



Nursing student Anthony Attalla, left, talks with Austin Nation, CSUF associate professor of nursing.

NURSING DEGREE

INDEBTED TO NURSING: HIS DEVOTION CAME FROM ALARMING EVENT

Care during COVID informed student

By **Larry Urish**
contributing writer

A life-threatening experience forever altered Anthony Attalla's future. A recent graduate of Cal State Fullerton's School of Nursing, Attalla spent several days in 2021 hospitalized with COVID-19. "I was so exhausted, I slept throughout the entire day," he said. "Now that I understand the health aspects of what I went through, it's really shocking." While fighting for his life, struggling to breathe, Attalla formed a deep connection with the nurses who attended to him. "They were always with me, and we had many interesting conversations," he said. "They cared for me holistically, far

beyond just the physical aspect." The care Attalla received cultivated a deep sense of altruism. The result: Last month he graduated, summa cum laude, from CSUF's Accelerated Bachelor of Science Nursing program, with accolades that go beyond his academic achievements. Altruism has been a guiding light throughout his professional development. "The essential quality of a good nurse is altruism, and Anthony is driven by that," said Jutara Srivali Teal, associate professor in CSUF's School of Nursing and the program's nurse coach. "In my experience as a critical care nurse, when a person isn't sure if they can continue to breathe, they think deep, philosophical thoughts about life's purpose. Seeing health care providers caring for Anthony

when he was hospitalized with COVID may have sparked a plan to act on the path of caring for others. I suspect his appreciation of nursing came from his reflections while he was a patient and how nurses made him feel. "Often, the nurse assumes the additional role of surrogate: a surrogate sister, brother, aunt, mother or father – wherever that love and caring energy can come from. And altruism drives many into leadership." For Attalla, that leadership came in many forms. In addition to acting as a peer mentor, assisting fellow students, he served as the cohort representative for his class. "You're there to advocate for the students," Attalla said, "but you're also there to advocate for nursing in general.

At the end of the day, I have this responsibility, not only for the students but for the future patients we'll be caring for." For his accomplishments, Attalla was accepted into the exclusive Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, and he presented the commencement speech for his Accelerated Bachelor of Science Nursing cohort at the May 14 graduation ceremony. In addition, he created the School of Nursing's first-ever Chamomile Award (named after the calming effects of chamomile tea), given by each nursing grad to their faculty member of choice. "I felt there should be something to recognize the amazing work that the faculty put into educating us," he said. While Attalla had many nursing

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CAREER PATH

Communications grad finds her passion in radio and television

Fullerton native got behind mic early

By **Jenelyn Russo**
contributing writer

As a communications major at Cal State Fullerton, Class of 2025 graduate Ariana Hartman made the most of her time by stepping out of her comfort zone and fully embracing all that the university had to offer. Growing up in Fullerton and graduating from nearby Troy High School in 2021, the idea of attending CSUF was always a possibility. While her twin sister headed south to San Diego State University, Hartman researched the programs and opportunities available to her through CSUF's College of Communications and ultimately chose to stay close to home. Eager to get involved, Hartman dove

headfirst into college life and communications at CSUF. During her first semester as a freshman, she spotted an advertisement for Titan Radio DJs and applied on a whim. Before she knew it, she was behind the microphone hosting her own show. Despite not knowing exactly what she was doing, she created a game plan, and "Hart to Heart" was born. The show ran throughout her four years of college, covering current events, pop culture and everything in between. "I have people on, friends or people I'm just getting to know, and it always starts out fun, talking about whatever we want, then it ends with a heart-to-heart conversation, a message to give our listeners, something they can sit with throughout the rest of the day," Hartman said. "Being able to work with studio equipment and present myself as my own host of something and advertise something I'm passionate about has been really awesome."

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Ariana Hartman, communications student and host of Titan Radio's "Hart to Heart"



I WANT TO MAKE MY CHILDREN **PROUD**



Education is understanding and committing to your community

Pursuing higher education is, at its core, an act of hope — especially in moments of political and economic uncertainty. My road to this stage began during a global pandemic. In my life before Cal State Fullerton, I was a grocery store manager breaking up fights over toilet paper and hand sanitizer. That's how I learned that grocery stores are microcosms of American society.



Alli Dubin
CSUF 2025 graduate

investigating the American Dream from marginalized perspectives. When I picture America, I picture the people in the stadium at graduation — regardless of their immigration status or country of origin. They are all there together as a community who values the power of education. The United States is far from being the kind of community I want it to be, but I am committed to making it better because I am so proud to call you all my fellow Americans.

Thank you, Cal State Fullerton, for expanding my political imagination — and for helping me believe in the power of community.

Congratulations to the Class of 2025 on reaching this monumental milestone. Earning your degree is more than just a personal achievement — it's a gift to the people in your life.

We celebrate the transformative power of education and its positive impact on our community.

The degrees you've earned are the result of years of hard work and a commitment to shaping a more equitable future. By completing your education, you haven't just changed your own path forward — you've shifted the course of our collective history. Thank you for



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHUTTERSTOCK

your curiosity about the world, your care for the people in it, and your dedication to drawing on interdisciplinary connections that inspire collaboration and progress.

And I say this: When you celebrate, remember that your joy is an act of resistance.

Alli Dubin, of Anaheim, graduated from Cal State Fullerton last month with a Bachelor of Arts degree in both American studies and English, with a minor in creative writing. She served as the president of the American Studies Students' Association and won both departments' academic achievement awards.

COMMUNICATIONS

Lecturer's focus on experiential learning recognized by CSUF

CSUF News Media Services

During her two decades at Cal State Fullerton, communications lecturer Michelle Kurland has taught hundreds of students and won a variety of awards, but she can also boast of succeeding where many a C-suite media executive has failed — bringing financial stability to a newspaper.

While the broader media industry saw waves of layoffs and cutbacks in coverage, Kurland helped bring the Daily Titan “from the pecuniary abyss to financial health,” said Walter Barranger, a 1986 communications-journalism graduate and a retired lecturer and New York Times editor who served as the student-run paper's news adviser from 2019 to 2023.

Kurland also helped create curriculum to build students' digital skills, she offers them hands-on experiences in and out of the classroom, and her students and colleagues say she's both dynamic and nurturing. That blend of qualities is among the reasons Kurland was named the university's 2025 Outstanding Lecturer.

When she joined CSUF in 2005, Kurland brought more than a decade of experience in advertising and public relations, with a client list that included Krispy Kreme and Oral-B.

She incorporates real-world activities into her lessons — like having her advertising sales students make cold calls, something 2018 communications-advertising graduate Kristen Griffiths said was “terrifying” but prepared her well for a job in the industry. Griffiths now works as vice president of an automotive ad agency.

“Working directly with students in

real-world settings is deeply important to me, as it's where I believe my mentorship can have the greatest impact,” Kurland said. “These hands-on experiences not only strengthen students' technical and interpersonal skills but also build the confidence they need to effectively present themselves after graduation.”

She regularly takes students to the annual College Media and Business Advertising Managers conference to learn and network, and she has served as the Daily Titan's advertising and marketing faculty adviser since 2015.

The Outstanding Lecturer Award recognizes faculty members who promote learning outside the classroom, work to improve curriculum and teaching practices, and show a history of superior teaching. To CSUF College of Communications Dean Jason M. Shepard, Kurland is that total package.

“Michelle Kurland epitomizes the qualities of an outstanding lecturer: She is a dedicated, inspiring teacher; a diligent contributor to the university and her field; and a committed mentor to students and colleagues alike,” Shepard said.

“She brings a unique blend of contagious optimism, boundless energy and meticulous attention to detail to her work, creating a sense of belonging, collegiality and encouragement in every team she joins.”

Kurland estimates she's mentored roughly 300 students. She's now pivoting from advising the Daily Titan staff to helping oversee Comm Week, which brings communications industry professionals to campus as inspiration for students.

“I am thrilled to support our students as they plan and bring to life the largest annual event hosted by the College

of Communications. For more than 45 years, this signature event has served as a bridge between students and industry professionals, offering invaluable insight into potential career paths and helping prepare them for life after graduation,” she said.

Some former students say it was Kurland's support that both guided them toward a career and gave them tools to excel in it.

“She consistently encouraged me to push beyond my comfort zone and take on challenges I hadn't initially considered,” said Isabel Cambiaso, a 2022 business administration-finance graduate, who now manages digital campaigns for an advertising and marketing firm. “Her encouragement demonstrated the power of mentorship and has influenced the way I now support and inspire others in my career.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

From left, Jason Shepard, dean of the College of Communications; Michelle Kurland, lecturer in communications, and CSUF President Ronald Rochon at the April 24 Academic Senate meeting

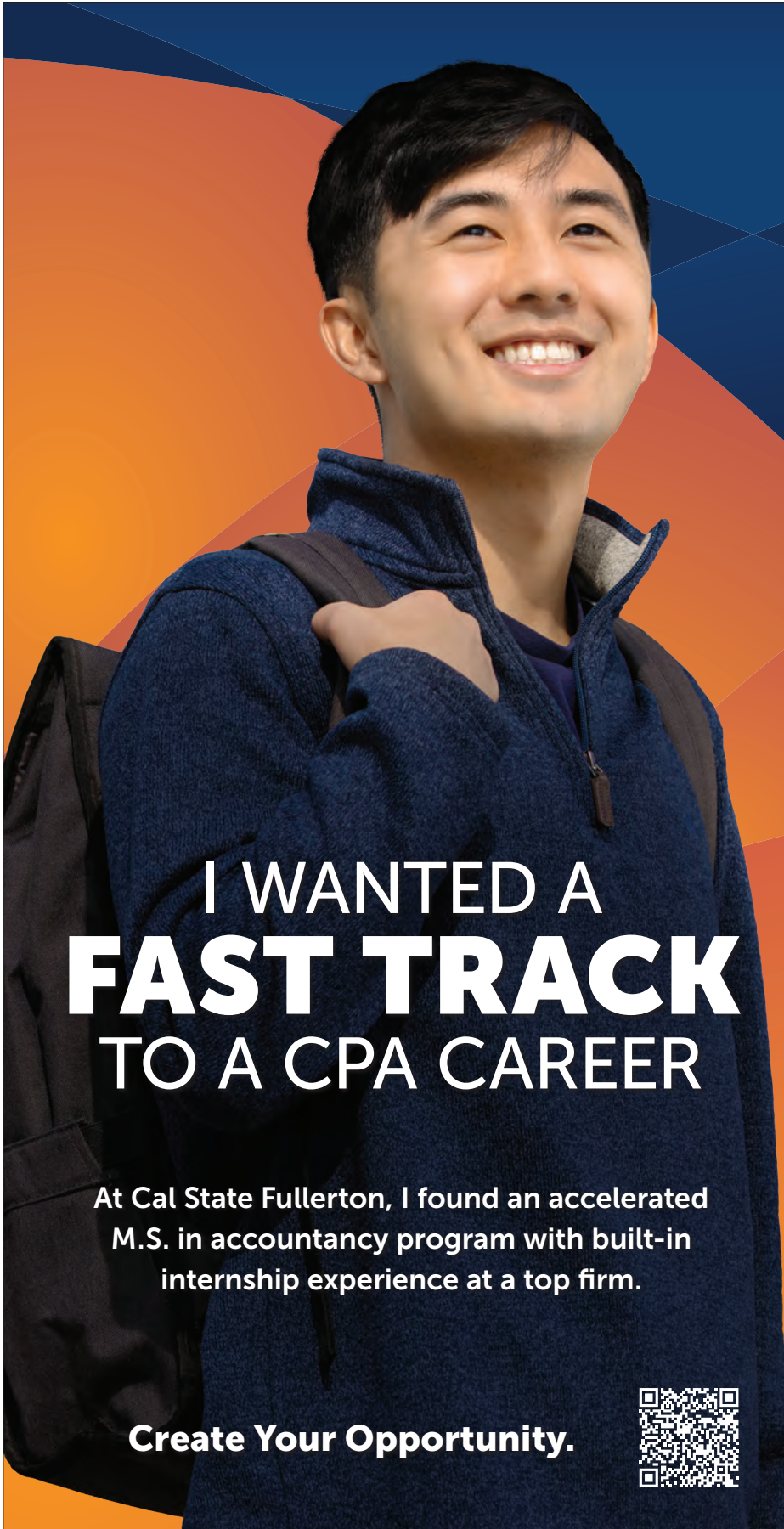
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The Cal State Fullerton community section is produced by The Orange County Register for the benefit of its subscribers. While the university is the section's primary advertising sponsor, all editorial decisions are independent of the university's control.


Published on select Sundays by
The Orange County Register
1920 Main Street, Suite 225,
Irvine, CA 92614
ocregister.com/cal-state-fullerton



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Graduate is a STEM student with a creative side

Marine life studies expanded critical thinking

By Nicole Gregory
contributing writer

Tabitha Martinez graduated from Cal State Fullerton in May with a double major in biological science and anthropology. “I was always very interested in the diversity of life,” she said, explaining her lifelong interest in biology.

The 22-year-old will head to UC Riverside next fall to begin her doctoral studies with the Evolution Ecology and Organismal Biology department and to work in the Animal Aeroacoustics Lab.

“In that lab, I’ll be studying the morphology of owls, specifically in regard to their silent flight and features on their body that allow them to do that,” she said.

Growing up in Anaheim, Martinez had so many pets — including dogs, rabbits, parakeets and a tortoise — that her family and friends were sure she’d become a veterinarian. But when she first came to Cal State Fullerton, her goal was to study art.

One class changed everything in her second year.

“A primate behavioral ecology class reignited my interest and passion for studying animals in the natural world,” she said. “I realized that I really enjoyed the challenge of a STEM field, and it was a really fulfilling experience for me being part of that class and knowing I can study this as a career.”

Martinez graduated from Canyon High School, where she swam and played water polo. “I’ve always been around water,” she said, and this included many weekend family trips to the ocean as a child.

In her third year at CSUF, Martinez joined the lab of professor Jennifer Burnaford. “Her lab is an intertidal ecology lab, so it’s very marine-focused,” Martinez said. “That’s when I started to go down the path of studying marine systems. That’s how I ended up studying



Tabitha Martinez conducts fieldwork on blueband hermit crabs at her research site in San Pedro.

hermit crabs.”

With guidance from Burnaford, Martinez undertook a study of how human handling affects hermit crabs. Because hermit crabs are abundant and accessible in Southern California tide pools, they play an important role in the ecosystem.

“They eat decaying matter, and they’re a food source for other animals,” Martinez said. “I wanted to see if we’re having any significant impact on them.”

She discovered that hermit crabs are exceptionally flexible and can adapt quickly and easily to changing conditions, including human handling.

“It makes sense because hermit crabs are from the tide pools, and the tide pools are always changing,” Martinez said of her study’s findings. “There are always temperature differences and differences in water availability, and they’re being constantly bothered by birds.”

Burnaford connected Martinez with the campus club of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science. Through that club, Martinez learned about internship possibilities.

Another project Martinez joined was the Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network, a research project in which college students from Southern California schools work together to monitor local intertidal zones.

Martinez applied for an internship through the Council on Ocean Affairs, Science, and Technology, a CSU-wide organization that promotes research on the ocean and coastal systems. This resulted in her spending a summer working at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro.

“My internship was in animal care and aquaculture,” she said. “Part of my day was working with the aquarists in cleaning tanks, handling animals. The other half of the day was with the nursery staff, which was also tank cleaning, but also feeding animals and working with more juvenile invertebrates. I learned so much about what goes into animal care, but also what goes into research.”

In addition to her parents, who’ve always supported her studies, Martinez credits professor William Hoese, an ornithologist, for encouraging her. “He really helped me think like a scientist and critically analyze primary sources,” she said.

Also influential was associate professor Misty Paig-Tran, who studies fish. “Her class was super cool, very hands-on, really engaging projects,” said Martinez, who wrote and sang a song about a fish for one of her projects. “It was just a blast. I had so much fun. It was a beautiful marriage of all my interests,” she said.

Martinez believes that STEM studies and creativity go hand in hand.

“I’m an avid songwriter,” she said, adding that she’s also the lead singer in a band called The Cecalias, which has released songs on YouTube. Martinez also plays cello in a local orchestra.

Looking ahead, she sees several possible career paths.

“I love working with animals, but I also love talking about animals to people. I’m keeping my options fairly open. I would really like to be a college professor or a researcher — even working at a zoo is quite enticing to me.”

STUDY

How Barbie influences girls’ perceptions of themselves

Reactions to Black dolls give some clues

By Lou Ponsi
contributing writer

A study conducted by toy manufacturer Mattel revealed that 95% of American girls ages 3 to 11 owned multiple Barbie dolls.

Amirah Kambe was one of them.

A 2025 Cal State Fullerton graduate with a degree in public health, Kambe, 24, drew on her childhood experiences with Barbie combined with her current academic curiosity to conduct a research project exploring how Black Barbie influences young Black girls’ perceptions of their hair.

“I had a lot of Barbie dolls growing up,” said Kambe, who minored in African American studies. “I don’t know that I had that many Black Barbies. We would go to the store and I’d ... look at the shelf and if there was one (a Black Barbie), I would pick it.”

Kambe’s research was part of a CSUF fellowship program — Bolstering Black Undergraduate Student Creative Activities and Research — pairing Black students with Black faculty mentors to guide them through the research process.

She was inspired by her mentor, Amirah Saafir, a faculty member at CSUF and a consultant for the Netflix documentary “Black Barbie.”

Saafir, who is featured in a segment of the documentary titled “Future of Black Barbie: Center of Her Own Story,” designed a study in which researchers presented hundreds of children with Black and white Barbies.

The children were asked questions such as “Which doll do you like the

most and why?” and “Which one are you most likely to play with?”

Saafir concluded that children tended to gravitate toward dolls that had similar features as their own or people in their family, revealing how younger generations think about representation, inclusion and diversity along with the significance of toys in helping children develop and understand their identity.

The study also revealed, however, that the children saw the classic Barbie dolls as being “normal” compared to other types of Barbies that came along much later.

For her research, Kambe had access to footage from the focus groups presented in “Black Barbie,” focusing on how the Black Barbie dolls’ portrayal of hair influenced participants’ perceptions of their own hair.

Using a research tool called qualitative data analysis, Kambe identified themes in the children’s responses.

“I think what jumped out at me really was that the kids were contradicting themselves a bit,” Kambe said. “They would express positive beliefs about their own hair and how they see themselves, and that’s really good. I feel like that’s the way the parents have socialized them because I think some of them haven’t been in school that long. So, it surprised me that they would have such positive beliefs about themselves or the Black Barbie dolls ... all the Barbies dolls, really.”

However, some children said their favorite Barbie dolls were the white Barbies with straight hair, Kambe said.

Also, when the youngsters were asked whether there was a Barbie that they considered to be the “real” Barbie, some identified the white, “perfect” doll because of her blonde, straight hair, Kambe said.

“So, I thought it was interesting that they feel positively about all the dolls but then they’re also saying, well, no,



Amirah Kambe is part of the CSUF graduating class of 2025, with a degree in public health.

this one is perfect and the epitome of what Barbie is supposed to look like,” Kambe said. “And maybe what a perfect woman is supposed to look like.”

From her research, Kambe concluded that a diverse collection of dolls lining store shelves isn’t enough.

“It also requires intentional marketing and media portrayals,” she said.

Kambe’s hope is that Mattel promotes Black Barbie with the same visibility as white Barbie to ensure that Black children see themselves reflected in mainstream storytelling.

Her research reinforced the idea that representation impacts children’s confidence, mental health and overall well-being.

Kambe was among 13 Black undergraduate students who presented their research at the Southern California Conferences for Undergraduate Research at Cal State San Bernardino in November.

Kambe plans to continue exploring the intersections of race, health and identity, potentially pursuing a master’s degree in public health or medical sociology.

Nursing

FROM PAGE 1

school options, he chose CSUF’s program because of its impressive number of resources, he said. This includes writing coaches and tutors as well as its Nursing Simulation Center and its nurse coach, the first-ever in the U.S. assigned to a nursing school, Srivali Teal.

“Nurse coaches are really unique and innovative,” Attalla said. “They help take care of the ‘whole you’ during the challenging times as a nursing student. ... And once you walk into the Simulation Center, it literally feels like you’re in an emergency room. The nursing faculty here at Fullerton give the students every opportunity to practice in a real-world setting.”

Attalla stressed the critical role of student-faculty communication. “Nursing faculty really care about student feedback and how they can continually improve the experience for future cohorts,” he said. “The way they interact with you is far beyond just as a student. Once we

graduate, we’re responsible for the lives of others. So they treat us as professionals and see nursing students as their future colleagues.”

Leaning toward working in a cardiac or intensive-care unit, Attalla admits that he prefers a fast-paced environment.

“I don’t enjoy sitting down for long,” he said. “Every time I sit, I feel as though there’s something else I should be doing. Even in a chaotic setting, you have to stay calm, since critical thinking and precision are necessary.”

Attalla is also drawn toward a future in teaching. “I saw how amazing the professors and faculty are at Fullerton, touching our lives in so many ways,” he said. “They’re making a difference, not just in an individual’s life, but in the whole profession.”

Teal is certain Attalla will be successful in whatever direction he chooses. “He’s very thoughtful and embodies brilliance and humility at the same time, which is refreshing,” she said. “Many of our great graduates maintain high GPAs, but the intangible qualities are the ones that make a student like Anthony exceptional.”

“I feel indebted to nursing,” Attalla said, “and I want to give it everything I have.”



Anthony Atalla, right, examines a patient dummy.

GRADUATION

CHEERS TO THE CLASS OF 2025

CSUF BY THE NUMBERS

Cal State Fullerton commencement ceremonies were held May 19–22.

12

Total number of commencement ceremonies

9,515

Total eligible* graduates – undergraduate students

1,792

Total eligible* graduates – graduate students

100,000

Total number of registered guests and family members at commencement ceremonies

Photos by Michael Goulding, Contributing Photographer

*Eligible students qualified to walk at commencement; however, they may decide to opt out of the ceremonies.



1



2



3



4



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10



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9



11



12



13



14



15

Photos by Michael Goulding, Contributing Photographer
May 20, 2025

1. A College of the Arts grad celebrates after receiving her diploma.
2. Logan Plummer, a College of Business grad, shows off his diploma.
3. College of the Arts graduate Mariana Lagrava greets a friend before the graduation ceremony.
4. One graduate from the College of Arts gives another a lift while walking into Titan Stadium.
5. Hannah Park helps Bryson Huang with his mortarboard before the ceremony.
6. Tuffy Titan watches over passing graduates from the College of the Arts as they march into Titan Stadium.
7. Cal State Fullerton President Ronald Rochon addresses the graduates from the School of the Arts.
8. A College of Business graduate shows off his diploma.
9. A happy graduate shakes the hand of Cal State Fullerton President Ronald Rochon.
10. Some College of the Arts graduates gather for a selfie before the ceremony.
11. Ka I Ao leong helps Beiru Lin with her mortarboard before the ceremony.
12. A pair of graduates from the College of the Arts greet before the ceremony.
13. Graduates from the College of the Arts march into Titan Stadium.
14. Some of the graduates from the College of the Arts greeted their professor with high-fives inside Titan Stadium.
15. A pair of College of Arts graduates celebrate while walking into Titan Stadium.

OUTSTANDING PROFESSOR

Environmental engineer earns top faculty honor for scholarship and teaching

CSUF News Media Services

Sudarshan Kurwadkar’s colleagues and students praise him as a dedicated professor, an enthusiastic and an environmental engineer at the forefront in his field.

Kurwadkar grew up in a small tribal village in India and is the first person in his family to earn a college degree — and the first engineer from his hometown of Gondpipari.

He went on to earn a doctorate in environmental engineering from the Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla. He also holds a bachelor’s and two master’s degrees in civil engineering from Indian universities.

“I faced challenges as the first person in my family to go beyond high school. I share this background with many of our students and deeply understand the obstacles they may face,” Kurwadkar said.

Sarab D. Singh, one of Kurwadkar’s former students, lauded him for creating a classroom environment that promotes student learning and success.

“He makes complex topics more approachable and engaging,” said Singh, who earned a master’s degree in environmental engineering in 2024. “His use of visual and practical examples helps clarify challenging material, making learning effective and enjoyable.”

For his teaching, scholarship and contributions to the university and the California State University system, Kurwadkar is the 2025 recipient of Cal State Fullerton’s Outstanding Professor Award.

“It’s a privilege to belong to an institution that prioritizes innovation, inclusivity and excellence in education,” said Kurwadkar, professor of civil and environmental engineering. “The teamwork we foster in advancing knowledge and

nurturing a supportive environment for our students is inspiring.”

Doina Bein, chair and professor of computer science, noted that her colleague is a standout in his field with his remarkable record of scholarly activities.

“He’s a friendly, compassionate and hard-working professor, striving to achieve the highest standards in his area of expertise,” Bein said. “The totality of his accomplishments makes him deserving of this award.”

Hakob Avetisyan, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, agreed: “Dr. Kurwadkar is an educator renowned for his unwavering commitment to teaching, research and service.”

Kurwadkar joined the university in 2014 and earned early promotion twice, achieving full tenure in six years.

Phoolendra Mishra, chair and professor of civil and environmental engineering, shared that Kurwadkar’s passion for his discipline fosters student engagement and learning.

“An exceptional educator must possess genuine enthusiasm for the subject matter and demonstrate a sincere commitment to ensuring students’ comprehension,” Mishra said. “Dr. Kurwadkar embodies these qualities, making him an outstanding educator.”

Kurwadkar’s research focuses on the occurrence and distribution of organic and inorganic contaminants of emerging concern in water and soil environments. His investigations include pharmaceuticals in Southern California wastewater treatment plants.

He has directed more than \$2 million in grants, including a \$1.5 million National Science Foundation award, which enhanced the learning experiences of underrepresented engineering and computer science students.

Kurwadkar has published three books and developed several new civil engineering courses. He has also au-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

From left, Susan Barua, dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science; Sudarshan Kurwadkar and CSUF President Ronald Rochon at the April 24 Academic Senate meeting

thored more than 50 research publications, with many co-authored by his students.

One of his 2021 research articles, co-authored by two graduate students, has been cited nearly 600 times, illustrating his significant impact in environmental engineering.

In recognition of his scholarship, Kurwadkar received the university’s 2020 L. Donald Shields Excellence in Scholarship and Creativity Award.

Beyond the classroom, Kurwadkar has received four summer faculty fel-

lowships with the U.S. Air Force, two with the U.S. Department of Energy, and a National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Fellowship.

Internationally, he received a faculty fellowship in Israel in 2022 and a visiting fellowship in Thailand in 2023.

Other accolades include receiving the 2019 Outstanding Faculty Adviser Award for Orange County, Los Angeles and California from the American Society of Civil Engineering. Last year, he was elected a fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

OBITUARY

Former communications law professor Overbeck dies at 82

Longtime Cal State Fullerton communications law professor Wayne Eugene Overbeck, 82, of Tustin, California, died April 12 with his family by his side.

Overbeck was born Jan. 3, 1943 in Muskogee, Okla., to Rita Rae Garrett and Luther Benjamin Joseph Overbeck. After early years in Kansas City, Mo., and Overland Park, Kan., his family moved to Manhattan Beach where he attended Center School and Mira Costa High School, graduating in the class of 1960. He earned an associate degree from El Camino College, a bachelor’s degree from Whittier College, master’s and doctoral degrees from UCLA, and a Juris Doctor from Loyola Law School. Overbeck was an active member of the California Bar Association for over 40 years.

For 37 years, Overbeck was a communications law professor primarily at California State Fullerton, and at USC. During this time, he worked briefly as an attorney for the National Association of Broadcasting. At CSUF, he served as the first faculty adviser for the student newspaper, The Daily Titan. For more than 20 years, he published a college textbook, Major Principles of Media Law, which was widely adopted by colleges across the United States. In 2002,

Overbeck retired from CSUF as professor emeritus. During his academic career, he contributed significantly to the Journalism Association of Community Colleges, providing the keynote law update for 28 years at the annual conference in Morro Bay. He also earned numerous accolades, including the Distinguished Service Award from the JACC and was recognized as one of El Camino College’s 50 outstanding alumni. In 2011, the JACC created the Wayne Overbeck Free Speech Award to honor excellence in community college journalism.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Wayne Overbeck

Overbeck had many passions, and his longest standing one was amateur radio. His call sign was N6NB. He earned his amateur radio license in 1957. He built his first station in his bedroom in Manhattan Beach, and then in every subsequent home, numberous vehicles, suitcases and toolboxes. He invented the Quagi antenna. He was elected to and served four terms as the vice director of

the American Radio Relay League from 1984 to 1993 and was chairman of the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee and a lifetime member of the ARRL. He won many awards, most notably a two-time winner of the John Chambers Award (1978 and 2015) for contributions and accomplishments in amateur radio. He was an active participant in VHF contesting, earning high scores contest af-

ter contest. He set and currently holds the world record for radio communications across the 902, 2304, and 3456 MHz bands between California and Hawaii using atmospheric ducting. He was a popular and frequent speaker at amateur radio conferences nationwide. His contributions to amateur radio are chronicled at www.n6nb.com. 73 and 88 to you, N6NB/Silent Key.

Overbeck was a friend and mentor to many people, through his journalism and teaching career, lifelong involvement in amateur radio, his commitment to the Mira Costa High School alumni association, and in his decades-long friendships that he maintained by consistently keeping in touch, showing up, and being involved. He was also a pilot, a sailor, cabin-builder, real estate broker, marriage and family mediator, computer programmer, and a amateur radio engineer.

Overbeck met his wife, Carrie, in 2008 and they settled in as life partners in 2010, eventually marrying in 2023. They had many adventures together, including road trips, radio contests, concerts, family visits to the East Coast, property and home improvement projects, and regular trips to the beach.

Overbeck was preceded in death by his parents and cousin Bonnie Finn. He is survived by his spouse, Carrie; daughter Lara, her mother Helen, and stepmother Donna; sister-in-law Marie; members of his extended family; and lifelong friends.

A memorial service will be held in early summer in Tustin.

Contributions can be made in his honor to the Journalism Association of Community Colleges, The Daily Titan at CSU Fullerton, the American Radio Relay League or the California Historical Radio Society.

Hartman

FROM PAGE 1

Her experience on Titan Radio gave Hartman the confidence she needed to step into other programs and organizations within the College of Communications. Her journey continued with a role in print media at Tusk Magazine, where she served as editorial director for the 2024 issue, overseeing a small group of editors and acting as a liaison between the general manager and the rest of the team.

“I had experienced writing news articles before, but this was a full-fledged magazine that we gave out to students and people all over the community,” Hartman said. “I was really happy to get involved with that written and photographic form of media.”

After deciding on an emphasis in journalism and a double minor in marketing and cinema television arts, Hartman knew that for her capstone, she wanted to go the broadcasting route. That led to OC News, CSUF’s student-produced television newscast. Although she had some experience with broadcasting in high school, this was a full show of packages each week that provides students a glimpse into a real-life television newsroom. It was a setting where Hartman excelled.

“I wore a bunch of hats, and a lot of people looked up to me for guidance,

which was a little overwhelming, but I felt very respected,” said Hartman of the OC News experience.

She enjoyed being on set so much that Hartman finished out her college career as one of the anchors on an all-female cast for “The Report,” a magazine-style news show on Titan TV that covers top stories nationwide and around the world.

Beyond the College of Communications, Hartman thrived in the University Honors Program, where small classes and close connections with professors offered the academic challenge she desired. She recently presented her senior honors project, a novel titled “Ethereal Bodies: Memoir of a Ghostwriter.”

Hartman was able to highlight her Titan experience in season 13 of “The College Tour,” a streaming series on Amazon Prime Video that profiles colleges and universities from across the U.S.

Additionally, Hartman served as president and board member for CSUF’s chapter of Best Buddies, an organization that connects Titan students with local college-age students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Reflecting on her broad range of experiences, Hartman is confident she made the right choice in attending CSUF.

“At Cal State Fullerton, they really put the emphasis on being able to do whatever you want,” Hartman said. “You’re not bound to just one thing. ... I was never confined to one area. I felt I was able to do a lot of exploring ... and I feel like I’m still able to be my own person.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Ariana Hartman also serves as anchor for TitanTV's OC News.

CSUF’s College of Communications gave Hartman a rewarding four years filled with hands-on learning, life-changing professors and best friends. She is looking forward to a career where she can continue to build connections and tell inspiring stories.

And for new Titan students who might be unsure of their next steps, Hartman encourages them to embrace the college journey, remain authentic and stay open

to new opportunities along the way.

“College is a scary decision, but know that you need to trust your gut,” Hartman said. “The first few months are always the hardest in any form of change, but there’s going to be a day where you look back and you’ll realize you have no regrets, and that’s the most important part. Things are difficult because change is scary, but it needs to happen. And everything will follow suit.”

SPRING RECAP

Titan players, teams make their marks, promise even more

By **Brian Robin**
contributing writer

Ava Arce spent much of the spring imposing her brutish will on what was a conga line of overmatched pitchers sprinkled around the Big West Conference. Kathryn Hosch spent much of her spring imposing her understated, but firm, will on a group of talented, but largely untested golfers.

Both Arce, the Big West Softball Field Player of the Year, and Hosch, Cal State Fullerton's women's golf coach, could go lightly on the imposition part of the equation because the talent was there for all to see and admire. When you have Arce's raw power and incandescent skill set, or when you have the peanut-butter-and-jelly chemistry and clutch abilities of Hosch's team, you do not need to go to the whip.

Baseball coach Jason Dietrich and men's golf coach Jason Drotter did not have that luxury. Their will imposition left nothing to the imagination, taking on a Darwinian quality that wouldn't be out of place at an SEC or Big Ten program. After last year's collapse, Dietrich invited a good portion of his team to investigate other programs. Drotter, meanwhile, put his golfers through a boot camp featuring 10-mile runs and obstacle courses, a boot camp brought to you by CSUF's ROTC program with the goal of building mental toughness.

It worked. The Titans' men's golf team finished second in the Big West, which was better than Drotter expected after CSUF finished 14th out of 15 in an early March tournament. And the Titans' baseball team — the Ferrari of the athletic department's program and the primary athletic focus and concern of CSUF alumni across the country — rebounded nicely from that nightmarish 2024 to make the Big West's inaugural postseason tournament, finishing third with a 19-11 conference record.

Whatever imposition of will Drotter and Dietrich employed squeezed every ounce of talent out of the talent at their disposal. Drotter coached up freshman Will Tanaka and junior Giacomo Comerio to top-five finishes at the Big West Tournament, their best finishes of the season.

Dietrich brought out the best in senior shortstop Maddox Latta, who was named Big West Defensive Player of the Year after leading the Titans with a .362 average, .486 on-base percentage, .503 slugging percentage and .989 OPS



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Ava Arce dominates at home plate during a tournament game in February.

to go with a .977 fielding percentage. Latta was one of three Titans earning First-Team All-Conference honors, along with third baseman and Big West Freshman of the Year Carter Johnstone (.341, 47 runs, 40 RBIs) and sophomore closer Andrew Wright (1.59 ERA, 10 saves).

But back to Arce, who put together one of the most complete and dominant softball seasons in program history. She pounded 12 home runs, two shy of Hawaii's Jamie McGaughey's 14, which denied Arce the Big West Triple Crown. She led the conference in average (.405), RBI (63), hits (68), slugging (.690) and total bases (116). She finished second in home runs and OPS (1.121).

Arce's 63 RBIs broke Jenny Topping's 24-year-old mark of 59 — one of the most cherished records in the storied history of the program. She eclipsed the mark with a two-run, go-ahead homer on May 3 against Cal State Bakersfield.

Arce's imposition of her will led the Titans to their second consecutive regular season conference title and an unprecedented haul of postseason honors. She was one of 18 players or coaches earning All-Conference honors. CSUF swept both Freshman Field Player of the Year (Nataly Lozano) and Freshman Pitcher of the Year (Eva Hurtado).

It also brought first-year head coach Gina Oaks Garcia Big West Coach of the Year accolades, a no-brainer considering the Titans went 37-15 overall and 22-5 in conference. Oaks Garcia became the fourth coach in program history to earn the honor, and she has a serendipitous tie to the other three. Judi Garman, who started the chain in 1981, recruited Oaks Garcia from Rancho Cucamonga High to CSUF. Michelle Gromacki, who coached Oaks Garcia, received the honor twice, and Kelly Ford, who brought Oaks Garcia back to CSUF last year, won the award five times, the last in 2022.

That brings us to Hosch, who won her first Big West Coach of the Year for guiding the Titans to waters heretofore uncharted. Not only did CSUF win its first Big West Women's Golf Championship, but it finished fifth in the NCAA West Regionals to qualify for the NCAA Championships for the first time. It was the first time a No. 10 seed emerged from the regionals to claim a chair at the nationals, and the Titans pulled it off with a final-day flurry that edged Auburn by a stroke for the fifth and final spot.

That highlighted a season that featured four individual tournament victories, two team titles and the crowning of Kaitlyn Zermeno Smith as the Big West

Golfer of the Year, following this year's conference runner-up, Davina Xanh, who won that honor in 2024.

When it came to imposing will on the track, the Titans' usual complement of sprinters did what they usually do under sixth-year coach Marques Barosso — win races and break records. The Titans' men's track and field team finished second after winning conference titles in the 4-by-100-meter relay team and the 4-by-400 relay team, along with Abel Jordan winning the 110 hurdles, Isaiah Emerson winning the 400 and Hawkin Miller capturing the shot put.

The CSUF women, who finished sixth, won the 4-by-100 relay, along with Brooklyn Davis winning the 100.

Amid all of that will imposition happening on the field, track and course, the Titans made news off the field, announcing the hiring of two new coaches: John Bonner takes over the women's basketball program and Nicky Cannon returns to helm the women's volleyball team.

Bonner takes over from Jeff Harada, who did not have his contract renewed after a 7-23 season. The Titans poached him from Cal State Dominguez Hills, where Bonner spent the last nine seasons transforming the Toros into one of the premier Division II programs in the country.

This past season, the Toros were 36-2, losing to Grand Valley State in the national championship game. That marked the second time Bonner and the Toros reached the NCAA Division II Elite Eight, joining a 31-3 season in 2022-23. He took CSUDH to five postseason appearances, earned CCAA Coach of the Year twice and compiled a 127-82 record in his nine seasons.

Cannon served as an assistant coach to Ashley Preston in 2019 and 2020 and to Nicole Polster in 2021, coaching defense, outside hitters and overseeing recruiting. She spent the past three years at UC Riverside, where she led the Highlanders to their first 10-win season since 2017 last year.

When Cannon was at CSUF, she instituted a defensive mindset that not only produced one of the region's best liberos in Savanha Costello (5.31 digs per set) but put the 2019 Titans among the nation's top-20 defenses with 17.44 digs per set. Cannon also coached freshman Julia Crawford to the most kills (368) and total points (398.5) by a Titan player since 2014.

We'll see next season how Bonner and Cannon impose their will on two programs displaying recent struggles that left nothing to the imagination.

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