Wreck said, "I was happy to jump on board and help find talent and offer support in other ways as well. I leaped at the opportunity."

Wreck said if you're punk, "you have to stand for something."

Something she and her co-organizers of PunkCon stand for is justice.

"In Orange County 20 years ago, it was absolutely way more conservative and challenging to be visibly trans and queer as a brown person," Wreck said. "It's always been a battlefield of misogyny, trans-misogyny, sexism and homophobia, and the fact that after all these years there's a punk conference being run by radical women of color to reclaim and to tell our stories and experiences, to provide a platform for other people to come share their experiences, in these times when people's rights are getting removed — bodily autonomy and gender identity — is great for people."

Added Wreck, a first-generation trans-Chicana: "There's been a lot of ground gained in terms of representation for trans people and women and people of color, but even with so much progress that had been made, to have all our rights challenged by mainstream society and out-of-touch, warmongering, fear-mongering old politicians, is dismaying."

"Punk is a sound of resistance, and I'm excited to be part of this, especially in Orange County. The punk rock spirit is to uplift and empower community, not to separate us and be competitive with each other."

CSUF students and alumni are encouraged to RSVP for free and/or sign up to present. For more information, contact Ríos-Hernández at [mrioshernandez@fullerton.edu](mailto:mrioshernandez@fullerton.edu).

#2 in California for **BEST UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING**

2024 U.S. News & World Report

Cal State Fullerton

[fullerton.edu/rankings](https://fullerton.edu/rankings)

### CSUF SECTION STAFF

**Managing Editor:** Jennifer Karmarkar  
**Project Manager:** Caitlin Adams  
**Creative Director:** Tom Halligan  
**Senior Graphic Designer:** Ken Abbott  
**Copy Editor:** Paul Davenport  
**Director of Communications:** Caroline Wong

Have a story idea or comment for the section?  
 Contact Caroline Wong at [cawong@scng.com](mailto:cawong@scng.com)  
 or 714-796-2202

The Cal State Fullerton community section is produced by The Orange County Register for the benefit of its subscribers. While the university is the section's primary advertising sponsor, all editorial decisions are independent of the university's control.

Published on select Thursdays by The Orange County Register  
 1920 Main Street, Suite 225  
 Irvine, CA 92614

[ocregister.com/cal-state-fullerton](https://ocregister.com/cal-state-fullerton)



## DIGITIZED HISTORY

# 'Mapping the Gay Guides' is showcased at Muzeo

## Exhibit traces cultural changes over time

By **Larry Urish**,  
contributing writer

You needn't be a dendrologist to understand that you can't tell much about a forest by examining just one tree. It takes a broader perspective to "see the forest for the trees," in this case literally.

Likewise, no historian can discern much about a group of people, past or present, by looking at just one artifact. However, by "pulling back" and analyzing thousands of artifacts, then culling together the collective information provided to see a much bigger picture, the historian can draw some often-fascinating conclusions.

That's where digital history comes in. "Analyzing digital history provides a broader view, a more expansive overall picture, than singular bits of data found on the internet," said Eric Gonzaba, Cal State Fullerton assistant professor of American studies.

Gonzaba earned his master's and doctorate degrees at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. After starting graduate school at George Mason, "I had no idea they train all of their (history) students in digital history." Drawn toward gay history, Gonzaba studied gay travel guides as a means of viewing the past and soon discovered the Damron Guides.

"Damron" refers to Bob Damron, who owned several gay bars, primarily in San Francisco. As a side project during the mid-1960s, he started publishing the "Bob Damron Address Books," which initially featured information about other gay bars but later expanded to include a host of other gay meeting spots throughout the U.S.: bookstores, restaurants, bathhouses, cinemas, cocktail lounges, cruising grounds and the like.

The Damron Guides grew massively (but quietly) popular among the mostly closeted gay community. To many gay people throughout the country, the guides provided a sense of community and safety. To Gonzaba, however, it furnished a historical treasure trove of data points ripe for electronic picking.

This brings us to the Mapping the Gay Guides project ([mappingthegayguides.org](http://mappingthegayguides.org)), a textbook example of applied digital history and the name of an exhibit appearing through June 23 at the Muzeo Museum and Cultural Center in Anaheim. The project, co-director Gonzaba said, fulfills "the promise of digital history. By using its broader perspective, we can learn things we can't otherwise see."

The online archive itself can be used in two ways: Virtual visitors can examine an interactive U.S. map that furnishes the location of every Damron Guide entry between 1965 and 1989. And drop-down menus allow the information to be filtered by state, location type, amenity feature and year. An assortment of coded amenities includes B (frequented by Blacks), D (dancing), PT (pool tables), L (ladies), and so forth. In addition, the online archive's Vignettes section furnishes articles that provide deeper dives into aspects of gay life by looking more closely at specific location types and amenities.

The archive reveals, for example, that 154 gay spots appeared across 12 states in 1965, but by 1980 this same territory was home to more than 1,000 locations. By inputting more than 25,000 entries (and counting) into the database, Gonzaba, co-director Professor Amanda Regan, of Clemson University, and a group of interns and graduate research assistants aren't just analyzing digital history; they're creating it, one data point at a time.

The National Endowment for the Humanities took notice, awarding Mapping the Gay Guides in 2021 with a three-year grant, allowing the project to expand its database of Damron's guides published through 2005.

The "Mapping the Gay Guides" exhibit at Muzeo is composed of three sections, Gonzaba said. Part I is about

life for gays before the Damron guides were first published. "And it explores the rise of gay print culture (magazines, pulp novels, newspapers and other travel guides). We'll have a wall full of different gay publications."

Part II, a look at Damron and his guides, furnishes a wall map of Southern California. "Visitors can read through the importance of different types of gay sites in Orange County, Los Angeles, Palm Springs, San Diego and Long Beach," Gonzaba said. Each region will focus on a different location type: gay bars in L.A., and hotels in Palm Springs, for example. Associated memorabilia will appear in nearby display cases.

Focusing on the Mapping the Gay

Guides project itself, Part III includes reflections by three CSUF grad students who studied in greater detail various subjects revealed through the analysis of data from the archive. Separate QR codes furnished by each student lead to their respective articles online, among many other articles found in the digital archive's Vignettes section. For example, one QR code leads to "Beyond the 'Rice Bar': A History of Mugi's," an article that delves into a former gathering place frequented by members of the L.A. gay Asian community.

"In 10 or 15 years, people will publish new insights from our data," Gonzaba said. "We learn digital history to not just learn history, but to learn new questions to ask about history."



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Eric Gonzaba, assistant professor of American studies at Cal State Fullerton

## NEW DEAN

# Hanson to add programming and expand library's reach

## Forming partnerships, drawing on resources

By **Lou Ponsi**,  
contributing writer

As the newly appointed dean of Cal State Fullerton's Pollak Library, Eric Hanson appears to be well-qualified to oversee an information hub that serves the largest student body in the California State University system.

Hanson brings years of administrative experience to his new post, working in college libraries, along with international experience as a librarian at the David Lubin Memorial Library in Italy, the main library of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

While continuing to assess all facets of the library, including its services, partnerships and infrastructure, Hanson sees plenty of opportunity to build on the Pollak's existing attributes along with launching new programming and expanding the library's reach on campus.

"It's a fantastic library," Hanson said. "A big space. There's a lot of opportunities I see to try to unite some of the services and to provide better service to students. I've met with the students and had an opportunity to hear from them. I'm meeting with my staff and team members and various partners. Our library has partners from across campus."

Integrating new technology such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence is high on Hanson's to-do list.

The library staff has already begun feeding frequently asked questions into an AI-driven Chatbot, which can provide quick and accurate answers to questions, he said.

Staff is also working with administrators of Alfredo H. Zúñiga Research collection to study the feasibility of using AI to translate from Spanish the collection's documents and recordings chronicling the Chicana/o Community in Orange County and events of historical and cultural significance to that community.

"We're testing it because a lot of the (collection) is in Spanish that may be in different dialects, and we don't have someone who necessarily understands it clearly," Hanson said. "So, we're having AI run through and then having someone as a control to see whether it is accurate or not, and surprisingly it's better than we thought, and that can save a ton of time and effort to get these materials transcribed and available to students."

Along with the integration of new technology, another priority is to simply



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Eric Hanson is the new dean of the Cal State Fullerton Pollak Library.

make the campus community aware of the library's existing treasures.

For example, the library is the repository for the Frank Herbert papers.

Science fiction aficionados might know that Herbert is the author of the science fiction space opera, "Dune" and that the critically acclaimed "Dune: Part Two" is currently playing in theaters.

"I want people to know that we have this collection," Hanson said. "And our students may be interested. We have a small display here in the library, but we haven't been pushing that out further. We have film and TV majors that would be interested in that."

The library currently has partnerships with Information Technology, the International Student Office, Faculty Development Office and other departments, and Hanson is hoping to explore the potential for new partnerships.

The first floor of the library is home to several affinity groups including the

African American Resource Center, Asian Pacific American Resource Center, Latinx Community Resource Center, the LGBTQ Queer Resource Center and Titan Dreamers Resource Center.

"I'm gauging how we can all interact with them and work together more," he said. "I'm not really clear on all of the connections just yet, other than that we share the space. And so, some of those meetings I've still yet to have because I've been meeting with all of my library people."

Hanson oversees staff that includes two associate deans, 25 librarians and about 25 additional staff members.

Prior to joining the CSUF family, Hanson spent nine years at Glendale Community College as dean of the library, where he had numerous responsibilities aside from managing the library.

"Eric's forward-thinking mindset and library experience will serve our Titan community well," said Amir Dabirian,

provost and vice president for academic affairs, in a Nov. 28, 2023 article on the CSUF website. "I am thrilled we have the pleasure of welcoming him to Cal State Fullerton."

The Pollak Library is made up of two interconnected buildings, Pollak Library North and Pollak Library South.

Before moving into its new building in 1966, the fourth permanent building on campus, the library was located in several temporary structures.

The library expanded in 1996 with the opening of a second building, Library North.

In 1998, the library was renamed The Paulina June and George Pollak Library in recognition of the \$1 million donation from Professor Paulina June Saiz-Pollak and her husband, George Pollak.

At the time, the gift was the largest ever from a faculty member.

Contact: Eric Hanson, dean of the Pollak Library



## SCIENCE

# Research: Epic floods hit Southern California during Little Ice Age

CSUF News Media Services

A new study by Cal State Fullerton researchers shows evidence of two epic floods that occurred within the past 500 years in Southern California during the Little Ice Age, the period from about 1450 to 1850.

Their research is the first-ever, land-based, flood-event evidence from that period — a documented time of above-average wetness in Southern California, said Matthew E. Kirby, professor of geological sciences.

According to scientists, floods — not earthquakes — represent California's single most significant socioeconomic natural hazard risk.

"Scientists know very little about California's flood history older than the historical record of the past 150 years," said Kirby, who studies Earth's climate history. "This research provides critical baseline information to prepare for future floods through understanding past flood histories."

Climate models predict that the frequency of large flood-producing precipitation events will increase in the 21st century due to climate change.

Kirby, lead author of the research, said severe rainfall is often associated with winter season atmospheric rivers in California, which can generate hurricane-scale precipitation, creating natural hazards such as floods and landslides. The past two winters, atmospheric rivers slammed California, bringing record-breaking rain, snow, and, in some areas, flooding.

"Flooding has been on the mind of many Californians the past two winters — and part of our research found the potential floods that California may receive in the future could be magnitudes worse than recent floods," said Samuel Hippard, who earned a bachelor's degree in earth science in 2023, one of the study's co-authors. "Our research shows the potential risk to millions of Californians."

The study was published in the *Journal of Paleolimnology*, a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal focused on the reconstruction and interpretation of lake histories.

Co-authors are CSUF geological sciences faculty members Joe Carlin, Nicole Bonuso and Sinan Akçiz; alumni Dahlia Serrato, who earned bachelor's degree in biological science-ecology and evolutionary biology in 2024 and Christian Novich, who earned a bachelor's degree in geology in 2022; and Lisa N. Martinez, a UCLA doctoral student.

The research was funded by the Southern California Earthquake Center and the university's Project RAISE, a federally funded program to increase the number of underrepresented and low-income students in STEM majors. While in Project RAISE's undergraduate research experience summer program for community college students, Serrato worked on the project.

For their study, the faculty researchers collected five sediment cores from a sag pond along the San Andreas Fault in Carrizo Plain National Monument in 2021 while following safety protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sag ponds are topographic depressions formed along



This sediment core from Carrizo Plain reveals two large flood event units within the past 500 years in Southern California.

active strike-slip faults, often resulting in a body of water.

"Sag ponds are worth our time to study because they offer an entirely new source of information, such as evidence of large floods," Kirby said. "We're also hoping to use these flood event histories to better constrain the timing of past earthquakes, thus our collaboration with the Southern California Earthquake Center."

Over the past three years, Hippard and the paper's other alumni co-authors worked in the lab to analyze the sediment cores' properties, such as charcoal, pollen and sand content.

"The larger the grain size, the more energy is needed to erode and deposit those sediments in the basin, which, if the grains are large enough, can be a pretty good indicator of a flood event,"



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MATTHEW E. KIRBY

CSUF researchers conducted fieldwork for their flood research along the San Andreas Fault in Carrizo Plain National Monument.



Matthew E. Kirby, professor of geological sciences

said Hippard, who conducted the research for his undergraduate thesis.

Hippard added that his research experience opened opportunities for him, including learning technical writing and data analysis skills to prepare for graduate school. He is studying environmental science and climate change in the master's program at the University of Toronto, Scarborough.

"The idea of discovering climatic events through a localized snapshot of history clicked with me," Hippard said. "Dr. Kirby provided all the necessary tools and support for me to succeed in completing my thesis."

The CSUF researchers also uncovered a puzzling finding about the 1861-62

winter storms that devastated California. Kirby said this period of statewide flooding has been used to model the "ArkStorm scenario," referring to a sequence of atmospheric rivers and their generation of a 1,000-year flood event.

The 1861-62 winter storms likely produced the most significant recorded flooding in the last 150 years.

"Remarkably, our research did not see clear evidence for the 1861-62 flood event, which begs the question, 'Are we underestimating natural flood magnitude and activity by using the 1861-62 event?'"

"If the answer is 'yes,' our research and other paleo-flood research may suggest California is not fully prepared for future floods," Kirby said.

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH

## Jason Shepard: From reporter to media law expert

### Professor specializes in 1st Amendment issues

CSUF News Media Services

There was only one career path Jason Shepard ever saw himself pursuing.

"Since I was a kid, I wanted to be a journalist," said Shepard. "I loved that journalism was an opportunity to learn more about the world, other people and how decisions are made."

Not only did Shepard fulfill his goal of becoming an award-winning reporter — covering crime, courts, politics, education and media for 10 years — but he also found a new passion in teaching and research that led him to Cal State Fullerton.

The chair and professor of communications is now a media law and First Amendment expert whose academic scholarship looks at a variety of trending topics, including legal protections for journalists, ethics and the regulation of social media.

Throughout his career, Shepard has contributed his expertise to more than 120 publications and presentations. In addition to publishing his work in academic journals like the *Yale Journal of Law and Technology*, *Communication Law and Policy*, and *Journal of Media Law & Ethics*, Shepard's been interviewed and quoted by several media outlets, such as *The New York Times*, *CNN* and *NPR*.

He's also been tapped as an expert witness in multiple court cases, and he was recently invited to attend oral arguments for two First Amendment cases at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. The cases, *NetChoice v. Paxton* and *Moody v. NetChoice*, examine whether states can regulate how social media companies moderate their content, including disinformation, harassment and hate speech.

"These experiences allow me to share real-world stories that bring these issues, people and institutions to life, and that helps me better connect with my stu-

dents," said Shepard, who covered the arguments for California Publisher, the publication of the *California News Association*.

"Studying the First Amendment is critically important in thinking about how we meet the current demands in our democracy today," said Shepard.

Early in his reporting career, Shepard investigated firefighters caught up in an undercover drug sting at a local bar. He received documents about the investigation from a confidential source and was later subpoenaed to reveal who gave him that information.

"I learned the hard way that journalists don't always have strong legal protections when it comes to court subpoenas," said Shepard, who turned this experience into an early research interest and the basis for his first book, "Privileging the Press."

Since Shepard first started studying freedom of speech, the national narrative in communications has shifted significantly, which has inspired the evolution of his research areas. In today's political and social climate, media consumers are very polarized, Shepard said.

This is partly because people receive their information in "echo chambers," which are closed communications environments that reinforce consumers' beliefs and can discourage them from exploring other viewpoints.

He's dedicated his research to understanding not only the role of the First Amendment in American politics and communications, but also the limitations of the amendment and the impact it has on a democratic society. Some of his recent scholarship looks at such topics as journalism ethics in the internet era, free speech in college newspapers, and the First Amendment and the roots of LGBTQ+ rights law.

On campus, he serves as the publisher for the student-run award-winning newspaper, the *Daily Titan*. A former college journalist and student media adviser himself, Shepard knows firsthand that participating in student media programs bolsters career portfolios and provides hands-on communications experience.

"Being able to support student media is a highlight of my job because I know that the experiences our students have in student media are going to have lifelong impacts," said Shepard.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Jason Shepard, chair and professor of communications



Shepard checks out an edition of the *Daily Titan* in the newsroom.



## Conference

FROM PAGE 1

the Center for Sociocultural Sport and Olympic Research on the CSUF campus, which has been recognized as an International Olympic Studies Center by both the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Studies Centre and the United States Olympic Committee for its quality and commitment to research and academic activities.

Launched at Cal State Fullerton in 2014, the center's official mission is "to promote education and research around sport in cultural, social, and political dimensions."

Attendees at the conferences included sociologists, historians, anthropologists, philosophers and others who presented research and gleaned information from the presentations to apply in their focus areas.

"It brings together all kinds of different dimensions of the sociocultural studies board," said Julie Brice, kinesiology professor and one of four co-directors of the center. "We don't have biologists or exercise physiologists coming. It is much more humanities-focused, but within the humanities, there's such a wide plethora."

Session topics at this year's conference included Queer Experience in Sport, Art Literature and Objects, Gender and Sport, Politics and Diplomacy, Sport and Identity, and Environment and Sustainability.

As a CSUF undergraduate student working toward a degree in women and gender studies, Lauryn Jarvis presented her research in the session titled Queer Experience in Sport.

Jarvis' research project was titled Is the "Fitness Party" Really Fun For All? An Examination of the Gender Non-Conforming Experience in Zumba.

"I'm a part of the LGBTQ community, and I'm also a Zumba instructor," Jarvis said. "It has kind of led perfectly to this intersection of gender nonconformity in Zumba and the group fitness space. There's not a lot of literature or work done that really looks at that intersection, but there is such a big need as well. Navigating my own identity, I find a lot of those challenges arise ... I had the opportunity to work on a research project, so I figured why not look into this intersection."

CSUF kinesiology professor Emmanuel Macedo, who teaches the Philosophy of Human Movement and the History of Sports Games and Culture, has attended the conference several times and was interested in the sessions covering gender and sports and trans athletes, a topic he covers in his class.

"Because it's like the newest conversation," Macedo said. "It's obviously an issue that goes way back, but in terms of it being of interest to students, it's



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Julie Brice is a professor of kinesiology and one of the directors of the Center for Sociocultural Sport and Olympic Research at Cal State Fullerton.

important to talk about it for multiple reasons, of course political, but also just ethical, moral reasons. So, I get to see how they talk about it, what resources they're using to study it, how they teach it. So that's the kind of stuff I'm interested in at this conference."

The conference also featured an athletes' panel of current and former Cal State Fullerton athletes discussing the topic of Race, Athletics and Student Perspectives.

The keynote speaker for the conference and distinguished scholar recipient was Akilah Carter-Francique, dean of the School of Education, Health and Human Services at Benedict College in Columbia, S.C.

Serving as co-directors along with Brice are kinesiology professors John Gleaves, Matt Llewellyn and Toby Rider. Llewellyn and Gleaves are also the

center's co-founders.

Co-director Toby Rider joined in 2015, and Brice came on in 2022.

Rider and Llewellyn are historians, researching different aspects of history in the Olympics.

Brice's research centers around sociology, focusing on society and sport and the Olympics, and Gleaves studies the philosophy of sport.

"The motivation (for forming the center) was, we had been conducting research in and around sport history, in particular the Olympics, Olympic studies, and we just felt that there was a real niche in the academic landscape for an Olympic-focused research center," Llewellyn said. "There was one in Brown University, there was one at the University of Texas in Austin, and there was one at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada, but they

were the only Olympic study centers in North America."

Llewellyn is pleased with how the center has progressed.

In 2020, the center published the Journal of Olympic Studies and continues to publish the journal twice a year.

Several educational programs have also emerged from the center, including an Olympic studies course taught to undergraduate and graduate students along with a two-week trip to Greece, where students study the origins of the Olympic Games.

"The focus of the program is Olympic studies, ancient to modern," Llewellyn said. "We go to the archaeological sites, and then we study the modern revival of the games. So, we go back to Athens and show them the first modern Olympic stadium. It's an amazing program."

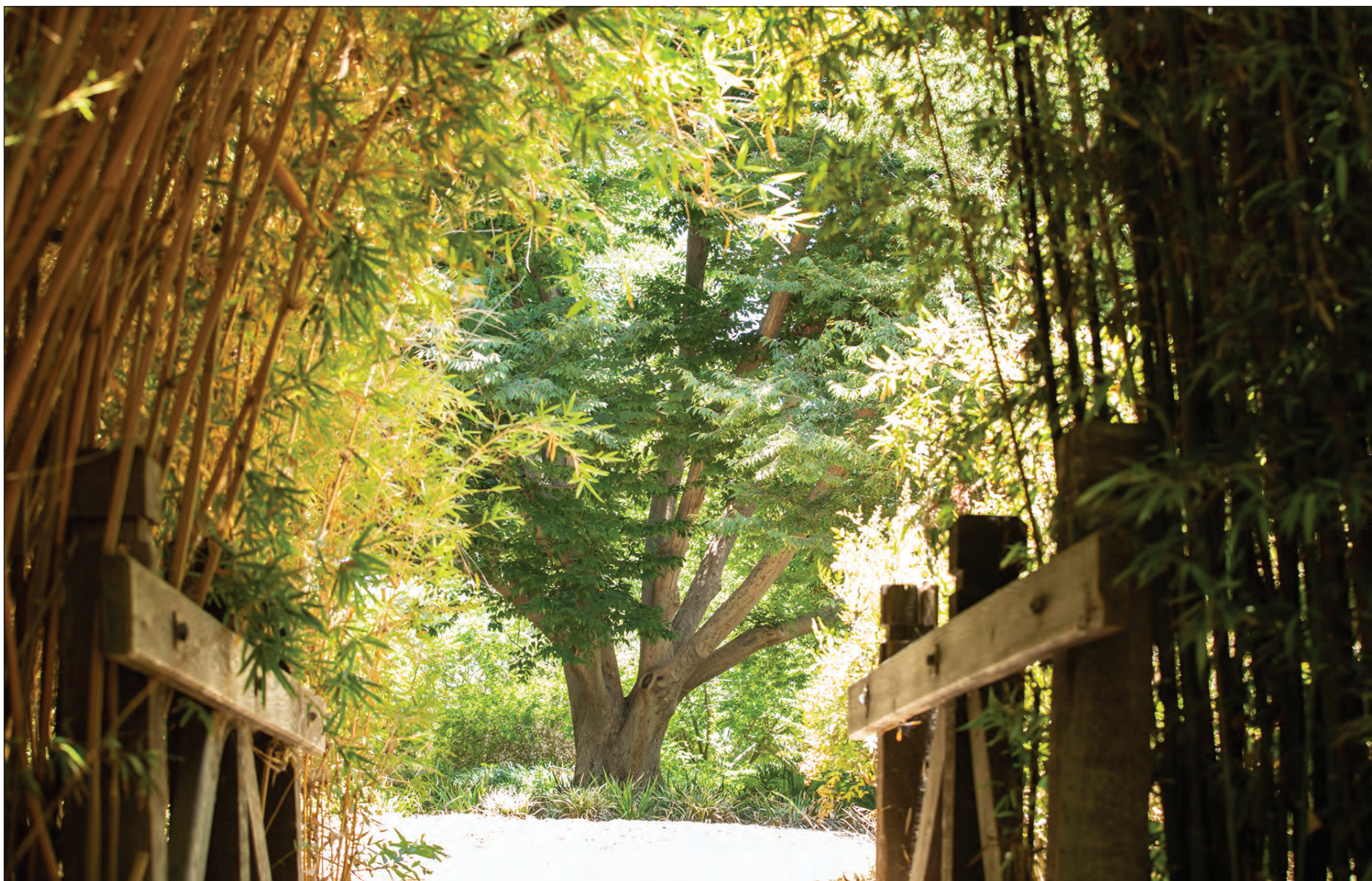


PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Springtime at the Arboretum showcases the beauty of the facility's landscaping.

## Spring

FROM PAGE 1

colleges and all the students here at Cal State Fullerton," said Dyment, who has been in the role of Arboretum director for more than 27 years.

In tandem with its academic mission, the Arboretum also serves the broader Southern California community where visitors can not only enjoy the beauty of the botanical garden but engage in programs that support environmental and conservation education, many of which are hosted by Friends of the Fullerton Arboretum, the nonprofit group that provides support through volunteers, education and events.

"When we look at the people who visit us on a daily basis and the people who

are members, we get people from more than just Fullerton," Dyment said. "We get people from all over Orange County and all over the greater metropolitan L.A. area. So with the name change, we're looking to broaden our reach."

Visitors can enjoy the unique plant life that makes the Arboretum such a special place, including native plant collections from locations such as the Channel Islands and the Galapagos Islands.

"Our collections that we have are tremendous," Dyment said. "We have plants here that aren't anywhere else, except in their native habitats. That speaks to the diversity that we have within our collection."

### Upcoming events

The Arboretum also hosts several community events throughout the year for locals to explore, shop and learn, including several springtime activities that are on

the calendar in the coming months.

On April 18, the Garden Flea Market will be open from noon - 4 p.m. on the Orchard Lawn. This event is entirely planned and executed by CSUF students majoring in event planning and management and will feature food trucks, music and a variety of items for sale by student vendors.

For those looking to jump-start their spring vegetable garden, VeggiePalooza will be happening at the Arboretum on April 18-19 from noon - 4 p.m. and on April 20 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Guests can purchase a wide variety of vegetable seedlings, all grown in the Arboretum nursery. California native plants and other SoCal climate-friendly plants will be available for sale as well. Additionally, monthly plant sales this spring will be held on May 4 and June 1.

Art lovers can enjoy two different exhibits this spring. "Symbiosis" will run

April 18 - May 12 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and will feature 18 colorful and whimsical environmental art installations in the Arboretum's Garden. And "Graphic & Interactive Design" exhibit, a thesis presentation by a CSUF Master of Fine Arts student, will be on display from April 29 - May 3 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the Nature Center.

Now in its 45th year, the Arboretum's new name not only reflects on its roots but points forward by providing alignment with the university and further championing CSUF's mission of environmental research and education for all.

"Our dream is to have every student come through here," Dyment said. "This is our place, and we hope that they're all able to enjoy it. Come out here, learn out here, recreate out here and relax out here."

For more information, visit [fullertonarboretum.org](http://fullertonarboretum.org).



## SPORTS

# Coach marvels at mental toughness of his men's golf team

By Brian Robin,  
contributing writer

Mental toughness is an obsession with Jason Drotter, one of those intangible — yet essential — elements that come with his job. It's a hazard, not unlike the ones his players deal with on any round of golf they play, on any course they play.

In this case, however, it's the flip side of your garden-variety bunker, lake or waste area. Lacking this necessary occupational hazard in Drotter's mind is occupational heresy. And yet, the Cal State Fullerton director of golf and head men's golf coach may have found a team more obsessed with the between-the-ears game than even he is.

"I don't know if I have had a team that's tougher mentally, and I'm big on that," he said. "The first (conference) championship team I had was mentally tough, but I haven't had a team that, up until now, has been that tough. These guys may be too tough for their own good — and I say that as a compliment.

"They thrive on being nine, 10 shots back going into the final round. They thrive on that. It's like they flip a switch and play better. I'd like them to play better from start to finish because that would take a lot of pressure off my emotions. ... But what more can I ask as a coach, especially a coach like me who is big on toughness, and a coach who loves the fact they love that adversity? They love being down and they love being counted out. It's special watching it."

It's late March, and already the Titans have enjoyed many special moments that have sent their coach's blood pressure into medication-land. If they weren't coming from 11 shots back entering the final round at the Grand Canyon University Invitational and winning, they were coming from nine down in the final round at the Wyoming Desert Intercollegiate at Palm Desert's Classic Club.

No matter. The Titans shot 11-under-par in that final round to win that event. The following week, they'd shoot 12-under-par on the final day of the Orange County Collegiate Classic at Monarch Beach Golf Links to win that event for the third consecutive time. And a month later, after a gritty second to Colorado in the Wyoming World Match Play at Indian Wells Golf Resort, the Titans were ramping up Drotter's blood pressure again.

They were 11 shots back entering the final round at the Grand Canyon Invitational at GCU's home course. Apparent-

ly, the Titans had the field exactly where they wanted them because they lowered Drotter's stress level by shooting a combined 13-under in the final round to edge host GCU by one. Russell Howlett, who finished second overall, led the onslaught with a career-best 6-under 66.

"That's something special too. I feel like at our level, we can have talented teams, but toughness is something you can't measure, and it's necessary at a mid-major that you have to be tough and resilient, and they've shown that," Drotter said.

This is why Drotter doesn't mind the blood-pressure spikes, because he's in his own zone watching the Titans enter theirs. The snatch-and-grab victory at Grand Canyon was the Titans' third victory in their four spring tournaments and their fourth this season, counting a fall victory at Cal State Northridge's Bill Collum Invitational in October.

Naturally, that victory came with its own final-round pyrotechnics. The Titans were in fifth place after the second round on a difficult Saticoy Country Club course, which established this season's trend of final-round switch-flipping. They rode Trevor McNary's 68, Garrett Boe's 69 and Tegan Andrews' 70 into a 6-under final round and a six-shot victory. The Titans' final-round 282 was six shots better than runner-up Hawaii's final round.

That tournament came with an important footnote: Patrick Ordonez, who was competing as an individual, won the individual title in a sudden-death playoff against Cal State San Bernardino's John Kim. That was the first time in Drotter's 12 seasons that a CSUF player who didn't qualify for team play won an individual event.

This footnote gives one illustration of why this may be Drotter's best team since the program began in 2009, a team even better than the 2013-14 back-to-back Big West champions. That Ordonez could conquer a good field on a tough course — yet not break into the Titans' top-five for team scoring for that event—shows what kind of depth and talent Drotter has at his disposal.

That's because Ordonez, along with Trevor McNary, Howard Yoon and Matthew Schafer compete with each other for the final two spots for each tournament. Drotter said the four of them are separated by two shots in the hunt for those two spots at the Titans' next tournament — the April 1-2 Wyoming Desert Classic in Arizona.

Which brings us to the three-headed reason for that Darwinian logjam — Andrews, Boe and Howlett. When we last

saw the seriously talented, but mentally troubled, Andrews last spring, he was coming off an injury- and mentally plagued year where he was fighting his head, his game and his purpose. Andrews redshirted the 2022-23 season, then found his head, game and purpose nearly qualifying for last year's U.S. Open.

He's been unstoppable since. Andrews won last October's Visit Stockton Invitational with an exclamation-point, final-round 63 that tied Boe's program record and earned him Big West Golfer of the Month honors. He'd add a conference Golfer of the Month bookend in February after winning the Wyoming Desert Intercollegiate with a 10-under 206.

"His ceiling is so high, and the difference between Tegan and others is he's not soft. He doesn't crack under pressure," Drotter said. "He loses it mentally. He'll be in a good head space and after a couple bad shots, he'll start to lose it, get angry, and he can't get back to the one-shot-at-a-time mentality he needs. But he has worked very hard on that.

"Physically, there are very few kids in college golf who drive it like he does: 330, 340 (yards) on a string, long and straight. He's also a good putter, and if you can do those two things, the rest doesn't have to be as good."

Which brings us to Boe, who is as pure a ball-striker as Andrews. Drotter said if you took the two of them and plopped them down on a driving range amid PGA Tour pros, you wouldn't know they were collegiate golfers, such is the sound and flight of their shots. But in a Wizard of Oz-esque quest echoing Andrews' ability to overcome poor shots, Boe's issues are with his putter.

"He had a standard Garrett fall, where he hit it well and putted poorly," Drotter said. "I had a talk with (UC Irvine head coach) Paul Smolinski, who's seen Garrett forever. He suggested I put a broomstick/long putter in his hands. I would never do that, but you see guys on Tour do that when they struggle.

"I called him to suggest it, and I didn't know how that would go. He said, 'You won't believe it, Coach, but I just



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES  
Jason Drotter is proud of his team's performance this season.

got a broomstick."

It helped. Boe's a much better putter inside 10 feet, a key factor in lowering his scoring average to a career-best 70.43. Boe's ability to swallow his ego and put the long putter in his bag is as big a key to the Titans' season as Andrews' ability to swallow his and address his mental game.

Then, there's Howlett, a transfer from NAIA University of British Columbia in his native Canada. He doesn't have the endless ceiling of Andrews or Boe, but what Howlett does have is a ceaseless work ethic and no major weakness in his game—along with a Big West Individual title, which he won a share of last year. Picture the Titans' version of Jim Furyk—a grinder who hits fairway and greens and is a better-than-average putter.

"He's always been a pretty good ball-striker, but his putting is where he's turned the corner. He's put in the work. The guy's a workhorse who will do anything it takes," Drotter said.

"I've never had three guys with a sub-71 scoring average," Drotter said about Andrews' 69.24, Howlett's 70.1 and Boe's 70.43. "They have put the team on their back. ...

"Again, what more can I ask for? I love it. It's fun watching it and being a part of it."

I ALWAYS  
WANTED TO  
**TEACH**  
SPECIAL EDUCATION

At Cal State Fullerton, I earned my teaching credential and master's degree, and researched communication strategies for children with Down syndrome.

**Create Your Opportunity.**



LEARN MORE