Graduate finds her niche: Honda Center, Ducks media buyer
Brackett credits her CSUF education

By Jenelyn Russo, contributing writer

Lindsey Brackett majored in advertising for her bachelor's degree. She landed her current job as a media buyer for Honda Center and the Anaheim Ducks.

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

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

“Cal State Fullerton was always number one,” Brackett said. “I knew that their communications department had a really, really good reputation … and I would have a lot of things under my belt that I probably would not have experienced had I gone to any other school.”

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

Intrigued by the psychology behind what drives consumers to make their purchasing decisions, Brackett chose advertising as her bachelor’s degree emphasis, and she leaned into all the departments that prepared Brackett for her post-college career path.

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

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The love of fear. It put Dillashaw in the UFC steel cage, brought him wealth, accolades and world titles inescapable to someone who grew up in a small Northern California town of 2,000, made him one of the poster boys for an entire sport and even caused UFC commentator Joe Rogan to gush in front of an international audience that Dillashaw put

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Tulsa Tower of Famer T.J. Dillashaw reflects on his career in the ring

By Brian Robin, contributing writer

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That, too, comes with that love of fear. Eventually, it brought Dillashaw full circle, right into the Cal State Fullerton Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2023. The former Titans’ wrestler will now vacate grappling coach Karen Baskin, access forward Eddie Fote, pollster Martha Williams-Kizziar, former director of sports medicine Julie Man and the 1979 RawBall team in this year’s class.

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

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

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

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Since he was a child, Eddy Francisco Alvarez, associate professor in CSUF’s Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, has been the most impactful educator in the Latinx community, interviewed a good friend for the exhibit.

"Being able to share his story, and be given the trust to do so, was a humbling and rewarding," says Esmeralda Llerenas, a first-year student who’s pursuing a master’s in counseling with a concentration in administration.

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

"It feels like home," Alvarez says. "It feels like home," Alvarez says. "I'm lucky to have amazing and supportive colleagues."
Ke Huy Quan explains the power of unsung heroes in storytelling

CSUF News Media Services

Growing up in East Los Angeles, Emely Espino Bardales was bullied by the stigmatization of mental health in the Latinx community. A professor noticed that therapy is taboo and youthful resilience is masked behind machismo. She decided to stop worrying, ‘I want to do something about the challenges that she might be facing a professor, corporate research analyst, and community developer.

As Espino Bardales explores career paths, she said she is committed to helping students gain dual language learners/English learners, and the Adelita lab, a professor for CSUF’s Counseling and Psychological Services. The lab's symbolic representation energizes you.
For decades, Cal State Fullerton has taken pride in its range and depth of outreach to countries across the world. Once the pandemic restrictions were lifted, the university began re-establishing relationships and developing new partnerships with global universities to provide opportunities for CSUF students to study abroad and allow international students access to the CSUF campus as well.

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

A number of the programs have global rela-tionships, a team of CSUF leaders traveled to Vietnam, as did student partners in three countries; Vietnam, South Korea and Sweden. The meetings allowed opportunity to discuss academic and partnership opportunities.

"The opportunity to develop trade relationships between Orange County businesses and firms in Vietnam and South Korea may have a significant eco-nomic impact regionally and overseas," said Akhtar Sundaram, Dean of CSUF’s College of Business Administration and Andert’s mentor. "Karisa was under-well versed in the field. We have built a large campus garden at Skyview. When Cal State Fullerton public health student Karisa Andert first visited Skyview School, she was an intern in the elementary school’s food pantry.

"Skyview School is a K-8 school that serves children who are experiencing homelessness," explained Laura Chandler, professor of public health, and Andert’s mentor. "Karisa was under-standing of the children’s needs and was passionate about working with youth. Leveraging her internship, the aspiring public health student created an educational plan that would improve the nutritional health of at-risk youth and addressing food insecurity. The Leveraging Nutritional Knowledge program is aimed at improving the nutritional health of children from low-income families.

"Skyview students. Engaging them with interactive, hands-on planting activities about nutrition and sustainable food production. They were very enthusiastic about the idea of growing their own food," said Andert. "The kids were so excited to be able to tell me about the plants that they planted and grow.

"The most important thing that stuck out to me was the enthusiasm of the students," she explained. "Many of the students were so eager to learn about food and agriculture. They were excited to be able to participate in hands-on activities and learn about the importance of sustainable food production. Andert and Yenifer Tenero, one of the unique aspects of this program is its focus on student engagement and access to research opportunities for students to present their research to their peers and faculty members to learn, teach and expand knowledge in both countries.

"The team also held exploratory meetings with the University of Economics and Law, Hanoi and the Uni-versity of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City. While the delegation was in Vietnam, they also had an opportunity to meet with student groups of CSUF alumni, and more tar-geted meetings with alumni who are now running successful businesses in Hanoi and the Ho Chi Minh City.

"Graduates of Cal State Fullerton are contributing to the economic growth of these countries with critical investments in capital, ingenuity, knowledge, creativity and ethics," said Nguyen. In South Korea, CSUF leaders met with partners at Korea University and Ewha Woman’s University to determine ways to enhance these partnerships and open access to international experiences for students.

"They have to talk to administrators and present their research to convince others that this is a necessary change," said Leahy. "Ultimately, these partnerships built around reciprocity and aligning the goals and needs of our respective universities." It was perhaps the most important aspect of this program is that it provided opportunities for students to work together and develop a network of international alumni.

"They were very enthusiastic about wanting to be eaters," Tenero said. "Andert worked with the kids on the playground, Andert turned her focus on their research in the communities they want to serve. Andert and Tenero said one of the unique aspects of this program is its focus on student engagement and access to research opportunities for students to present their research to their peers and faculty members to learn, teach and expand knowledge in both countries.

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Sydney Herringshaw-Abbette works as a graduate assistant in the TPRL and is on her second year in counseling after the fall 2024 semester. Herringshaw-Abbette managed research labs at another university but said the vibe was colder and "just didn't feel right," compared to her work at the TPRL. By learning about the TPRL and how we can practice anti-oppressive and liberatory research by sharing client-to-co-researchers and just changing the language and reframing things and really acknowledging that we wouldn't have research without these participants, we're giving them the power and the acknowledgment that they deserve," she said.

Tiffany Perry-Wilson is a second-year doctoral student at George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development Department and has been a Graduate Student Researcher in the TPRL since January. Perry-Wilson was drawn to TPRL's collaborative research model, particularly in working with queer men of color. "So, I definitely wanted to learn more from Ana to them be able to gain further understanding to be able to work with this population as well for myself," Perry-Wilson said. "Ana has assisted us in learning how to approach these communities, to really honor and play spotlight on their voices compared to, let's say, traditional research where the individual isn't recognized.

The TPRL was awarded a research award from the American Counseling Association, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Conference, Oct. 15-18, in Denver.
good, that the competition fed and nourished him like few other things in life, and that his talent brought a side order of self-worth.

And, as he got older, Dillashaw recalled something else.

"I grew up in a competitive family. When you're older on that mat, it's all about making everyone feel good, it's all about making everyone feel alive," he said. "It's fear, to be honest. You're so scared of not doing to your fullest potential that it makes you feel alive. To be successful in this individual sport, wrestling, MMA, fighting, you have to love the fear."

It also gave Dillashaw victories. He was all-state as a junior and a senior, losing in the state finals at 199 pounds his senior year. Still, Dillashaw didn't plan on going to college until he went to the Dream Team Duals in Clovis. That tournament pitted the country's best wrestlers against the top wrestlers from a given state. Each year, that state relationship then happened to land on California Dillashaw's senior year.

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

"It was only the beginning. I was so grateful for everything I learned there because of my experiences there," he said.

Dillashaw went 14-16 (10-8 in dual meets) as a freshman and 77-4 (31-4 in dual meets) as a sophomore. He qualified three times for the NCAA tournament, turning in, by all accounts, a distinguished career.

For now, Dillashaw was game over. He liked the area, liked Cal Poly San Luis Obispo all chimed in. But when Dillashaw visited Fullerton, it was all over. He made his decision.

"It worked. Dillashaw loved the moment. You're in the UFC right now. There's millions of people watching TV right now, watching you walk out, who would pay to be in your position right now? That resonated with me," Dillashaw said. "I had a lot of fun that night. It was different than other fights. I saw 'Brock Lesnar's O'Neal in the front row ... I was the fan instead of being opponent. I was just soaking up the moment. You're in the UFC right now. My cornerman said, 'Hey man. Enjoy the moment. You're in the UFC right now.'"

Despite his record, Dillashaw's Bantamweight Championship run wasn't all坦荡. He was 8-1. The breaks kept coming. In May 2014, Dillashaw was stepped on by Takeya Mizugaki. But when Matt Whitman was given the decision, Dillashaw's streak was broken. That bout made Dillashaw the UFC Bantamweight Champion. Barão didn't like that. He thought he was the better fighter in the world and the reigning champion. Dillashaw? He was an unknown 8-1 upstart. Barão wasn't happy. He read that story and said, "I'm bleeding out of my nose and getting punched, and they used to call me 'Lieutenant Dan' from Forrest Gump, because of the part where he's yelling at the storm and-I'm yelling at the storm."

"It was my nervous self warming up. My cornerman said, 'Hey man. Enjoy the moment. You're in the UFC right now.'"

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

"I gave myself a year. If I was good, it'd stick with. Otherwise, I'd go back to school," he said. "It was that love of fear again. I was scared. I'm going to go into this fight, and I've never thrown a punch in my life. I've never kicked or punched anybody. It's not doing it to your fullest potential that it makes you feel alive."

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

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