



PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER LANGENWALTER

Liberal studies professor April Bullock, left, works with student Michelle Ramirez in the campus garden.

ECOLOGY

A NEW SEASON OF UNDERSTANDING IN THE CAMPUS GARDEN

Students learn about growing food

By Nicole Gregory,
contributing writer

Cal State Fullerton students learn how to plant and grow vegetables, particularly heirloom varieties that their ancestors may have grown and harvested centuries ago, at the university's small but active campus garden — just one of many benefits the garden provides for students.

Faculty close to the project hope it can be expanded.

"We're trying to foster a sense of community on campus and highlight issues of sustainability and bring awareness

to food systems, so people have an idea where their food comes from," said John Bock, professor of anthropology and director of CSUF's Center for Sustainability, who helped bring the idea into reality.

As the winter crops come to an end, the garden is transitioning to the warmer season. "We'll soon put in zucchini, squash, greens, lettuces, kale and onions," said Bock, adding that varieties of peas, beans and corn will be planted, too.

"We're starting to grow Navajo copper corn, a small corn plant the Diné (Navajo people) grow on their reservation in Arizona and New Mexico," he said. "We want students to know we are growing plants developed and used by cultures

for thousands of years. Some of the squash comes from the Raramuri (Tarahumara) people from Chihuahua."

Students are enthusiastic about growing their own food.

"I've had more than a hundred students say that working in the garden was the most important experience they've had in their college career — that it was especially meaningful to plant something and then eat it," Bock said. "When they pick a vegetable, put in their mouth and chew it, knowing it came from the tiny seeds they planted, they always say 'This is best chard or best lettuce I've ever had.'"

A 2018 study published in the Journal

of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics showed that among college students, gardening experience was associated with a higher vegetable and fruit intake.

Located between the Humanities and Social Sciences building and Gordon Hall, the campus garden first began in April 2022 with a raised bed. Today, "the entire area of the campus garden is approximately 2,000 square feet, and the garden structure itself is about 250 square feet. We have a California native plant garden that fills 1,000 square feet of the space," said Bock, who coordinates the garden's activities.

One requirement for all seeds that

GARDEN » PAGE 2

COMPETITION

Engineering students urged to use their skills to make a difference

Applications focus on social justice

By Lou Ponsi,
contributing writer

The annual Engineering-Social Justice competition at Cal State Fullerton tasks engineering students with tapping into their expertise to help solve some of society's more pressing social justice issues, especially those in their own communities.

The "Engineering Social Justice: A Design Challenge" competition was held March 20 in the Titan Student Union and featured teams of engineering students who crafted tools, applications and processes to address a variety of issues such as the mental health and wellness for children from low-income families, women's safety on college campuses and access to affordable education.

"We have the skills and the knowledge

to change the world around us," said Kristijan Kolozvari, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering and one of three faculty coordinators for the competition. "So why don't we then try to work towards solving some of the social justice issues?"

The challenge started with 13 teams that were encouraged to examine the problem from social, economic and business perspectives.

The competition was then pared down to nine teams, whose projects were on display and evaluated by a team of judges.

First place, which includes a \$6,000 award, went to the team titled CatByte for its design called Catpanion, an on-demand aid device, shaped like a friendly looking, round-faced silicone cat, designed to mitigate anxiety for children in therapy.

CatByte teammates David Frias and Bazil Alvarez designed Catpanion to provide mental health assistance for low-income and minority children during critical ages of mental development by offering a cost-effective portable device developed in collaboration with mental health professionals.

ENGINEERING » PAGE 5



PHOTO BY DREW A. KELLEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Keshav Daga describes his team's entry in CSUF's Engineering Social Justice competition on March 20.

I ALWAYS WANTED TO
TEACH SPECIAL
EDUCATION



VISION & VISIONARIES

SchoolsFirst president credits CSUF education with helping him advance

Lara applied what he learned while working

By Jenelyn Russo, contributing writer

In honor of their accomplishments in their respective fields and their service and support of the university, Cal State Fullerton recognized four Distinguished Alumni and two Honorary Alumni on Feb. 24 as the 2024 CSUF Vision & Visionaries Award recipients. Established in 1994, the biennial awards are the highest honors presented by CSUF to alumni and community supporters.

Jose Lara, who graduated in 2002, was already in the financial services industry when his higher education journey brought him to Cal State Fullerton. But Lara acknowledges that his time as a Titan has been integral to his 40-year career, including his current role as president of SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union.

In recognition of his service and commitment to those in Orange County and beyond, and for his continued support of CSUF and the Titan community, Lara has been named a 2024 CSUF Vision & Visionaries Distinguished Alumni award winner.

Lara grew up in Los Angeles, and his early career path was in computer operations at a local hospital. But the inability for the hospital to accommodate his college schedule forced him to pivot to a job with a financial institution. His computer background paired with his aptitude for technology and numbers was a great fit in that setting, and he adapted quickly.

“I really enjoyed helping people with their finances,” Lara said. “It was something I really was passionate about.”

Working full time while attending college full time meant it took a few additional years for Lara to earn his bachelor’s degree in business administration from CSUF. But the ability for Lara to keep his full-time job during the day and attend classes in the evenings at CSUF’s College of Business and Economics were



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES
Jose Lara accepts his Visions & Visionaries award from CSUF President Sylvia Alva.

what made pursuing a degree possible. And the courses he was taking at school were applicable in real time to what he was experiencing in his job.

“The Cal State system is really about applied education, so I found what I was learning to be extremely relevant to what I was doing,” Lara said. “All those courses helped me understand the world that I was in. It wasn’t theoretical. It wasn’t nebulous. I really enjoyed it because I could apply it.”

Lara also experienced the dedication of the CSUF faculty, and he never felt slighted for working full time while attending school.

“They really expressed their care for their students, and they were very inter-

ested in your learning,” said Lara. “They facilitated my ability to finish my degree. I really believe that. That’s why I’m so loyal to Cal State Fullerton.”

Lara joined SchoolsFirst FCU (formerly Orange County Teachers Federal Credit Union) as a manager, and his career trajectory saw him move up the ladder to vice president, senior vice president, executive vice president and chief operating officer before he took on the role of president in May 2022. He discovered early on that his goals aligned well with the credit union’s mission.

“I found a lot of purpose in the credit union movement, and I enjoy working at the credit union because of its mission and its role in our economy,” Lara said. “I

never imagined I would stay at this credit union for that long, but this credit union has given me so much opportunity. And I won’t deny that the degree helped me.”

Lara has managed many divisions of operation over his time at SchoolsFirst FCU, including Member Experience, Information Technology and Strategic Initiatives. With the goal of expanding membership outside of Orange County, he also oversaw the 2008 name change and rebranding from OCTFCU to SchoolsFirst FCU, which now operates statewide. During the conversion, he leaned on his contacts at CSUF for guidance, including former CSUF President Milton Gordon.

Lara credits the faculty at CSUF for recognizing his leadership abilities and for instilling in him the confidence that he now carries in his career. As a first-generation American and first-generation college graduate, CSUF meant access to higher education.

“I didn’t grow up in an environment where I thought that kind of access was available to someone like me,” Lara said. “It really boosted my self-confidence and self-worth. It led me to take greater risks in my job and be secure in that.”

Lara and his wife, Priscilla, have made it a priority to give back to CSUF, specifically to the university’s Guardian Scholars Program in support of current and former foster youth. He makes time to help prepare the next generation of Titan business graduates by mentoring them in skills such as resume preparation, interviewing and business-luncheon etiquette. He also is a board member emeritus for the Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation.

Lara was in “disbelief” when notified of his CSUF 2024 Vision & Visionaries Distinguished Alumni Award and is grateful for the opportunity to thank his family and CSUF for all they have done to help him realize his career success.

“I’m part of a bigger tribe who really understands what Cal State Fullerton did for them,” Lara said. “I’m a big believer in the Cal State system, especially Cal State Fullerton, because of the variety of access they give to the community ... I’m very proud to say that I am a Titan.”

Garden

FROM PAGE 1

are planted is that they must come from plants that have been open pollinated — in other words, they breed true, are not owned by a seed company and were pollinated by bees, birds or weather. A second requirement is that the plants must be heirloom or culturally significant.

“We work with small suppliers such as Native Seed Search in Tucson whose seeds come from Indigenous groups in the Americas,” Bock said. “We also get seeds from Baker Creek, which has seeds from all over the world, and Truelove, which specializes in seeds from the Black diaspora.”

Environmental science students use the garden for research, as do students of health and nutrition. Jennifer Langenwaller, an adjunct faculty member who teaches a class about obesity, brings her students to the garden. “I’m teaching them about growing your own food,” she said. “With obesity, we try to emphasize a positive approach to eating and nutrition. Some students had never put their hands in dirt.”

The campus garden features a sign that reads “By us, for us,” and each garden bed is planted by a student club, organization or department. Caring for, or shepherding, a garden bed is so enjoyable that there is a waiting list to do so

each semester, despite the constant work gardening requires. “Shepherds are responsible for all aspects of their bed during the semester — planting, weeding, and watering,” Bock said.

Recent rain has caused the wildflowers to bloom in the section of California native plants, making the garden a magnet for insects and birds that help pollinate plants, and within a few months, vegetables will be ready for picking. “When we have extra produce to harvest, it goes to Associated Students Inc. food pantry, which has been very helpful,” Bock said.

He works with the Urban Agriculture Community-based Research Experience or U-ACRE, a federally funded urban agriculture project. “U-ACRE provides seeds as a donation and also starts seedlings at the Arboretum. Shepherds are given seeds, seedlings and chemical-free soil amendments for their garden beds,” Bock said.

“Most of our students have no experience with growing anything,” he said. “The garden provides exposure to what it’s like to grow plants and think about varieties. People need to know how our food system works.”

The Center for Sustainability received a small grant from the CSU Chancellor’s Office, said Bock, who is planning to put in a new bed featuring a “SOXX garden” — 6-foot-long fabric tubes filled with planting mixture with small holes for seedlings.

He’s also hoping to raise funds to add two more beds in the garden this year.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JENNIFER LANGENWALTER

Above left, Jennifer Langenwaller, adjunct faculty at CSUF, uses the garden as part of her lessons for her class on obesity. Above right, John Bock, professor of anthropology and director of CSUF’s Center for Sustainability. Above, planting beds at the garden are used to grow seasonal vegetables and herbs.

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CLUB

Women animators create a safe space, support

Nonprofit provides resources, networking

By Lou Ponsi,
contributing writer

Women in Animation was formed more than 30 years ago to support and grow the scant number of women working in the field of animation.

The nonprofit has grown to 11,000 members worldwide and is a preeminent advocacy group supporting female-identifying and nonbinary people in animation, visual effects and gaming.

WIA Student Collectives, including the WIA Cal State Fullerton Collective, have played a significant role in the nonprofit's growth, enabling university students to build connections and support among members as they work to make inroads into the industry.

The CSUF collective offers industry-related resources to members and organizes workshops, mixers, speaker events, workshops and mixers for CSUF animation students and advocates for gender equality in the animation industry.

Any CSUF student, including students who don't identify as a woman, can become a member of the collective.

"It's not exclusionary," collective member and officer Pedro Maradiaga said. "It was started by women, but their goal is to help all minority groups and as well as people who may not be minority groups. It's supposed to be an open and safe space because, historically, most spaces in animation and most other industries are dominated by men."

Animation major Brooke Olson has been a member of the collective for nearly two years after hearing about it from a friend, who told her several members were graduating and the collective was looking for new members.

"I really love the kind of community that was built within the arts department through WIA," said Olson, an officer in the collective. "I was able to meet a lot of cool people and meet a lot of friends while also learning a bit more about art with the resources and events that WIA provides with the clubs on campus and also within the departments. It's really nice, too, because we have a lot of faculty that are alumni of WIA as well."

The collective also collaborates with related clubs such as the Video Game Development Club, Pencil Mileage Club and others.

Member Teeny Nadeau first learned about the collective after transferring from Saddleback Community College and attending Discoverfest, CSUF's largest involvement event that showcases student organizations.

Nadeau, who is a double major in illustration and animation, is also drawn to the sense of community within the collective. She said everybody in the group is "super friendly and amazing."

"We get to do all these fun activities, and we all have this shared sense of art," Nadeau said. "I've always been in the 2D kind of scene when it comes to art, and I didn't know if I wanted to do 2D anima-



PHOTO BY LOU PONSI, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Visitors view the artworks by the Women in Animation Collective on display at the Titan Student Union.

tion or if I wanted to do background or concept art, so I just kind of decided I'd expand my horizons.

Nadeau, incidentally, was recently awarded a \$10,000 scholarship from Sketchers for print design artwork she submitted for "Sketchers' Paws for a Cause Design" scholarship program.

The award also included mentorship from a Sketchers industry professional.

Nadeau's design of "goofy cats dressed in regal attire" was selected and will be used as design for a BOBS from Sketcher limited edition collection that will be released in June.

Khue Tran is a design lead for the collective and organizes the art created by other members for promotional events.

Tran first learned about the collective from a classmate who had served as the club's president.

"I just feel like Women in Animation fosters a very specific environment," Tran said. "Community is really important, and because of that a lot of people are more than willing to kind of pull each other up in this industry where I believe that a lot of women or people who don't identify as men are a little bit underrepresented."

Between 30 to 40 students typically attend the collective's biweekly meetings, but membership is at about 200 students.

When WIA was formed in 1995, it set a goal of having an equal percentage of

women and men working in the industry by 2025.

Maradiaga feels equality can be reached sooner.

"It can be done way sooner," he said. "You look at any of the school's demographics for animation, it's mostly women. So, I feel like it's going to happen nat-

urally, and we just want to foster that. Even the people going in should all be getting into the industry with the idea of helping other people out, especially minority groups, and encouraging them as well because that's what we mostly do. We encourage and provide a safe space, and we just have fun together."



PHOTO BY LOU PONSI, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Brooke Olsen, left, and Khue Tran are members of the Women in Animation Collective at Cal State Fullerton.

INCLUSIVITY

Renaming affirms LGBTQ Resource Center's significance

Programming, financial aid gets \$1.5 million boost

By Lou Ponsi,
contributing writer

As an openly gay man who came out more than 40 years ago, Michael Losquadro clearly remembers the days when same-sex couples wouldn't dare hold hands in public because "you were likely to get bashed."

Losquadro, who graduated from Cal State Fullerton in 1986 with a bachelor's degree in business administration-management, has spent decades on the front lines of the fight for equal rights and has been an active supporter of LGBTQ causes, including Orange County's first Gay Pride event in 1989, the fight against AIDS in the 1980s and the national march on Washington for gay rights in 1993.

Motivated by a desire to ease the burden and provide more resources for current and future CSUF students, Losquadro and his husband, Brian Keller, pledged a \$1.5 million gift to the university to benefit the LGBTQ Queer Resource Center and student scholarships in the College of Business and Economics.

In a March 25 naming and ribbon-cutting ceremony, the center was renamed the Losquadro Keller LGBTQ Resource Center.

With CSUF President Sylvia Alva and other university leaders present, along with the couple's family and friends, Losquadro said the university "has stepped up to meet the important social needs of its rainbow students."

"From the leadership training and opportunities to the simple, safe place for Titans, this center is vital to vulnerable students as they pursue their degrees and their dreams," said Losquadro, who spent his career in university fundrais-



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

CSUF President Sylvia Alva speaks during the official naming ceremony of the Losquadro Keller LGBTQ Resource Center at Cal State Fullerton.

ing. "Brian and I have each served our community for decades in the ongoing fight for LGBT equality, and we're humbled by this great honor that my alma mater is bestowing on us both."

The naming ceremony, and the center's presence, publicly affirms the importance of inclusivity and affirmation, which is so much a "part of the Cal State Fullerton identity and way," Alva said.

"To me, that concept, as simple as it is, is so meaningful to ensuring that people feel included, that they feel a part of something bigger than themselves, but that they also matter, that their voice, their identity has a place here at Cal State Fullerton," the president said.

"This new center, the Losquadro Keller LGBTQ Resource Center, I know that for centuries and years, our students will be feeling the love and the support that you have given all of us today."

Of their planned gift, \$1.2 million will go to the center for programming and \$300,000 for student scholarships in the College of Business and Economics.

The funds will also be used to support the general operations of the center along with potential initiatives to continue to create LGBTQ-affirming resources.

Starting out in a small room in the Student Union in October 2012, the center now occupies a much larger space in the Pollak Library and is one of six resource

centers that make up the Diversity Initiatives & Resource Centers on campus.

The collaborative also includes the African American, Asian Pacific American, Latinx Community, Titan Dreams and Women's resource centers.

"The work that we do at the Losquadro Keller LGBTQ Center is really impactful," said Lauryn Jarvis, a program and activities lead at the center and a CSUF student. "It's hard to put it in words, the things that we do and the impact that it has. It's hard to quantify ... laughs, smiles, tears, but the work that we do really makes a difference."

Losquadro said it's vital for the current generation of LGBTQ students, most who probably "don't think twice about same sex couples holding hands and walking across campus," know the past struggles of the movement.

"I think it's really important because things were so vastly different back then and so much has occurred in the last 40 years that if they don't know the history, they'll be disadvantaged," he said. "It's important to know our history so that we know how far we've come and where we still need to go and that we do not turn the clock back. In some circles, that's beginning to happen. They have so much more support, which I think is fantastic, and we need to continue to support them."

Student Jack Matthews, who comes to the center regularly, said the space is a safe haven where he feels love and support.

Matthews said he is grateful for the efforts of LGBTQ movement's predecessors such as Losquadro.

"I think it's a great thing because when I came here, in a lot of my major classes, I didn't really see a lot of people like me right in those classes," Matthews said. "So, the fact that I'm able to go to a center like this, where I'm constantly supported, and I'm reassured that there are other people like me, it just feels very validating. I don't think I could have had the confidence that I have today, without that kind of support."

ARTS

Actress Diane Guerrero inspires students to become warriors in storytelling

CSUF News Media Services

At 14 years old, Diane Guerrero returned home from school to an empty house. Her neighbors broke the news that immigration officers deported her Colombian parents and brother. Guerrero was the only member in her immediate family with U.S. citizenship.

Years later, she bravely reenacted the deportation scene as an undocumented inmate in the Netflix series, "Orange Is the New Black."

"We need to promote a culture of not feeling ashamed about being an immigrant, having parents who come from a war-torn country or having an undocumented status," said Guerrero, an actress and immigrant rights activist who participated in Cal State Fullerton's "Beyond the Conversation" 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.

Guerrero's personal experiences inspired her to embrace authentic storytelling in her work. Her notable roles include Maritza Ramos in "Orange Is the New Black," Isabela Madrigal in Disney's Oscar-winning film "Encanto," Lina in the American telenovela "Jane the Virgin" and most recently, Crazy Jane in DC's superhero television series "Doom Patrol."

In 2011, Guerrero moved to New York City and studied acting at the Susan Batson Studios and met her manager, Josh Taylor. In 2012, she was cast in "Orange Is the New Black."

During the production of "Orange Is the New Black," she was surprised when eight episodes extended into seven seasons. When she embodied her role as Maritza Ramos, she shared that her character consistently spit out punch lines and one-liners that helped mitigate her anxiety in performance. She realized through her work on that show that there are "no small roles" in television.

For students aspiring to become actors, she said it's important to stay open-minded and to not feel disappointed about making mistakes.



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Diane Guerrero, actress and immigration reform activist, center, middle row, has a photo taken with students.

"It's about the whole picture. Move on, you have a whole story to tell," Guerrero emphasized.

"Hollywood wants you to be multifaceted, but they'll put you where they're comfortable, specifically for people of color," she said. "I think I will continue to exist and tell stories I want to tell, and I will challenge working environments that want to deny who I am and what's important to me."

In the face of adversity from Hollywood executives, Guerrero encouraged students to "find a space with dignified rage and love."

"Find community and like-minded people who love storytelling," said Guerrero. "Create your own table. There's no

scarcity, and no story is the same."

For her advocacy in immigration reform, Guerrero was nominated as an ambassador for citizenship and naturalization by the Obama administration in 2015. She expressed optimism in the potential for progressive gains with Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

"I felt the most hope in grassroots activism and organizations," said Guerrero. She believed in the power of the people to foster social change with creative advocacy.

Guerrero volunteered at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, a national nonprofit group that provides immigration legal training, technical assistance

and educational materials to promote immigrant civic engagement.

After Guerrero's father died two years ago, she questioned if she had a motive to keep on fighting. She channeled her grief into creativity and is filming a documentary about finding home in Colombia.

In her 2016 memoir, "In the Country We Love: My Family Divided" and her second book, "My Family Divided: One Girl's Journey of Home, Loss and Hope," Guerrero said she felt the need to put her pen on paper to push immigration reform. In recognition of her dedicated work to immigration rights, she was awarded an honorary doctorate of law from Regis College.

BIOLOGY

Grad student examines effects of human activities on seaweed

CSUF News Media Services

Cal State Fullerton biology graduate student Megan Nguyen is studying the impact of human activities and environmental stressors on seaweed in Southern California's rocky intertidal habitat.

After she completes the master's program in May, Nguyen will apply her research skills in marine biology and knowledge about rocky intertidal ecosystems to study the California Delta as a 2024 California Sea Grant State Fellow.

Nguyen has been awarded a 12-month, paid California Sea Grant State Fellowship for graduate students. The educational fellowship offers hands-on training at a municipal, state or federal agency in California related to marine, coastal and watershed resources and the decisions affecting those resources in the state.

"This is a new opportunity for me that provides a deep dive into the intersection of science funding, science communication, environmental justice and natural resource management in the Delta, the hub of the state's water supply," she said.

During her yearlong fellowship, Nguyen will work on projects in a multifaceted role that connects research, policy and inclusivity.

"My interest in the fellowship stems from my desire to advance professionally at the state level, gain a deep understanding of California's ocean and coastal management priorities, and expand my network with environmental agencies and stakeholders," she shared.

A first-generation Vietnamese American, Nguyen's motivation and passion for pursuing a career in coastal science and policy stems from her family who relied on fishing and other marine resources to establish a new life in the U.S. following the Vietnam War.

Nguyen, who earned a bachelor's degree in biological science-marine biology in 2019, became involved with CSUF's chapter of the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science as an undergraduate and served as president and vice president in graduate school. She will build on these experiences to bring advocacy, leader-

ship and diverse perspectives to her fellowship.

"As a woman and queer Vietnamese American graduate student, I rarely saw professionals who looked like me," said Nguyen, who worked as a tidepool educator in Laguna Beach.

"I fell easily into impostor syndrome and lacked confidence. However, Dr. Jennifer Burnaford created a safe and diverse space in her lab where I finally felt seen and heard as a scientist."

Alongside Burnaford, professor of biological science and her thesis adviser, Nguyen is investigating a seaweed called *Silvetia compressa*. Known as golden rockweed, it is an olive-brown alga facing decline due to climate change and human disturbance.

Nguyen is studying how human disturbance can harm this canopy-forming seaweed. The seaweed grows on rocks and creates a moist microhabitat that provides protection and shade and serves as a food source for marine animals.

In the intertidal zone — the shoreline area between high and low tide — organisms are exposed to air during low tide and covered by water during high tide.

"When people step on the rocky shore, it can cause problems for seaweed that grows there," said Nguyen, who conducted field and lab experiments. "Seaweeds, especially the large ones that create a canopy, can get damaged or even completely removed when people walk on it during low tides."

Her study showed that trampling over time by people had pronounced effects on canopy cover. At her study area in San Pedro, trampled plots lost more than 70% of canopy cover, while plots not trampled lost less than 10% of canopy cover over the course of her study.

Nguyen's research fills in the gaps and helps scientists understand how disturbances like people walking on the rocky shore and seaweed drying out can indirectly and directly damage the seaweed and its rocky intertidal ecosystem.

"Understanding the impact of human activities on canopy-forming seaweeds provides insights into broader ecosystem health," she said. "Changes in the behavior or abundance can have cascading effects on biodiversity, species interactions and overall ecosystem functioning."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEGAN NGUYEN

Megan Nguyen, a biology graduate student, studies a seaweed called *Silvetia compressa* in the intertidal zone.

BASEBALL

Alums make some moves around the MLB

By Brian Robin,
contributing writer

There was migration. Lots of off-season migration, where Cal State Fullerton baseball alums moved from major-league baseball team to team like the animal manifestation of its Titan mascot — the elephant.

As usual, Cal State Fullerton was well-represented on Opening Day major-league rosters, with seven Titans populating rosters, along with three coaches and a manager. But what stood out about the 2024 Titan major-league contingent is the migration.

Of the seven players on major-league Opening Day rosters, five are playing on new teams: Matt Chapman, J.D. Davis, Justin Turner, Dylan Floro and Michael Lorenzen. The migration also extended to one of the coaches: Matt Wise.

We'll get to the moving-van crew in a moment. Instead, let's start with one of the two Titans who didn't need change-of-address forms this winter — Tanner Bibee. When we last checked in with the Cleveland Guardians right-hander, he was parked in the Guardians' Class AAA franchise in Columbus, Ohio.

That lasted until last April 26, when Bibee needed his own change-of-address forms after the Guardians — noting his 2-0 record, 1.76 ERA and 19 strikeouts in 15 innings — called him up to the majors. From there, all Bibee did was go 10-4 with a 2.98 ERA and 1.17 WHIP (walks

plus hits divided by innings pitched). Bibee made 25 starts, striking out 141 in his 142 innings. He finished second in American League Rookie of the Year voting to Baltimore Orioles' shortstop Gunnar Henderson.

This season, through last weekend, Bibee hasn't missed a beat. He's 1-0 in his first two starts, with 13 strikeouts in 9.1 innings.

The other Titan who didn't have moving companies on speed dial was pitcher Chris Devenski, an interesting development considering the former All-Star reliever is now playing for his fifth team — the Tampa Bay Rays. He joined the Rays after the Angels released him last August. In 29 appearances for the Santa Ana native's hometown team, Devenski was 3-2 with a 5.09 ERA and 33 strikeouts in 33.2 innings — after spending a month on the injured list with a strained right hamstring.

Tampa Bay signed him to a major-league contract the same day, whereupon Devenski found Florida more to his liking. He went 3-2 with a 2.08 ERA, 0.88 WHIP and nine strikeouts in as many innings for the Rays. In December, he resigned with Tampa Bay.

This year, Devenski has a 4.05 ERA in three games for the Rays.

While Bibee and Devenski stayed put, Chapman made perhaps the biggest splash among the Titan migrating major-leaguers. After two seasons in Toronto, the multiple Gold Glove-winning



AP PHOTO BY CHRIS O'NEARA

Tampa Bay Rays' Chris Devenski pitches relief against the Toronto Blue Jays during the seventh inning March 29 in St. Petersburg, Fla.

third baseman moved back to the Bay Area, signing a three-year, \$54 million guaranteed contract with the San Francisco Giants.

Chapman began his major-league career on the other side of the Bay, with the Oakland Athletics, who traded him to Toronto after the 2021 season. Chapman battled a finger injury en route to his fourth Gold Glove last year, to go with 17 home runs, 54 RBI and a .240 batting average. He turned down a \$20.325 million qualifying offer from the Blue Jays and tested a tepid free-agent market in which he was still unsigned into March. Chapman rectified that March 3, signing that contract with the Giants.

This season, Chapman reacquainted himself with not only his former Bay Area digs, but manager Bob Melvin, who was Chapman's manager his first five seasons in Oakland. Chapman's power and fielding remain among the game's elite. Before his finger injury, Chapman blasted 27 home runs each of the previous two years.

While Chapman returned to the Bay Area, Davis stayed in Northern California — albeit on the other side of the Bay. The third baseman opens his eighth season with the Athletics after signing a one-year, \$2.5 million contract.

And Davis has Chapman to thank for that. When the Giants signed his fellow Titan alum, Davis became expendable. That, despite hitting 18 home runs and driving in 69 for the Giants last year. San Francisco released Davis on March 11, after it signed Chapman and after Davis beat the Giants in salary arbitration. When the Giants released Davis, they saved more than \$5.7 million in salary — the difference between the \$1.1 million in termination pay they owed him and the \$6.9 million the arbitration panel awarded him, according to ESPN.com.

This year, Davis is off to a strong start for the Athletics. He's hitting .310 with a pair of homers and a .961 OPS (on-base plus slugging percentage) in eight games.

The other eye-raising move aside from Chapman came from another former All-Star—Turner. One of the most popular players in the game, Turner filled Chapman's Titan spot on the Blue Jays, signing a one-year, \$13 million contract. The 39-year-old Turner moves north after hitting .276 with 23 home runs, a career-best 96 RBI and an .800 OPS for the Boston Red Sox last year.

Turner filled the same role with the Red Sox that he did with the Los Angeles Dodgers: a wise, veteran presence in the clubhouse and a popular presence with the hard-to-please Boston fans. When he was with the Dodgers, he was the only three-time winner of the team's Roy Campanella Award, given annually to the Dodgers player who best exemplifies the spirit and leadership of the late Hall

of Fame catcher.

Turner opened his 16th major-league season with a homer, four doubles and five RBI through last weekend, breaking out with a .936 OPS.

Lorenzen, meanwhile, opened his 10th season with the reigning World Series champions, the Texas Rangers. And signing that one-year, \$4.5 million contract with the Rangers on March 22 wasn't close to the biggest news the All-Star right-hander made in the last eight months.

In a move that went below virtually every radar screen outside of Detroit and Philadelphia — and even there, it barely made a ripple despite his All-Star season for the Tigers — Lorenzen was traded from the Tigers to the Phillies on Aug. 1. Eight days later, in his first home start for the Phillies, Lorenzen threw the 14th no-hitter in franchise history. In so doing, he became the first Titan to throw a no-hitter in the majors.

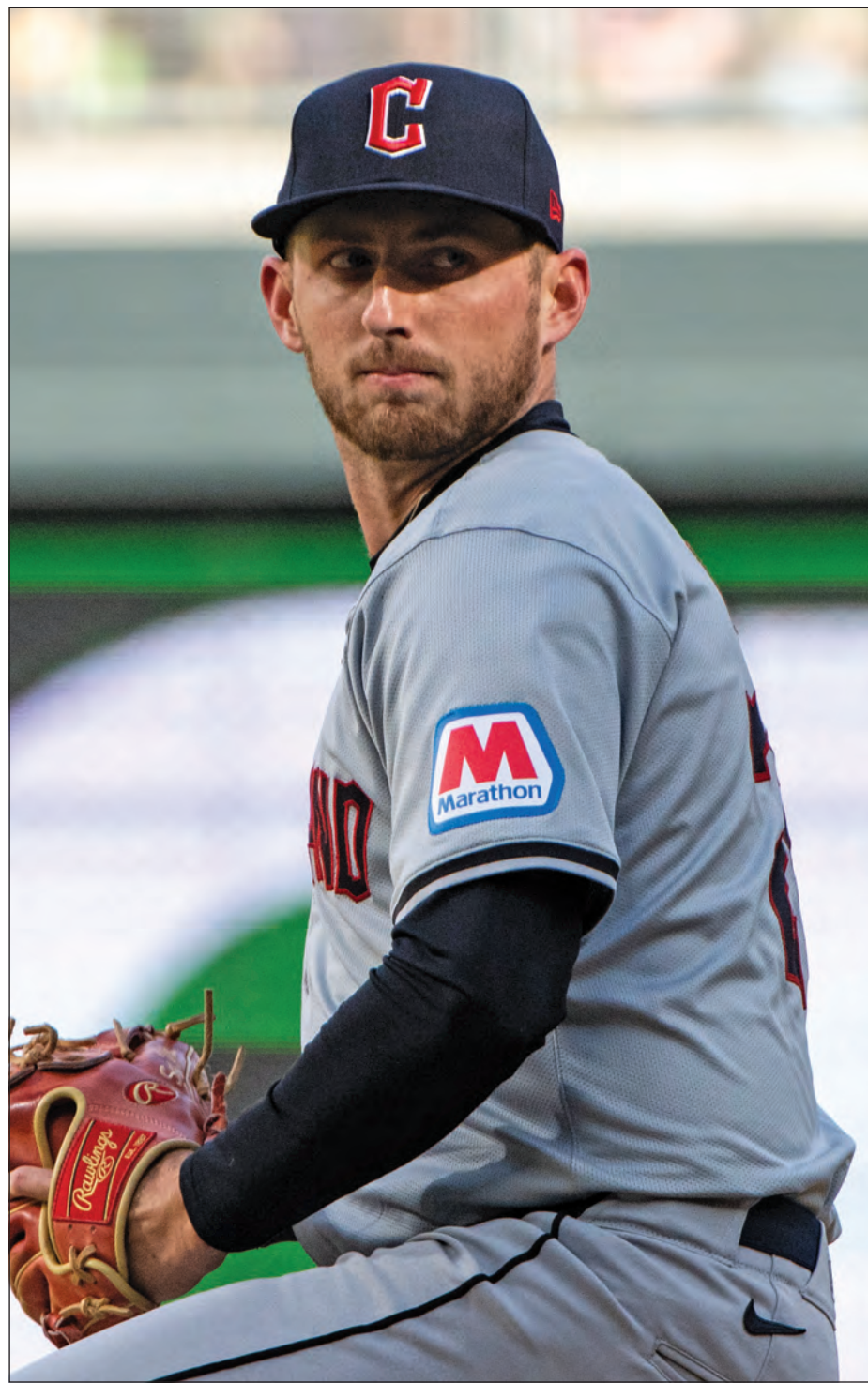
That was Lorenzen's high-water mark as a Philly. He compiled a 5.51 ERA over his 11 games, going 3-2 for the duration of the season. He became a free agent after the season and opened the season on the injured list, due to his late signing. The Rangers wanted Lorenzen to build up his endurance and pitch a couple of minor-league starts before bringing him to the major-league active roster.

Then, there is the ultimate Titan vagabond — Floro. He joined the Washington Nationals via a one-year, \$2.25 million contract. That brings the right-handed reliever from the Minnesota Twins to his seventh major-league team in nine seasons.

Splitting time between the Miami Marlins and the Twins, who acquired him in a July 26 trade, Floro was a combined 5-6 with a 4.76 ERA and 58 strikeouts in 56.2 innings. For Minnesota, Floro went 2-1 with a 5.29 ERA, 48 hits and 41 strikeouts in 39.2 innings, whereupon the Twins released him Sept. 29.

After the Angels fired Phil Nevin, Mark Kotsay became the lone Titan filling out lineup cards as a major-league manager. Kotsay began his third season helming the Athletics. The stalwart of the Titans' 1995 College World Series championship team, Kotsay finds himself charged with keeping the migrating Athletics; they're set to play in Sacramento starting in 2025, focused on playing baseball games on-field, rather than paying attention to the business games off it.

Wise, P.J. Pilitere and Mike Harkey comprise the Titans' major-league coaching contingent. Wise moves from the Angels' dugout as pitching coach to the Chicago White Sox as bullpen coach. Harkey returns to his bullpen coach role with the Yankees for a ninth season. Pilitere begins his second season as the assistant hitting coach with the Colorado Rockies.



AP PHOTO BY ABBIE PARR

Cleveland Guardians' Tanner Bibee delivers during the first inning April 4 against the Minnesota Twins in Minneapolis.

Engineering

FROM PAGE 1

"What we realized after doing a lot of extensive research is that mental health issues are really drastic in children, especially within ethnically diverse and lower-income communities," Frias said.

For Alvarez, the motivation for developing Catpanion stemmed from his own experience.

"My family is low income, and I've been through a situation where my sisters didn't have the mental health care they needed," Alvarez said. "And so, I saw an issue and I (thought) let me just develop something that can actually be an intermarriage between the therapy and the child."

Second place and \$4,000 went to Team Care for its application called CAaRE (Caretaker Assistance and Resources Engine).

CAaRE was tailored to simplify and personalize the work of caretakers in a variety of ways such as consolidating medication management, appointment scheduling, alarms, planners and connections with therapists into one seamless platform.

Third place and \$2,000 went to Defending Hearts and Harmony for the development of a multifunctional application called Wlk (short for Walk), which is designed to enhance women's safety on campus by enabling the women to book a trained and equipped female student to

walk them to and from parts of campus during the later hours of the evening.

"It's essentially aimed at mitigating issues with women's safety across campus because of the recent uptake in sexual assault crimes, rape and harassment," team member Hafsa Farooqui said.

Using Wlk, walking partners who are trained by the police department would be called upon to accompany female students as they walk to their campus location.

A \$500 award for the best poster went to Transfer Assist, a consolidated research assistance application for transfer students.

The competition was funded by the \$40 million Scott-Jewett Fund for Student Success and Innovation grant, which was donated to the university in 2022 to fund projects that focus on student success and innovation through the lens of social justice.

The design challenge received \$60,600 from the grant.

Event coordinator Garrett Struckhoff, professor of civil and environmental engineering, said including freshman and sophomore engineering students was a priority, even though those students are taking mostly math, physics and science courses and not yet taking engineering courses.

"We feel like they come in with a lot of passion about what they see in their communities," Struckhoff said. "We want to be able to bring in students who don't have the tool set just yet, but who have great ideas about ways that they can impact their own communities."

Members of the first-place team from



PHOTO BY DREW A. KELLEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Dahlia Sukaik, right, talks about her team's entry in CSUF's Engineering Social Justice competition.

the 2023 design challenge, "Open-Source Pantry Solutions," were on hand to talk about the inroads they've made over the past year in marketing an inventory management software application called "Bag/Get" that enables collaboration between individuals, food banks and food pantries to provide up-to-date information on inventories of food at the facilities.

Most of the \$6,000 has gone toward market research and development costs, team member Rohan Kunchala said.

"We've spoken to pantries and food banks in Shasta County all the way down to San Diego, Los Angeles, every city we've tried to hit within California," Kunchala said. "And we spent a lot of

time and effort on just doing that first."

The inspiration for starting the competition evolved from a conversation among faculty members from the College of Engineering on how engineering can be used to help solve issues related to social justice.

"It's wonderful to have collaborative, co-curricular experiences like Engineering Social Justice for our students," said Susan Barua, dean of CSUF's College of Engineering and Computer Science. "Their innovative ideas in the space of social impact really drive home how our students can take the technical skills honed in the CSUF classroom and apply them to make a tangible difference in the world."

INCLUSION

Advocating for equity, access for Black deaf students

CSUF News Media Services

For Lissa Ramirez-Stapleton, Black deaf lives matter.

Over the last decade, the Cal State Fullerton educator and author has advocated with and for deaf students of color to ensure equity and access to education and how higher education institutions can better support these students.

Ramirez-Stapleton, associate professor of educational leadership, is researching the connections between Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Black deaf education. For her study, she is interviewing Black deaf alumni and current students who attend or have attended HBCUs since 2020.

Her research also examines the development of Black teacher preparation programs for deaf education between 1920 and 1950. She is exploring the role space, place and time played in the relationship between Southern University A&M University, Hampton University and West Virginia State University in creating a master's degree program in deaf education for Black teachers.

"This work examines culturally rich Black educational spaces, why deaf students and students with disabilities select HBCUs and how these universities can continue to improve services and uplift all Black students," she said. "This is limited research in this area, but the

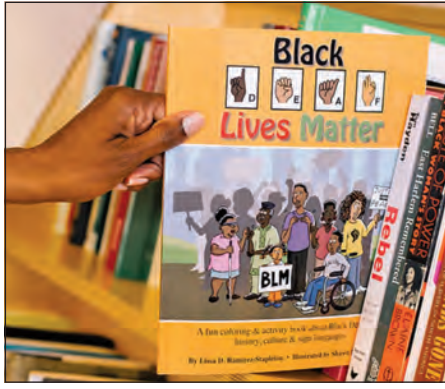


PHOTO COURTESY OF LISSA RAMIREZ-STAPLETON
Lissa Ramirez-Stapleton authored a book about Black deaf life, history, culture and sign language.

possibilities are endless and important to Black higher education."

As a high school student in Columbus, Ohio, Ramirez-Stapleton was introduced to the deaf community at the Teen Institute leadership retreat — a defining moment that changed her life.

"Since then, I've learned a lot about my own hearing privilege," she said. "To take that privilege and do something with it has been important and rewarding."

Ramirez-Stapleton, a first-generation college graduate, earned a bachelor's degree in social work at Wright State University and learned American Sign Language. She completed a master's degree in college student personnel at the University of Dayton to work with deaf and hard-of-hearing college students and the challenges they face in higher education, including audism and racism.

Through her work as a community director in residential life with deaf college students at Cal State Northridge and international service with deaf Jamaican and Ghanaian communities, she wanted to learn more about ways to support deaf college students' lives.

"I saw deaf students of color dropping out of college because they did not have the support they needed," said Ramirez-Stapleton. "I wanted to know how we improve services and resources for deaf students of color."

The National Deaf Center on Post-secondary Education reported in 2019 that only 11% of Black deaf Californian students graduated with a bachelor's degree, she said.

Ramirez-Stapleton earned a doctorate in education, with an emphasis in higher education and social justice, at Iowa State University. Her dissertation centered on the lived experiences of deaf



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Lissa Ramirez-Stapleton, associate professor of educational leadership

students of color and how they successfully navigated college and graduated.

After earning her doctorate in 2014, she became a faculty member in the Deaf Studies Department at Cal State Northridge. She joined CSUF's College of Education last fall and teaches graduate-level courses in educational leadership.

Last year, Ramirez-Stapleton founded The Black Deaf Project, a Black deaf and hearing educational nonprofit centered on Black culture and identity. The organization offers social justice workshops, educational materials, such as books, flashcards and history posters, and online resources for parents, teachers and community members.

The Black Deaf Project partners with Southern California Black Deaf Advocates, Center On Deafness Inland

Empire-CODIE and the Civil Rights Institute of Inland Southern California to host free community programs.

As a result of her work with schools and community organizations, Ramirez-Stapleton self-published "Black Deaf Lives Matter: A Fun Coloring & Activity Book About Black Deaf Life, History, Culture & Sign Language." A portion of the book's proceeds benefit the Black deaf community through educational programs.

"The book tells the stories of deaf enslaved people to the Black Lives Matter movement," she said, adding it is widely used in K-12 school settings in the region and country. "It offers students educational activities and tools to learn about social justice issues, Black deaf role models and historical events."



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISSA RAMIREZ-STAPLETON
Lissa Ramirez-Stapleton with The Black Deaf Project and Southern California Black Deaf Advocates board members

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