



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Cal State Fullerton, which operates as part of the university's Extension and International Programs, offers a wide variety of courses for students of all ages.

OLLI

## 45 YEARS OF INSPIRING RETIREES TO REDISCOVER THEIR PASSIONS

### More than 1,200 continue learning

By **Jenelyn Russo**  
*contributing writer*

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Cal State Fullerton, as the organization celebrates nearly half a century of curiosity, connection and lifelong learning for adults of all ages.

Founded in 1979, OLLI-CSUF got its start on campus as the Continuing Learning Experience, or CLE, and began offering continuing education for retired community members. In 2006, CSUF was awarded a grant from the

Bernard Osher Foundation and became one of more than 120 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes across the country.

OLLI-CSUF now operates as part of Cal State Fullerton's Extension and International Programs and boasts a community of more than 1,200 members who engage in a diverse schedule of continuing education courses — offering more than 20 daily options, including lectures, discussion groups, dance classes and travel opportunities.

For \$160 per semester or \$290 per year, OLLI-CSUF members can enroll in unlimited classes and have access to a number of Titan student benefits, including a parking pass, access to CSUF

athletic events and the opportunity to audit any regular CSUF class with permission from the instructor.

Former executives, lawyers, engineers, doctors and retired educators are just a few of the OLLI-CSUF members who not only engage in the organization's programming but also share their wealth of knowledge and experience with CSUF and the community at large through research and mentorship.

"The whole purpose of (OLLI) is for them to continue their process of learning and rediscover things beyond retirement in a university setting," said OLLI-CSUF Executive Director Daisy Thomas. "But the great thing is that

they're not just gaining that knowledge unto themselves. They're also sharing their experiences and their knowledge, mentoring undergraduate and graduate students and helping give them a hand up to prepare for the real working world."

OLLI-CSUF member Debbie Maxwell got her start in the organization after she signed up for a flash mob class. Now, Maxwell is learning line dancing and cribbage, as well as serving as the VP of Membership.

"Everyone, especially when you retire, needs a purpose," Maxwell said. "I have children and grandchildren, but

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PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Assistant professor William Toledo teaches secondary education at Cal State Fullerton.

**HOT-BUTTON ISSUES**

## Tips for talking politics at family gatherings

Resist insults, professor suggests

By **Nicole Gregory**  
*contributing writer*

William Toledo, assistant professor of secondary education, teaches students how to guide controversial political and civic discussions so they can have positive educational experiences.

His Cal State Fullerton students are future teachers of grades six through 12, but the strategies Toledo has developed from his research can be applied to family gatherings, where conversations among people with opposing political or social views can turn into hurtful arguments.

"When I think about difficult conversations, I mean those hot button issues related to voting for this last election, or those really big issues like immigration

and women's rights that can come up in families, in schools, in all social settings," said Toledo, who received his doctorate at the University of Michigan and is the author of the book "Civics Education in Contentious Times: Working with Teachers to Create Locally-Specific Curricula in a Post-Truth World."

"There are many issues out there that Americans aren't seeing eye-to-eye on," he said.

As a first step, Toledo recommends being willing to have those difficult conversations rather than avoiding the hot-button issues altogether.

"Get yourself in a mindset where you're prepared to hear things that may not resonate with you and things you may not agree with," he said. "If you get yourself in that mindset, and you're still willing to engage in a conversation, that's step number one."

Resist the urge to label or insult another person, he said. "We've seen so much of that. We'll see Republicans calling Democrats snowflakes or lib-tards. And then we'll see Democrats calling Republicans morons and garbage. It's just so divisive."

Another strategy is to find common ground with others. "I think finding

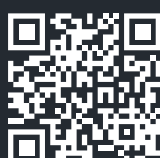
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‘WHAT JUST HAPPENED’

# Political scientists dissect results in post-election forum

## View of economy, gender bias scrutinized

By **Lou Ponsi**  
*contributing writer*

The 2024 presidential election has been analyzed, scrutinized, criticized and anatomized arguably more than any presidential election in recent memory. As such, the public forum held Nov. 18 at the Fullerton Public Library, featuring analysis from Cal State Fullerton and Fullerton College political science professors, was well attended by a community looking for answers. The forum was aptly titled “What Just Happened? Making Sense of the 2024 Elections.” The panel of experts included Cal State Fullerton political science professors Scott Spitzer, Matthew Jarvis and Robert Robinson, and Fullerton College political science professor Jodi Balma. Multiple topics were discussed during the forum, which included a Q&A session with attendees. Here are some highlights:

**Vibrant democracy** Spitzer, who served as moderator for the forum, said the assertion that “Democracy is alive and well,” normally an accepted premise in U.S. elections, was worth mentioning for this election, given the rhetoric and accusations making headlines over the past four years and leading right up to Election Day. “Yes, there was an election, and nobody knew who was going to win beforehand,” Spitzer said. “Somebody won the election, and there was no controversy over the process. So, it seems like for sure, American democracy is functioning. The question is, what does it get us?”

**It’s the economy** By now, most people are familiar with the phrase, “It’s the economy, stupid,” which was famously coined in 1992 by James Carville, political adviser to Bill Clinton. Carville’s comment was brought up



PHOTO BY LOU PONSI, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER  
From left, Fullerton College political science professor Jodi Balma and Cal State Fullerton political science professors Scott Spitzer, Matthew Jarvis and Robert Robinson speak during a panel discussion on the 2024 election results.

almost immediately during the forum when Spitzer asked his colleagues to comment on the victory for Donald Trump and the Republican Party. “I’ve been thinking about this a lot since the election,” Spitzer said. “I heard there are new analyses that our gross domestic product is higher than ever, and it grew, even when adjusting for inflation, by a huge amount over the last three years, that more Americans are wealthier now than they were four years ago, that the lowest income quintiles were lifted as more people got out of poverty over the last four years.” If the economy is doing so well, why would the incumbent lose, Spitzer asked rhetorically? Just because the indicators might appear positive, vast segments of the population aren’t feeling it, the panelists noted. For one, the cost of housing has skyrocketed, they said. A shopping cart full of groceries that

used to cost \$100 now costs \$130 or more. “I would come back to it’s what people perceive as the economy,” Jarvis said. “So that’s where I would say it’s prices and the economy, and inflation really comes back and bites.”

**Gender bias?** It was pointed out that Trump has run for president three times, twice against female candidates and once against a male candidate. He won against Hillary Clinton and Kamala Harris but lost to Joe Biden. “I think it’s a fair question but difficult to answer,” Jarvis said. “Because people don’t generally admit to holding beliefs like that. Well, some do, but even if they believe it, it might not be driving their vote. They might say, ‘I don’t usually vote for women, but I will this time,’ or whatever. My answer is that it mattered but I don’t know how much. I don’t think it would have made a differ-

ence in the ultimate outcome, but I can’t be really sure. I’m positive there wasn’t a zero effect.”

**Fitness factor** Throughout the campaign, Harris made the argument that if Trump got elected, democracy would surely collapse and the U.S. would become an authoritarian nation. Think back to Jan. 6, she said. But voters didn’t buy it, the panelists said. Jan. 6 was a long time ago and really didn’t have an impact on Americans’ day-to-day lives. “I just think there was a sense that voters, whatever the Democrats tried to push on that, they didn’t buy it,” Robinson said. “To them, it sounded like just a campaign tactic, politics, and honestly, (voters) might say something along the lines of, well, democracy did not end between 2016 and 2020. I’m not going to believe this the second time. Now, you might say, well, the situations are different in terms of guardrails and who’s there, and I think that’s a good conversation to have.”

**The podcast election** Rather than gleaning information from mainstream news sources, voters turned to influencers and podcasters for election-related news, many analysts have said. For the first time, Call Me Daddy, NELK Boys and The Joe Rogan Experience were the preferred sources of information. Spitzer said the trend will continue. “And all of the legacy media are losing,” Spitzer said. “It’s really hard in that kind of an environment to communicate solid information, factual information, about the state of the economy, about what’s going to happen when Trump gets into office, what he has said he’s going to do in terms of the rule of law and things like that. People are not getting that information clearly because they’re identifying in their own little asylum.” Said Balma, “I get my news from KQED. That’s a news organization, not Joe Rogan.”

## Politics


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those commonalities are great jumping off points before we debate our differences,” Toledo said. “It would be very rare to meet or know somebody who felt completely different about every political or social issue — it would be almost impossible.” Americans were not always as divided as they are today, Toledo said. “A lot of my research has looked at what I call the civic gap, or the division gap.” In the 1990s, he said, Americans felt the same way about the majority of issues. “The distance between a Democratic candidate, let’s just say Bill Clinton at that time and his counterpart Bob Dole for that election, the distance between their views and their platforms wasn’t near as distant as it was with our recent candidates, Donald Trump and Kamala Harris,” he said. Another cause of Americans’ division these days is the tendency to associate only with like-minded people. “American people have kind of gotten themselves into what we call echo chambers, where you’re associating with only people who think like you and have your same viewpoints,” Toledo said. “And in schools, you hear, ‘Don’t talk politics,’ which has really gotten us into a terrible space because then we’re closing ourselves off to having important discussions,” he said. Having peaceful discussions is a learned skill. “It is a skill that we can teach — how to talk about these issues in ways that are productive, in ways that don’t label people, in ways that don’t re-

sult to screaming, yelling, name-calling,” Toledo explained. “We need to get back to that space where we can talk with people who feel differently than we do, who vote differently than we do.” To cultivate this in the classroom, he suggests that teachers start with “low emotional intensity” topics such as whether bikes should be allowed on sidewalks or vending machines should stock only healthy food options. “Then you build your way up to the bigger, more controversial issues,” said Toledo, who is in his third year as a professor at Cal State Fullerton. Although all topics can be open for conversation, it’s OK to set a boundary around sensitive personal issues, which Toledo calls “closed issues.” “I’ll give an example for me — I am a gay man, I’m married to a man,” he said. “If somebody disagrees with gay marriage, which now, thankfully in California, as part of our state constitution, is protected, that’s not a great jumping off point for us because it’s affecting my identity and my humanity. My defenses are immediately going to be up.” Within any family, there can be a wide diversity of views and experiences, Toledo said, which is why holiday gatherings can be settings for helpful, rather than hurtful, discussions. The host can promote a positive tone. “As a host, there’s that opportunity to set the scene for some really productive discussions,” he said. “The first request would just be telling people to open their mind, that any political discussions shouldn’t resort to name-calling, to labeling. There are many opportunities where there is room for discussion and where we can find common ground.”




PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES  
William Toledo’s advice is to not avoid difficult conversations.







# I WANT TO ADVOCATE FOR STUDENT VETERANS

At Cal State Fullerton, I embraced my experience as a former Marine, worked toward my degree in business administration and found my calling as an advocate for the veteran community.

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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 Thursdays by  
The Orange County Register  
1920 Main Street, Suite 225  
Irvine, CA 92614  
[ocregister.com/cal-state-fullerton](http://ocregister.com/cal-state-fullerton)



HEALTH AND SAFETY

# University’s Mobile Crisis Team puts students first

## Police intervention alternative pays off

By Larry Urish  
contributing writer

Emphasizing student safety and welfare, Cal State Fullerton’s Counseling and Psychological Services last spring began partnering with CSUF’s Police Department to form the Mobile Crisis Team, a unit that has been implementing a new holistic safety plan to better serve students in crisis.

Consisting of a CAPS mental health clinician and a police campus safety specialist, the Mobile Crisis Team prioritizes compassionate intervention, case-specific support, follow-up care and referrals to a variety of on- and off-campus resources. This reimagined form of crisis care has been given a boost thanks to a recent \$549,000 grant provided by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Working in tandem, the Police Department and CAPS have decreased the need for traditional law enforcement intervention for nonviolent incidents, lowered the number of arrests, cut costs, decreased repeat calls for service and enhanced student access to a more thorough, wider range of care for those undergoing a crisis.

The new form of police/counseling intervention involves a “tiered” safety response system, in which different levels of care are based on a given situation — everything from a serious, violent crime to a student overwhelmed about an upcoming exam.

“This holistic approach recognizes that not every call requires a uniformed police officer,” said Det. Christopher Brown of the CSUF Police Department. “It frees up our police officers to respond to, investigate and prevent crimes, and engage with community members.”

“The Mobile Crisis Team came about when the new police chief (Anthony Frisbee) realized that many of these mental health calls shouldn’t require police,” said Jaime Sheehan, director of CAPS. “They should be for licensed mental health clinicians. Now, for mental health situations, the hope is that we have a trained clinician or Mobile Crisis Team member respond instead of officers.”

Available Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., the Mobile Crisis Team is activated by contacting Counseling and Psychological Services (657-278-3040) or the police department’s 24-hour dispatch center (657-278-2515). The pairing of a CAPS mental health professional and a campus safety specialist ensures that students receive support in a safe environment.

Brown emphasized that campus safety specialists don’t wear a uniform, and they don’t carry weapons. “They provide a bubble of safety and act by requesting additional support if a situation escalates.”



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

The new Mobile Crisis Team is a collaboration between the CSUF Police Department and the school’s Counseling and Psychological Services department.

Using the old response process, “The police determined if the person was in danger to himself or others, or gravely disabled,” Brown said. “If the student wouldn’t meet this criteria, the officer would hand out a pamphlet, say have a nice day and move on. Now, with the Mobile Crisis Team, clinicians specially trained for helping students in crisis can refer them to helpful resources and provide follow-up care. It’s not just one and done.”

The \$549,000 grant will be paid over three years, Brown said. “This time allows us to build the tiered-response program, highlighting it to the campus community. Moving forward, hopefully, it will be included in our formal budget, and we won’t have to rely on the federal grant.”

On the subject of funding, “One way the Mobile Crisis Team reduces costs is by lowering the number of repeat calls,” Sheehan said. “It really helps if we can get students into treatment sooner and provide access to services they didn’t know about. Our goal is to follow up with treatment and provide additional resources through different agencies, versus resolving an issue for that one moment.”

“Law enforcement is expensive,” Brown said. “The Mobile Crisis Team frees up our police officers to respond to crimes. By connecting troubled students to resources that help, we’re not dealing with the same problem over and over again.”

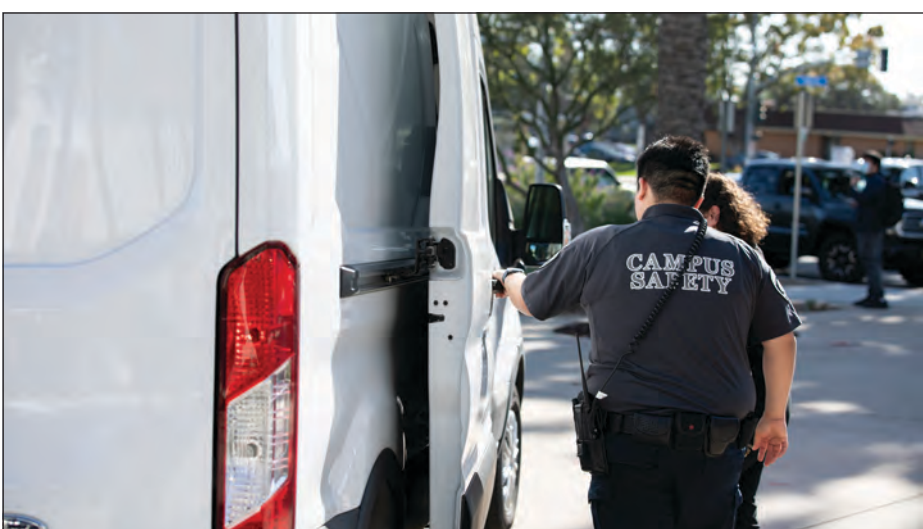


PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

The unit aims to offer a holistic approach to student safety and welfare on the campus.

The crisis team also lowers student fear and the perceived disgrace associated with mental health intervention. “When law enforcement responds to a mental health crisis, it may create more of a stigma,” Sheehan said. “If someone sees a police officer in a uniform, it may lead to a fear reaction. Having a mental health specialist and a campus safety officer respond can reduce worry.”

Student feedback about the new system has been positive, Sheehan said. “They’ve been very appreciative and thankful, and they believe that it will be very beneficial for future students using

this service.”

“When a Mobile Crisis Team is deployed, students get great care, far better than from a regular police officer,” said Brown, who sees the tiered-response model one day being used in other CSU campuses and across the nation.

“Every position within the university is designated for student success. A key part of that is providing mental health care. The work that the Mobile Crisis Team is doing every day is helping students to be academically successful and be contributing members of society. That’s really powerful.”

ANTHROPOLOGY

# Social sciences symposium honors late professor John Q. Patton

CSUF News Media Services

A thoughtful warrior, a voracious learner, a champion for students, quiet, respectful, kindhearted and fun. These are some of the words scholars, former students and colleagues used to describe John Q. Patton, the late Cal State Fullerton professor known for decades of work as an evolutionary anthropologist and tribal warfare specialist.

An Oct. 25-26 symposium hosted in his honor focused on “Interdisciplinary Collaborations in the Evolutionary Social Sciences.” Scholars from Arizona, California, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Washington, Utah, Virginia and Canada gathered at CSUF to share research in such areas as coalitional psychology, health and reproduction, environment and adaptation, climate change and sustainability, evolution and human nature.

The symposium was sponsored by Cal State Fullerton’s Center for the Study of Human Nature, Division of Anthropology, Department of Psychology and Department of Philosophy, as well as CSUF student clubs Association for Primate Evolution Studies and Society for Interdisciplinary Research in Evolution.

Following the symposium, scholars celebrated Patton’s life and work at the Arboretum and Botanical Garden at Cal State Fullerton, where Amir Dabirian, provost and vice president for academic affairs, posthumously conferred Patton’s emeritus title.

“Every time I saw John, he had a beautiful smile,” said Dabirian. “He was kindhearted and really wanted to help every single person who came across his path. He cared about our students, our faculty, his friends and other scholars and wanted everyone to be successful. As the university continues to grow, we will always see John’s footsteps and the impact he left on all our students.”

Patton joined Cal State Fullerton’s faculty in 2005 and served in various leadership roles, including coordinator of the evolutionary anthropology program and member of the Academic Senate Executive Committee.

Laura Zettel-Watson, associate dean of faculty and academic programs for the College of Humanities and Social Sci-



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Cal State Fullerton anthropology professor John Patton, center, gets his team together in 2018 at a field site in Conambo, Ecuador.

ences, shared her admiration for Patton as a scholar and colleague.

“John was a staunch advocate for our students, especially those who faced barriers or were otherwise marginalized,” said Zettel-Watson. “When discussing administrative policies and procedures, John could always be counted on to keep conversations centered on our students.”

“What I respected most was how he would approach these discussions: He always remained soft-spoken and respectful to everyone,” she said. “He spoke with such strength and passion and conviction that he always got his point across, never alienating anyone in the process and always inviting folks in for further conversation.”

James Zerbe, a former CSUF student and doctoral candidate at Arizona State University, had the opportunity to travel to the Ecuadorian Amazon twice with Patton to collect data for his master’s thesis and dissertation.

Patton’s life work included launching a field site in Conambo, Ecuador, in 1992 with his wife, Brenda Bowser, who is also a professor of anthropology at CSUF. Patton led 12 research trips to the site to examine life among the Achuar and Sapara tribal community.

“I feel really privileged because I got to go on some pretty amazing adventures with John, and there’s an incredible consensus about his impact on everyone,” said Zerbe, who earned a master’s degree in anthropology in 2017. “John was a voracious learner. Some people think that once you start teaching, you’ve learned all the things you need to learn. But John never stopped learning.”

“It’s amazing for us to come together and honor John in his life’s work,” said Zerbe. “When I look back on everything — coming here to Fullerton and being John’s student — I can’t imagine a better place to have ended up. I’ll miss him for the rest of my life.”



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Professor emeritus John Patton was remembered in October at a social sciences symposium.



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

# Washington internship opens doors for 2024 Panetta Scholar

CSUF News Media Services

At 19 years old, Cindy Chavez is already forging a path toward a career in law and policy.

A political science student at Cal State Fullerton, Chavez was selected as CSUF's 2024 Panetta Congressional intern and had the opportunity to gain hands-on professional experience in U.S. Rep. Lou Correa's Washington, D.C., office.

"I've always dreamed of visiting Washington, D.C., to witness how Congress works to tackle the challenges facing our country. But coming from a low-income household, I never thought it would be possible," said Chavez.

The Panetta Congressional Internship Program is hosted by the Panetta Institute for Public Policy, and selects one student annually from each California State University campus to participate in a fully funded internship in Washington, D.C. Through this opportunity, students gain firsthand experience in legislative work and constituent services.

Chavez said her role has allowed her to immerse herself in Capitol Hill's daily operations. From attending congressional briefings and responding to constituent mail to drafting cosponsor recommendations for bills on education, Social Security and veterans' affairs, she is actively engaged in the legislative process.

"It's exciting to be involved in shaping policies that impact people's lives," she said. "I've learned how many moving parts work together to make government function."

"With the support of the Panetta Institute, I have had a once-in-a-lifetime experience on Capitol Hill. Every day, I am beyond thankful that I have the opportunity to be part of the history being made on the House and Senate floors," said Chavez.

The experience connected Chavez with Correa, a CSUF alum and longtime advocate for student opportunities.

"I'm a proud CSUF alum, and I'm so grateful to see that my alma mater is pre-



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Cindy Chavez, 2024 Panetta Congressional intern

paring the next generation of CSUF leaders. As an intern, Cindy has gained valuable, hands-on work experience while contributing to our legislative process and supporting our constituents back home," said Correa '80 (B.A. economics).

"Cindy has applied her the knowledge and skills she's developed in the CSUF classroom to help us deliver for the 46th District and Orange County. Cindy has a bright future, and I hope she considers public policy for her career."

## Building a future

Chavez's academic journey at CSUF, especially the supportive environment within the Educational Opportunity Program, has been a key factor in helping her pursue her dreams.

CSUF's Educational Opportunity Pro-

gram provides academic and financial support to students who face economic and educational barriers. EOP offers such services as admission assistance, counseling, tutoring and financial aid guidance to help students earn their degrees.

"As a first-generation college student, CSUF gave me the resources to navigate academia," she said. "The support I received from my EOP adviser helped me set up a meeting with my professor during office hours, and the library resources he recommended helped me earn an A in the class."

This academic support combined with her political science coursework has provided Chavez with the confidence and knowledge to pursue a career in law. Her interest in criminal justice reform stems from a personal experience that shaped

her perspective early on.

"When I was 6, my father suffered a serious workplace injury, and I watched my family struggle because he didn't receive the compensation he deserved," said Chavez. "I knew from a young age that I wanted to help families like mine seek justice."

Chavez plans to further her involvement on campus in the spring, joining student government or outreach initiatives that align with her passion for helping others achieve their educational goals.

"CSUF has been more than an education — it's been a foundation for my future in law and policy," said Chavez. "Washington has opened doors for me, and I'm excited to see where my career takes me."

GEOLOGY

# Searching for clues of an ancient collision that created the Himalayas

CSUF News Media Services

Cal State Fullerton geologist Kathryn Metcalf is searching for clues into the collision of India and Asia over 60 million years ago that created the Himalayas, the world's tallest mountain range straddling Tibet and Nepal.

Before the two continents collided, not long after the dinosaurs went extinct, India was a large island in the Indian Ocean and far south of Asia.

The Himalayas — Mount Everest is the highest peak — have been studied extensively. Yet, researchers debate the collision of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, which closed the ocean between India and Asia.

"The India-Asia collision is the largest ongoing continent-to-continent collision, raised the highest mountains in the world and has significantly altered global climate," said Metcalf, assistant professor of geological sciences, who studies how mountains are built.

"Despite decades of study by geologists around the world, there are several things that don't add up about the India-Asia collision," she said.

In her study, Metcalf is investigating whether India was twice as big as it is today, if there was another ocean in between pieces of India or Asia, and insights into how the collision occurred.

Metcalf's study, supported by a nearly \$294,000 National Science Foundation grant, focuses on untangling the deformation history — the process affecting the shape, size, or volume of an area of the Earth's crust — during the first half of collision.

Meanwhile, the collision continues today, making the Himalayas slowly grow taller.

"If we rewind plate tectonics, India has moved about 1,800 miles since the continental collision began about 60 million years ago," she said.

"Over the last 30 million years, growth of the Himalayas accounts for about 600 miles of shortening. The other 1,200 miles are missing from the rock record and is one of the greatest puzzles of the India-Asia collision."

Some clues may be hidden in the Tethyan Himalaya, a sedimentary zone stretching from northern India into southern Tibet, a major tectonic area. Plate tectonics is the movement of Earth's outer layer, which causes earthquakes, shifts continents and builds mountains.

Metcalf said that if she and her research team find significantly less than 1,200 miles, then that would suggest there may have been another ocean basin that had closed during the India-Asia collision.

Metcalf's study is co-led by Delores Robinson, chair and professor of geological sciences at the University of Alabama, who is conducting lab analyses. Their research team includes graduate students from the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, part of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

## Research in Tibet unravels the past

Over the past two summers, Metcalf



PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF KATHRYN METCALF

CSUF's Kathryn Metcalf, second from left, geologist Delores Robinson and doctoral student Sean Davis from the University of Alabama and Titan alum Jennifer Diaz conducted research in Kangmar dome in southern Tibet.



Geology graduate student Kaelyn McFadden will study microscopic rock structures from Tibet to better understand the tectonic processes recorded in the rocks.

and her students traveled to Tibet to conduct fieldwork, which included collecting rock samples to find pieces of information about the closure of the ocean between India and Asia in the geologic past.

Alumna Jennifer Diaz, a first-generation college graduate who earned a bachelor's degree in earth science this year, was Metcalf's student field assistant in Tibet this past summer.

The fieldwork gave Diaz the opportunity to learn new skills, such as using technology to create geologic maps and a microscope to identify minerals.

"The research was fascinating because, just by looking at the smallest details in bedrock, you can unravel the past by observing and taking measurements," said Diaz, who aspires to become an environmental scientist.

Geology graduate student Kaelyn McFadden will examine the rock samples in

Metcalf's campus lab to understand the scale of the continental collision.

"This project is exciting because we use rocks at the surface to piece together the history and movement of the tectonic plates. When we analyze these samples, we are getting the chance to see back millions of years in time," McFadden said.

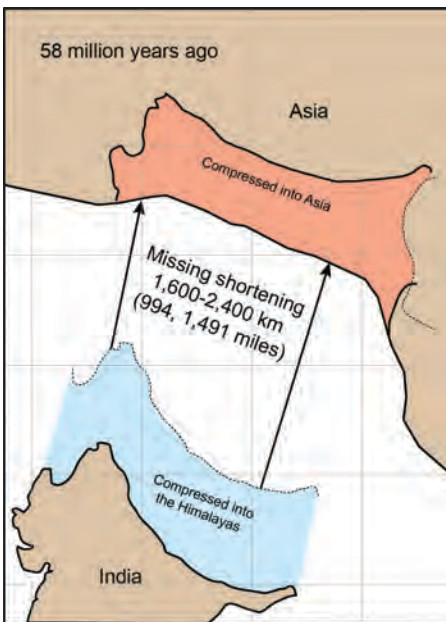
For Metcalf, her project has allowed her to study the region further following her doctoral research in Tibet 10 years ago, which focused on the closure of the ocean between India and Asia.

Metcalf will return to Tibet next summer to continue searching for evidence about the mysteries surrounding the continental collision.

"We're doing cutting-edge research to find solutions and expand our understanding of how the Earth works to tell us the story of plates crashing into each other — and building mountains."



This illustration shows Kathryn Metcalf's study area in the Tethyan Himalaya. The blue line marks where India and Asia collided.



This illustration shows the positions of India and Asia near the time of collision. The "missing shortening" is what Metcalf and her colleagues are trying to unravel.



SPORTS

# For Titan teams, a year of rebirth and renaissance

By Brian Robin  
contributing writer

Even in a year where two of the marquee programs in Cal State Fullerton's athletics — men's basketball and baseball — struggled, the theme was rebirth and renaissance.

In 2024, CSUF welcomed a new tennis coach, seeking to continue the tennis renaissance started by her predecessor. And speaking of a tennis renaissance, one quietly took place — hiding in plain sight.

This calendar year, we saw men's soccer continue its re-emergence as a Big West presence, showcasing some of the best players in program history.

We saw the rebirth of Tegan Andrews, who captured an honor previously grabbed by only one other golfer in Cal State Fullerton golf history. And the continued development of Davina Xanh as one of the dominant women golfers in program history.

We saw the Titans Dance Team strut back into a national championship, defining on its terms its 2024 renaissance.

And we saw the softball team shake off the disappointment of losing the 2023 Big West title on the season's last weekend, welcoming the renaissance of one of its best players from injury to re-take the conference title.

Speaking of softball, we bid farewell to a coaching presence, followed by a hello to her replacement. And haven't we seen that replacement before?

Here, in no particular order, we look at some of 2024's marquee athletic events.

**Jazzed**

Except when you see them at halftime of basketball games, the Titans' Dance Team does its sashaying in the shadows. It seeks – and finds – the spotlight one weekend a year: at the United Dance Association National Collegiate Dance Team Championship.

And the Titans have basked in that spotlight 17 previous times, capturing that many national titles. But in 2023, the spotlight wasn't as kind as it usually is to the Titans. They finished tied for sixth in the Jazz Division. This year, the UDA made the road back to center stage tougher, adding a preliminary round to the Division 1 Jazz Division.

That meant the Titans, as one of 30 teams, had to survive an extra round that whittled the field to 20 — then survive that semifinal round to make the final round of 10 teams. But survive and advance they did, capturing their 18th UDA National Championship in Jazz over the weekend event held at ESPN's Wide World of Sports complex in Orlando, Fla.

They weren't done. The Titans finished third in the nation for their Division 1 Pom Routine.

"Consistency was our team motto this season. Having a fairly new team with 11 rookies out of 21 athletes, they all made it a goal to be consistent and intentional in everything they did," Dance head coach Jennie Volkert said afterward.

**A fiery Serrano**

Eddie Soto, Bob Ammann, Mike Am-



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Cal State Fullerton's Dance Team earned their 18th national championship this year.

mann, Josh Saunders, Mike Fox, Brad Wilson, Duncan Oughton. Those are a few of the notables who pepper even a cursory scan of the CSUF men's soccer record book.

And none of them accomplished what Erick Serrano did for the Titans in 2024. Serrano became the first Titan in program history to earn back-to-back Big West Player of the Year honors, capturing his bookend award for Midfielder of the Year.

It wasn't hard to see why. Serrano scored 16 points on five goals and six assists. That latter figure put him second in the Big West and helped him to his second consecutive spot on the All-Big West First Team.

Forward Roberto Ordonez had a tough act to follow — his own. He was the Big West Offensive Player of the Year in 2023 (nine goals, 10 assists, 28 points) and followed that with a seven-goal, seven-assist, 21-point campaign in 2024. Ordonez led the Big West in assists and the Titans in scoring, earning a second-team berth.

Freshmen Jose de la Torre and Julian Borja took spots on the Big West All-Freshman Tea; de la Torre for his four-goal, two-assist, 10-point season and Borja as a defensive presence, starting all 19 games as a center back.

The CSUF women's team carried familiarity with its accolades as well, putting last year's Big West Freshman of the Year, Kaylee Noble and Isabella Cruz on the United Soccer Coaches All West Region Third Team.

Noble led the Titans with 15 points on six goals and three assists. Her 15 points were third in the conference. Cruz was second on the team with four goals, four assists and 12 points. Both were all-conference first-team selections

as freshmen last year and repeated the honor this year. They became the 34th and 35th Titans earning All West Region honors.

**A classic Ford**

Even as she followed a coaching legend (Judi Garman) and a playing legend (Michele Gromacki) as only the third softball coach in CSUF's 45-year program history, Kelly Ford called it "the best job in the world."

It was hard to argue that she wasn't up to the task, or that she didn't leave her successor (more on her momentarily) equally big shoes to fill.

Ford announced her retirement over the summer, ending a 12-year career at Anderson Family Field that produced 410 wins — including 60 against Power 5 programs — six Big West titles, seven NCAA Tournament appearances, five Big West Coach of the Year honors and 48 players who earned a combined 91 All-Big West Conference awards.

Ford retires with a combined 865-342-2 (a .717 winning percentage) over her 23-year head coaching career, one split between Mt. San Antonio College and CSUF. That's the body of work her successor, former CSUF two-way standout Gina Oaks Garcia, gets to follow. Oaks Garcia took the reins of her alma mater in August.

**Golfing center**

Golfers Tegan Andrews and Davina Xanh took different paths to the same destination. While Andrews took a red-shirt year in 2023 to nurse an injury and overcome inconsistency, Xanh earned Big West First Team honors as a freshman.

In 2024, they arrived at that destination. Andrews was named Big West

Men's Golfer of the Year and Xanh earned Big West Women's Golfer of the Year, the first time two Titans earned that award in the same season.

Known for his prodigious length and frustrating inconsistency, Andrews put together one of the best seasons in program history, winning three tournaments and adding six top-10 finishes. He saved his best for last, winning the Big West Men's Championship with a three-round, 14-under-par 202 that featured an opening-round 63. Andrews became the second men's player to win Big West Golfer of the Year, and the first since Mark Anguiano opened the award ledger in 2014.

Xanh was the third Titan in women's program history to earn the accolade and the first since Brittany Shin in 2021. All she did was finish in the top 10 in all 10 tournaments, win one and record the lowest scoring average (71.43) in program history.

**Perfect timing**

In September, Ellie Johnson moved over from Concordia University, becoming the 12th women's tennis coach in program history. And give Johnson points for good timing.

Last spring, the Titans went 17-9 and nearly won their first Big West title, falling 4-3 to Cal Poly in the conference final.

So why did Johnson arrive at the perfect time for her? Because CSUF graduated only one senior. While the Titans lost Big West Freshman of the Year, Josie Usereau, to Arizona, sophomores Sein Myoung and Seha Yu return, as do juniors Milena Gevorgyan and Diana Yanotovskaya and seniors Mariia Nikitash and Kaytlin Taylor. All played prominent roles in last year's success.

## Retirees

FROM PAGE 1

you need something for yourself, and being part of OLLI has given me a purpose of helping other people and giving back."

To commemorate its 45th anniversary, OLLI-CSUF hosted a celebratory event on Nov. 1 at the Arboretum and Botanical Garden at Cal State Fullerton. CSUF President Ronald S. Rochon, along with CSUF Provost Amir Dabirian and other campus, business and community leaders were in attendance.

"The Provost Office and the University President enjoy our partnership with OLLI," said CSUF Associate Vice President of Academic Programs Eileen Walsh. "We recognize and deeply appreciate the contributions OLLI members make to our students and faculty. In the coming year, we plan to reinvigorate the relationship with more activities and with streamlined processes to make the relationship even stronger and more efficient."

In February, OLLI-CSUF will host a special celebration at the Charles L. and Rachael E. Ruby Gerontology Center to honor its members ages 90 and older. The 15,000-square-foot center, which serves as the organization's campus home, was funded through donations and opened in 1988.

One of the members who will be celebrated that night is Barbara Talento. The 96-year-old Brea resident is a former CSUF nursing professor and assisted in establishing Continued Learning Experience on campus in the organization's early years.

Shortly after Talento retired, she gifted her mother a membership, making her one of the first original 50 members. She later began taking classes herself and was drawn to courses such as Wisdom Exchange and Exploratory Discussion. OLLI-CSUF helped her find a new identity in her retirement years.

"When you're working, the first thing anybody says is they ask you what you do for work," Talento said. "When you give that up, what's your answer? Now,



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

OLLI-CSUF Executive Director Daisy Thomas speaks Nov. 1 at the institute's anniversary celebration.

I'm a student. It helps you identify with something that you are qualified to do and that you do on a regular basis."

Talento served as OLLI-CSUF president twice, in 2001 and again in 2007. She was also named Volunteer of the Year in 1997. Now, with her daughter, Sandi, by her side, she still attends classes regularly, acknowledging the supportive environment the setting

provides.

"For me, it's almost like being in a family," Talento said. "I know so many people, and we support each other so well."

On Jan. 11, OLLI-CSUF will host its Spring Preview event where the public can get a first look at upcoming course offerings, as well as enroll for membership. As the organization celebrates this

milestone, it stands as an example of how the power of education and community can inspire growth, no matter the age or stage of life.

"It's meant a lot to me," said Talento of her involvement with OLLI-CSUF. "The learning is important to me because it keeps my brain functioning, but the interaction between people is what keeps my heart functioning."



ESPORTS

# Logan Clampitt: A champion on the iRacing circuit

CSUF News Media Services

As 40 racers pull up to the starting line, Logan Clampitt takes a steady breath and braces his hands on the wheel.

In the next 100 laps, he'll go head-to-head with top-notch drivers, clock one of the fastest lap times and take the lead just in time for the checkered flag — and he'll do it all in a virtual landscape.

"When that green flag drops, I get in the zone and it's just me and the track," says Clampitt, a Cal State Fullerton computer science student who found that his love for racing is best suited online.

iRacing is the premier motorsport racing simulation that allows players to test their skills on racing circuits around the globe. Clampitt started competing online when he was 15, and is now among the highest-ranking racers in the world, earning top marks in collegiate and global competitions.

His car — a Camaro fitted with the blue and orange Titans logo — is a reminder of the community that stands behind him as he races toward each finish line.

"I was competitive in iRacing throughout high school and community college, but I never got the same level of support that I've received here at Cal State Fullerton. It makes me proud to represent the university," says Clampitt.

### Team support

When Clampitt transferred to CSUF from Saddleback College, he set out to find a program that matched his passion for simulation racing.

That's when he learned about Titan Esports, an organization that provides students opportunities to build a network in the video gaming community and represent CSUF in esports competitions. Inside the Esports Lounge in Titan Student Union gaming students have access to a dozen gaming workstations, accessories from Logitech and televisions for console gaming.

"Logan has become a great representation for Titan Esports," says Chris Estrella-Ramirez, coordinator for sports clubs in Student Life and Leadership. "He brings a lot of experience and passion into every competition, but more importantly, he cares about working with his teammates."

Established in 2019, the Titan Esports program supports more than 60 athletes who compete in regional and national tournaments for such games as League of Legends, Valorant and Overwatch.

"The program is unique because it en-



PHOTO COURTESY OF IRACING

Logan Clampitt's iRacing car fitted with the Titan Esports logo



PHOTOS COURTESY OF IRACING

Logan Clampitt, 2023 spring champion of the eNASCAR College iRacing Series

courages students to take their interest in gaming and explore it in a community setting, where they meet others, work toward their gaming goals and compete at a high level," says Estrella-Ramirez.

Like many students in the program, Clampitt realized that competing with the Titan Esports logo means there's always a team behind him.

After finishing first place at the Nashville Superspeedway, he noticed that the digital screens around campus displayed his car with the message, "Congratulations, Logan Clampitt."

"I was excited that people were interested in iRacing, and I felt honored that my school supported me," says Clampitt.

While racing competitively, he's also earned thousands of dollars in scholarships to help pay for his education.

Off the track, Clampitt is fueling his passion for computers and software in CSUF's College of Engineering and Computer Science. Taking such courses on high performance computing and learning from faculty experts, Clampitt has advanced his programming skills in front-end development while exploring his interest in graphic design and video editing.

As a simulation racer, Clampitt knows firsthand the power of sophisticated software and its ability to make a difference in peoples' lives. It's what inspired him to pursue a career in software development to work with different clients to build, test, create and maintain software that helps them meet their goals.

### Dominating a track

As a kid, Clampitt visited the Auto Club Speedway and Phoenix Raceway with his dad and was mesmerized by the speed and art of NASCAR racing.

Logan Clampitt, 2023 spring champion of the eNASCAR College iRacing Series Edit text to: Taking courses on such topics as high-performance computing

When he found out that his favorite racer, Dale Earnhardt Jr., was active in iRacing, he knew he had to try it.

"I fell in love with the game and I started racing everyday," shares Clampitt.

He won his first professional race as a rookie in 2016 and has been on track for success ever since. Clampitt joined the eNASCAR College iRacing Series, a professional competition for college racers from the United States and Canada. This past year, he was named the 2023 spring champion and finished second overall for the 2023-24 college series season.

Beyond collegiate competition, the young racer is also a two-time runner-up in the eNASCAR Coca-Cola iRacing Series, the signature contest for the top 40 simulation racers worldwide. His accomplishments have earned him several sponsorships throughout his career, including with such companies as Valvoline, Logitech and Sim Seats.

For Clampitt, the fun is in the competition. He's learned that being competitive is all about practice, technique and staying sharp behind the wheel.

"When it's time to race, it's almost like taking an exam where you're confident and focused. You can't focus on anything besides what's right in front of you."

# I WANT TO TELL ANIMATED STORIES

At Cal State Fullerton, I gained hands-on artistic training,  
earned a \$10,000 Skechers Paws for a Cause Design  
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