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From left, student Eli Wolcott; Natalie Fousekis, The Lawrence de Graaf Center director; Chérie Rolapp, College of Humanities and Social Sciences business and community relations strategist; student Georgina Galindo; student Nataly Luna; Jessica Yirush Stern, Humanities and Social Sciences dean; retired U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Terry Robling, retired Brig. Gen. Michael Aguilar, retired Col. Patrick Gough at the ceremony announcing the partnership

PARTNERSHIP

DE GRAAF CENTER, MARINE MUSEUM PRESERVE ORAL HISTORY OF AIR BASE

El Toro stories a slice of Orange County

By **Lou Ponsi**
contributing writer

A partnership between the Lawrence de Graaf Center for Public and Oral History at Cal State Fullerton and the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum at Great Park in Irvine will add a new and unique layer to the storied aircraft flown by U.S. Marine pilots over the decades.

The center is donating a copy of the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station Project, which features more than 500 oral histories, helping to bring to life the

more than 40 aircraft and related artifacts and exhibits to be displayed in the 131,000-square-foot museum when it reopens in late 2026.

The El Toro Marine Corps Air Station Project includes interviews with military pilots, enlisted Marines, veterans' families, civilian employees and others who had a connection to the air station from World War II to the Vietnam War.

Jessica Stern, dean of CSUF's College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Natalie Fousekis, director of the center for public and oral history, and other officials from the university and the museum, were on hand when the partnership was announced on Feb.10 at

Hangar 297 at Great Park, which currently houses the aircraft.

Many of the aircraft that will be displayed in the new museum are currently being stored and restored in the hangar.

"I have to say I'm kind of moved by being here," Stern said. "I'm an early-American historian, and I think, as most of my fellow historians in the room know, so much of our life is spent trying to picture worlds, reading sources, but the power of being in a place where everything is made manifest ... I'm really touched by this; I'm really touched by the mission of what you are doing here, and I feel so honored to be

a part of that."

Fousekis said the collaboration ensures that the oral histories are not just stored in an archive but are used in exhibitions and made accessible to the public.

The collection includes the first Marine Corps female general and African American general, Fousekis said.

"So, it just feels really special to be back here in one of these hangars, which many of the Marines that we interviewed talked about," Fousekis said.

Through the center's student-driven oral history program, the recorded El Toro memories were conducted by 35

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PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Cal State Fullerton President Ronald Rochon speaks at the Second Baptist Church in Santa Ana.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Praising the value of higher education at Second Baptist Church

Part of statewide initiative

By **Lou Ponsi**
contributing writer

Speaking in front of the congregation at the Second Baptist Church in Santa Ana — the oldest African American church in Orange County — Cal State Fullerton President Ronald Rochon emphasized the importance of higher education for opening doors and creating higher earnings possibilities.

Statistics support the president's assertions.

Widely cited studies have shown that a college degree has an average lifetime value of \$2.8 million, that degree holders have better access to health insurance and retirement plans and have lower rates of unemployment.

But it was Rochon's own personal journey that seemed to have greater

impact on the 300 congregants.

Rochon, who was delivering his first Super Sunday address since becoming president at CSUF in July, was among administrators from all 23 Cal State Universities sharing with congregations at nearly 50 Black churches on Feb. 25.

The initiative is known as "Super Sunday."

Ivan S. Pitts, Second Baptist Church senior pastor, who himself earned a bachelor's degree from San Diego State University, said the CSU leaders are providing "powerful examples of leadership."

Speaking from the podium, Rochon talked about being the first in his family to attend college, earning a degree from Tuskegee University, ranked among the top Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the nation.

Recalling the first time he witnessed Tuskegee's commencement ceremony, Rochon said he was awed by the pageantry and grandeur of the event.

"And I remember vividly these African American men and women walking across the stage at the beginning of the commencement, and they had

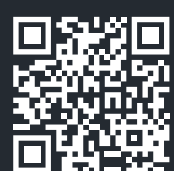
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Cal State **Fullerton.**

performer in the nation for

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■ U.S. News & World Report's 2025 list of Top Universities Impacting Social Mobility



fullerton.edu/rankings

CONFERENCE

Teaching faculty how to adapt to artificial intelligence

The best strategies for using technology

By **Lou Ponsi**
contributing writer

Artificial intelligence has become a prevailing force in every aspect of life, and that certainly includes higher education.

In many cases, students are more proficient than their professors in integrating this emerging technology into their lives on and off campus.

For this and other reasons, Leslie Bruce, a full-time lecturer in the English Department at Cal State Fullerton, and colleague Alison Marzocchi, professor in the Mathematics Department, organized the AI conference held Feb. 21 in the Titan Student Union.

Designed to help faculty adapt to AI technology, the conference featured a variety of workshops, panels, roundtable discussions and a keynote speaker, covering topics ranging from integrating AI into course assignments, using AI ethically and responsibly, using the technology to enhance cultural competency and others.

“Alison and I thought, OK, why don’t we break down these silos that we often end up in within academia, in our disciplines, in our departments and in our offices,” said Bruce, who is the director of Writing Across the Curriculum LIAISONS program. “And ask people to come together and share their experiences and just try to create a safe space to have these conversations about what people are doing or not doing in their classes and maybe their rationales for those actions or inactions.”

Marzocchi said the highlight and most engaging segment of the conference was the student panel, where roles were reversed, and students became teachers and teachers became students.

Each student panelist shared their individual experiences related to their use of AI, which then prompted a series of questions from instructors in the audience.



PHOTOS COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

From left, CSUF math professor Alison Marzocchi; assistant professor of illustration Hunter Huang; and Leslie Bruce, English department lecturer



From left, AJ Heiss, CSUF physics major; Alison Marzocchi; and Giselle Tlaxcuapan, math major

“I would not be surprised to learn that this was the session during which faculty learned the most,” Marzocchi said.

Panelists shared that some professors allow the use of AI in certain instances, some don’t allow AI at all, and some professors don’t ever discuss AI with their students.

“My experience so far is that only one professor has even been very open about the use of AI,” said Giselle Tlaxcuapan, a third-year math major and member of the panel. “AI was included in almost every single lecture. Every topic we went over that day would kind of prompt the

teacher to ask us, or the professor to ask us, how can you use AI for this? And it makes us think, it makes us question when we should, when we shouldn’t, and so I think her giving us the space to question ourselves and our own integrity is what helped a lot of it.”

Panelist AJ Heiss, a third-year physics major, said AI isn’t mentioned at all in his physics classes.

However, the professor of his geography class permits the use of AI within certain parameters.

“She was probably the only professor that I’ve had who was OK with it,” Heiss

said. “I think maybe the professors that don’t want you to use it is because maybe they don’t understand it themselves.”

Heiss and Tlaxcuapan both said they use AI to create study guides.

“It can enhance your learning and not detract from your learning,” Heiss said. “It’s not a crutch, it’s a tool. It’s something that you can use to help you learn and understand a subject better on a deeper level. So, if you have a question and you can’t ask a professor, instantly ask ChatGPT.”

Lecturer Rose Adams, who teaches several art history classes in the Department of Visual Arts, recalled being afraid of losing her job about two years ago when AI was making its way into the education field.

“I had an existential crisis when this whole AI came into the picture,” Adams said. “I was wondering if I was going to have a job, if I should just go into another field because I was pretty panicked about the whole thing. And then finally, in 2024, I said, you know what, I’ve got to take the bull by the horns and do something, and so I started integrating AI into my assignments.”

Britt Marlow, an adjunct professor of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, was among professors providing insight in a faculty panel titled “Integrating AI into Course Assignments,” which talked about the responsible use of AI in Academia.

Marlow provided examples of how AI can be a valuable tool for both teaching and learning if it is used responsibly, within the guidelines of academic integrity.

“Generative AI can be incredibly helpful for academics,” the professor said. “It allows us to quickly find resources and understand complex theories, which is especially useful when preparing for classes.”

Marlow also discussed the practical applications of AI in the classroom, sharing personal experiences of how students react to the technology.

“Students are often nervous about admitting to using AI, but it’s important to have open conversations about it,” the professor said.

Education

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these beautiful gowns on, and they were adorned with these stripes on their shoulders and their sleeves,” Rochon said. “I know those are called chevrons. These people were receiving their PhDs in engineering, in literature, in business, and I had no idea what was happening. And I called my mother and said, ‘Mama, I don’t know what I saw, but I want one.’”

Before Rochon shared with the congregation, CSUF third-year student Seyi Alli stepped to the podium to share her CSUF experiences with the congregation.

Alli, who is serving in her second term as president of the Black Student Union, acknowledged being a bit worried her first semester because she hadn’t seen any Black people on campus.

Then she learned about the African American Resource Center on campus, which provides resources, services, programs and events that “focus on the total integration and success of African American students.”

From there, the business major got involved with the Black Student Union, where she formed friendships, tapped into the group’s resources and made inroads into possible careers.

Alli said she felt the need to pass the torch “by talking about the ways that Black Student Union has enhanced” her academic journey.

“And I just am very grateful because BSU’s given me so many opportunities to grow as a person and a leader and being involved has given me so much purpose in life,” Alli said. “I’m very passionate about the things I’m doing, and

I also just want to share the good experiences I’ve had. It’s a good school but people aren’t really aware of what we have, and I’m just trying to make sure it’s as visible as possible.”

Following the service, outreach directors and staff manned a table in the patio with information about the CSU application and admission process, as well as financial aid scholarships available to Cal State students.

Jordan Hunter, a junior at Long Beach’s Woodrow Wilson High School and a member of the Second Baptist Church youth ministry, said that until heard Alli and Rochon share, he hadn’t been aware of the resources available to African American Students at CSUF.

Hunter said he started high school as a below-average student, skipped class and wasn’t interested in school.

“You won’t fall alone at the campus,” he said. “You have a group of your own. You always have someone to lean on when times get hard. You don’t have to feel alone while you’re on this journey.”

He has since upped his GPA to 3.6. “All it took for me was to be in class and to want to learn,” he said.

CSUF sophomore Joyce Folorunso, vice president of the Black Student Union, learned about the campus group from Alli.

She was attending events organized by the Black Student Union posted on the group’s Instagram page even before attending CSUF.

“That sense of community is really nice because if I didn’t have this, I honestly don’t know if I would have made it as far,” Folorunso said. “Being with people that are like you and being with people that are around you, even if they’re not like you, it’s just knowing that you have that sense of community at our school.”



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Third-year business major Seyi Ali, president of the Black Student Union at Cal State Fullerton, speaks during the event.

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Cal State Fullerton

AMERICAN STUDIES

Overworked and overwhelmed: Why we mismanage clutter

Professor examines underlying factors

By Larry Urish
contributing writer

Do you keep finding your car keys under a confetti of scattered paper-work? Did your tax records somehow magically wind up in your sock drawer? If so, you may have a clutter problem. But don't despair; you're not alone.

Living with clutter impacts the lives of millions. While overconsumption is regarded as a key factor behind our on-going battle with clutter, Carrie Lane, Cal State Fullerton chair and professor of American Studies, believes other elements play a role in this issue. Her research into this subject resulted in her newest book, "More Than Pretty Boxes: How the Rise of Professional Organizing Shows Us the Way We Work Isn't Working."

Lane stumbled across this issue while decluttering a kitchen cabinet. "I got rid of a few things and felt so much lighter and proud of myself," she said. "Then I thought, 'What's going on here?' Having fewer mugs in my cabinet doesn't make me a better person. It doesn't give me a higher quality of life." An anthropologist who studies contemporary American culture, she examined the widespread view that decluttering can lead to a better, happier life — and the potential costs of this belief.

Lane notes that our relationship with clutter can affect us physically, financially and emotionally. For starters, it can trigger anxiety. "Most of us live in homes and work in spaces that don't have unlimited room," she said. "We have to decide where we're willing to allocate space and what we want to use it for. If you're using your home office as a storeroom, you can't really use it as an office. We're all making decisions every day about what we want to use the space around us for, and so clutter can have a real impact on what space is available."

The financial impact, which goes deeper than mere overspending, is multidimensional. "There are other kinds of financial impact," Lane said. "It's in the form of late fees or bills that don't get paid because you couldn't find the bill. Or you didn't remember that the bill had arrived, since it was misplaced. And it involves purchasing items that you already have in the home but can't find."

Lane's research included interviewing some 50 professional organizers,



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Carrie Lane, Cal State Fullerton chair and professor of American Studies

working more than 100 hours as an unpaid assistant organizer, and attending conferences and workshops. While she admits that overconsumption is a factor behind the clutter issue, she discusses another key component. "Today, people are too overworked and overwhelmed to really have the time and energy to figure out how to manage all that stuff of everyday life."

Clutter, Lane discovered, affects women more than men. "In the book, I talk about a fascinating UCLA study in which people were hooked up to moni-

tors. When women were looking at and standing in cluttered spaces, their anxiety spiked; the same was not true for men."

Despite advances women have made in the workplace over the last 50 years, Lane notes that the job of keeping a house clean and clutter-free still falls on women. "Since that's been the case for hundreds of years, you don't have to tell a woman that her home needs to be better organized in order for her to feel that pressure," Lane said. "Even today, girls are celebrated for being more or-

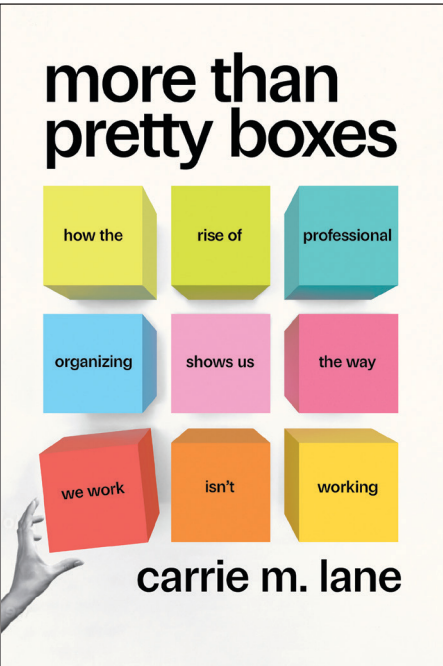


PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Lane's new book on personal organization and clutter

ganized, tidy and responsible for their belongings, and we're not holding boys to that same standard. These anxieties fall more heavily on women."

Another source of anxiety is "decluttering minimalism," a concept rooted in popular narratives about the need to have a sparsely decorated, well-organized space. "It's placing additional pressure on people," Lane said. "We're inundated with images of these perfectly organized spaces that don't really reflect the way that the vast majority of humans actually live. One of the organizers I interviewed called these images 'house porn.' Many people are critical of themselves if their places don't match that ideal."

Those who hire professional organizers need to know that there are limits to what the pros can do. Lane stresses that organizers are not psychologists or therapists, even though organizing can feel therapeutic. "Some people, including those with ADHD or hoarding issues, need to meet with a mental health professional before they can even begin the organizing process," she said.

Lane's advice for those who wish to begin decluttering their home or office: Always start small. "I would discourage anyone from thinking, 'I'm going to organize my house this week.' No, you should organize one small space, like a junk drawer or cabinet. And when that's done, pick another small space. That's how you stay organized over time."

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Researchers use machine learning models to manage disasters, health emergencies

CSUF News Media Services

Graduate student Asad Abdul is learning how to use machine learning models to manage life-changing public disasters and health emergencies — from pandemics to wildfires to reduce losses and save lives.

Under the guidance of Sampson Akwafuo, Cal State Fullerton assistant professor of computer science, Abdul is working on a grant project to develop advanced machine learning algorithms to ensure they are practical and impactful for emergency response systems.

The researchers said recent wildfires in Los Angeles County underscore the importance and urgency of the project.

"The fire spread rapidly, forcing first responders to make critical, split-second decisions about resource allocation," said Abdul, a computer science major. "The system we're developing can provide real-time data to emergency teams, enabling them to make decisions more effectively."

One key aspect of the research involves creating a novel algorithm that uses data from various sources such as population, environmental, geospatial and resource availability. The algorithm can help emergency teams to respond faster, reduce casualties, and better support communities during disasters.

"This can help identify and group regions more accurately, ensuring resources are directed to the right places at the right time for disaster preparedness," Abdul said. "The ultimate goal of this project is to save lives and minimize suffering during emergencies — and allows me to make a meaningful difference through technology."

For example, the algorithm can analyze the situation on the ground to pinpoint where firefighting teams, medical supplies, or evacuation shelters are needed most. It could also optimize emergency routes by bypassing blocked roads or areas of high danger.

"My work is contributing to optimizing emergency response routes. During disasters, ensuring that supplies like food, water and medical equipment reach affected areas quickly is critical," Abdul said. "Our algorithms analyze the best routes for transportation, considering road conditions and real-time disruptions caused by the disaster."

Akwafuo, who has several students working on the project, including computer science major Anthony Sturuss, said their work will also help determine the need and location for emergency



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTHONY STURUSS

Computer science major Anthony Sturuss

operating centers and the amounts of interventions or life-saving equipment stocked at each center.

Funded by a \$172,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, the project is a collaboration between researchers in computer science, public health and geography. The project aligns with Akwafuo's research interests to develop computational models for predicting outbreaks of specific diseases and optimization of emergency response logistics for disasters.

According to a recent news report by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, there has been a continuous and tremendous increase in the frequency of public health emergencies and disasters, resulting in the need to develop solutions, Akwafuo said.

The researchers explained that the project's potential goes beyond faster response times. By using data to predict disaster scenarios and allocate resources ahead of time, responders can be better prepared for volatile disasters.

"Our work will substantially benefit public health emergency and disaster researchers. It advances theoretical knowledge while finding solutions for real-life problems," Akwafuo said.

Abdul is on track to graduate in May and aspires to become a web developer.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASAD ABDUL

Computer science graduate student Asad Abdul



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Sampson Akwafuo, Cal State Fullerton assistant professor of computer science

He wanted to be involved in creating intelligent systems that enhance disaster preparedness to make a tangible difference in saving lives and reducing impacts.

"This mentorship has been trans-

formative, preparing me to contribute meaningfully to artificial intelligence and disaster response," he said. "It has inspired me to pursue a career where I can continue leveraging technology to solve pressing societal challenges."

COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Tara answers questions about relationships on radio

‘Loveline’ callers discuss love, sex and romance

By Nicole Gregory
contributing writer

Cal State Fullerton associate professor of human communication studies, Tara Suwinyattichaiporn, popularly known as simply “Dr. Tara,” first became interested in interpersonal communication while she was an undergraduate and noticed that “most problems in the world are because people lack interpersonal communication skills,” she said. By graduate school, she focused her academic attention on communication in romantic relationships.

“I conducted relationship studies and published my first peer review journal article on long-distance relationships,” said Dr. Tara, who today teaches a popular class called Sexual Communication. “Then in my Ph.D., I spent four years studying different aspects of relationships and different types of relationships. And that’s where I learned that sex is one of the most universal problems that people have, regardless of their race, gender, sexuality, cultural backgrounds.”

In addition to her full teaching schedule, producing a podcast called “LuvBites” and writing a regular column for Woman’s Health magazine, Dr. Tara has begun co-hosting a radio show called “Loveline” on the Los Angeles-based KROQ on Sunday nights at 10 p.m., answering questions from listeners about their love, sex and relationship problems.

Audiences are drawn to the subject, in part, because of a general lack of knowledge about sexuality, Dr. Tara said, as well as “a lack of self-knowledge of what one wants, likes, desires, or one’s boundaries. That lack of knowledge is very crippling for people’s sexual competence.” Most people are not taught communication skills for discussing sex, she added.

Moral judgements about sexuality can prevent people from learning about it, she said. “We have been in a purity culture for so long. Purity culture comes from the idea that virginity is something to be protected, and sex should be only between two heterosexual people in a marriage, and anything outside of the norm is unpure, dirty, and you’re going to hell. From the purity culture plus lack of education, no wonder people are so clueless when it comes to their own sexuality and how to maintain romantic relationships.”

Teens who are not taught accurate sex education in school are also at a disadvantage, she said. “We’re in America, one of the most advanced countries in the



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Cal State Fullerton associate professor of human communication studies Tara Suwinyattichaiporn with her radio co-host Kevan Kenney

world, yet only 18 states require that sex ed is medically accurate. In other states, their sex ed doesn’t have to be medically accurate. To me, that’s crazy.”

Questions from listeners of the KROQ show run the gamut. “For women, a question that I get very often is, how do I go about learning how to orgasm? And for men, I get a lot about sexual anxiety and performance anxiety. And then from couples, the number one question is how do we deal with different sex drives?” Dr. Tara said.

The use of pornography is another hot topic among listeners who call in, she said. “People are very concerned about porn use. They ask, am I using it too much? Is it a problem if I use it? Is it a problem if I want to use it with my girlfriend? Is it related to my erectile dysfunction? People just have a lot of questions because porn consumption became

very normal in the last five years, and now they’re concerned if there are negative side effects.”

Dr. Tara makes sure her advice is research-based, much of which she discovered while co-authoring the textbook “Sexual Community: Research in Action.”

Her role on KROQ’s “Loveline” is, in part, to ground the show in facts. “I’m kind of the person that provides an academic perspective,” she said. “My co-host (Kevan Kenney) provides a comedic perspective. He’s really funny and very engaging, and it’s really nice to work with someone who has worked in radio for many years.”

Each week, she and Kenney create a safe, nonjudgmental space where listeners can open up honestly with questions about sex and relationship dilemmas. “And also, we share a lot of our personal life, our sexual preferences, what we do,

how we communicate about sex with our partners,” Dr. Tara said. “People know that it’s a very safe and comfortable space to talk about sex.”

Born in Bangkok, Dr. Tara has compared cultural norms around sex. “In Thailand, a lot of communication is through reading the social cues and not direct communication. Sex is still very, very taboo compared to metropolitan cities in America. Thai culture is just a lot more conservative.”

But contradictions abound there. People in the LGBTQ community are accepted in Thailand, though same-sex marriage was only recently legalized, she said. And prostitution is also widely accepted and yet illegal, she said.

Dr. Tara’s forthcoming book, “How Do You Like It? A Guide for Getting What You Want (In Bed),” will be published in October.

BEYOND THE CONVERSATION

‘Make art that you believe in,’ actor Daveed Diggs advises

CSUF News Media Services

The core of Daveed Diggs’ creative philosophy is simple — “I like making cool stuff with my friends. That’s how I make art, and that’s the only way I’ve ever known how to do it.”

That’s how he found himself in “The Room Where It Happens.”

At Cal State Fullerton’s Feb. 20 Beyond the Conversation event, the Tony and Grammy Award-winning actor spoke to students about the importance of artistry and community and how his love for rapping and acting came together to shape his performance as Thomas Jefferson and Marquis de Lafayette in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s hit Broadway musical “Hamilton.”

The landmark musical story of rapping founding fathers debuted on Broadway nearly a decade ago, signaling the emergence of a new cultural phenomenon that went on to win the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in Drama and 11 Tony Awards.

Diggs’ road to Broadway started with a substitute teaching role in Marin City. Working with a friend, he began beatboxing and freestyling with students to teach them new concepts. It didn’t take long for Diggs’ friend to recognize his talent and love for music and performance.

“He said, ‘You should meet my friend Lin Manuel. We have this group called Freestyle Love Supreme.’ That’s how I ended up in ‘Hamilton’ 12 years later,” said Diggs.

From mastering Lafayette’s signature rap in “Guns and Ships” to perfecting Jefferson’s air of entitlement and privilege, Diggs said that his “Hamilton” performance was a pivotal moment in his career. As a first-time Broadway star, he was amazed by the national response. Taking the stage each night and signing autographs after every show, he remembers asking co-star Christopher Jackson, “Is this what it’s like to be on Broadway?”

“Chris said, ‘Oh no, it’s never been like this. Nothing has ever been like this.’”

As it changed the landscape of Broadway musicals, Diggs said the show also opened doors for him to pursue artistry in all facets of the industry, from hip-hop and Hollywood to theater and spoken word.

As an actor, he co-wrote and starred in the 2018 film “Blindspotting,” and he’s also appeared in several other projects,



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED STUDENTS INC.

Tony and Grammy Award-winning actor Daveed Diggs

including “Snowpiercer,” “Wonder” and “Black-ish.” He’s lent his voice to such animated projects as Disney Pixar’s “Soul,” Disney’s live-action remake of “The Little Mermaid” and DreamWorks Animation’s “Trolls Band Together.” His love for hip-hop and spoken word has also inspired his work with the band Clipping.

For college students, Diggs emphasized the importance of focusing on education. When he was in college, Diggs said he often felt pressured to achieve all of his goals at once, but he learned that some phases of life are meant for development.

“It’s OK if it’s not all working right now. You’re learning and you can draw on all of those experiences later,” said Diggs. “Make art that you believe in and that you love, and keep interpreting the world around you.”

Taking the stage

Hosted by Associated Students Inc. and the Division of Student Affairs, the Beyond the Conversation speaker series invites notable guests to campus to share their stories and inspire the Titan community.

Two years ago, Tanya Gonzalez was in the audience at her very first Beyond the Conversation event. She watched in awe as actress and artist Hunter Schafer encouraged students to stay true to who they are.

“I never imagined that two years later I would be on the stage, conducting an interview for the same series,” said Gonzelez, an art-graphic and interactive design student who interviewed Diggs at the Feb. 20 event. “I am a huge fan of his work, so when we confirmed him as our next guest speaker, I jumped at the opportunity.”

Gonzalez, who currently serves as the chair for the Association for InterCultural Awareness within ASI’s programming and engagement team, said that her favorite part of the experience was seeing the students’ excitement. She also appreciated Diggs’ insight into the art industry and his advice to students.

“The Beyond the Conversation series is important because each guest speaker brings something new or different to share with our students,” said Gonzalez. “It’s rewarding to see students learn from these guest speakers and be inspired for their futures.”

PHILANTHROPIC DAY

Donors can direct donations to meaningful causes

Titans Give event goal set at \$720,000

By **Jenelyn Russo**
contributing writer

On March 12, Cal State Fullerton will host the sixth annual Titans Give event, a 24-hour-long day of giving that supports student success, campus programs and other transformative opportunities.

Over the past five years, Titans Give has raised nearly \$2.5 million in donations that fund a wide range of scholarships, student clubs and other areas of need on campus. In 2024, more than 2,700 donors gave over \$700,000, and based on the overwhelming response from the community, the goals for this year's event are even higher.

“Our aim this year is to raise \$720,000 from 2,900 donors,” said CSUF Director of Annual Giving Grace Johnson. “Our Titan community showed up in a really big way (last year). ... It's growing, and people feel like they know what this is. It feels really established, and we feel we can do something really big this year.”

To help bring awareness of the event to the campus community, Titan Walk will be lined with posters sharing the some of the tangible ways Titans Give has already made an impact. Some of the recipients of gifted funds include students from the College of Communications who traveled to Paris last summer to cover the Olympics. Money raised from the annual event also supports a variety of annual scholarships that provide life-changing financial assistance to students.

“We're seeing donors that have either been recipients of scholarships or people that know exactly how much a scholarship can mean in the life of a student,” Johnson said. “Our goal at Cal State Fullerton is always to provide the highest quality accessible education possible, so scholarships help on that front.”

Titans Give donations also help support a number of basic needs resources on campus, including CSUF Basic Needs Services and the ASI Food Pantry, both of which provide support for students facing unforeseen hardships.

“Those are really critical services in helping a student stay on track toward graduation,” Johnson said. “Basic needs funding is something that no matter what happens to a student, we have things in place to support them.”

Throughout the 24-hour event, donors will have the opportunity to have their gift matched thanks to the support of a number of corporations and orga-



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Tuffy Titan and crew promote Cal State Fullerton's 24-hour day of fundraising in this photo from last year's event.



PHOTO COURTESY CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES
Grace Johnson, CSUF director of Annual Giving

nizations, including the 7 Leaves Café Midnight Match that will provide up to \$5,000 in matching funds beginning at midnight and the Anaheim Ducks \$10,000 matching gift beginning at 6 p.m.

Additionally, PepsiCo is providing

several matching opportunities up to \$50,000 that can be unlocked throughout the day, including the 50 States Challenge, the Alumni Donor Challenge and the Champion Challenge.

“It's 24 hours to launch opportunities and make the students and our Titan community be able to achieve things they have wanted to do but just needed our support to make happen,” Johnson said.

On campus near Titan Shops from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., students can engage in the Lunch Hour Lift Off event where they can grab a bite to eat and participate in helping to select a cause to receive a \$1,000 donation.

And from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., the community is encouraged to gather at Bigs Fullerton Bar & Grill for a happy hour event with a special menu and prizes for attendees.

“During such a significant moment, it's great that we can celebrate, toast the day and honor what is happening,” Johnson said. “Having fun with alumni, friends and the community and just being part of the moment is significant.”

Titans Give kicks off at midnight on March 12 and until 11:59 p.m., donors can visit titansgive.fullerton.edu to make a contribution toward their area of choice. With nearly 150 programs, centers, scholarships and clubs participat-

ing in the fundraising event, donors can support the causes that matter to them the most.

Those who wish to support multiple areas can split their gift across different programs within one donation. If a specific cause is not listed, donors are encouraged to write in their area of support. And for donors without a specific cause in mind, their gift can be designated to the Titan Fund, which directs donations to the areas of greatest need across campus.

“We're launching opportunities ... and when we back them on this day with our donations and our support, we make it possible,” Johnson said.

The minimum gift amount is \$5, and all donations are tax-deductible through the Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. No matter the cause or the amount, every Titans Give gift makes an immeasurable impact on the lives of the students it supports.

“We all recognize we have a journey that got us here, and people were supporting us along the way,” Johnson said. “We are a community that works together, and we achieve things together, so a day of giving is another opportunity to do that, to uplift Titan students in our community and help their journey be successful.”

Museum

FROM PAGE 1

undergraduate and graduate students, Fousekis and Volker Janssen, professor of history.

The original oral history interviews will remain in the archives at the center, housed within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Polak Library, Fousekis said.

The collection is available to students, faculty, researchers and the public by appointment. The partnership will offer career training and learning opportunities at the museum to students and community members.

The museum will offer two internships each semester, one paid and one for academic credit.

CSUF senior Eli Wolcott, a senior history major, is currently interning as a digital archivist.

Wolcott, who hopes to be a museum curator, digitalizes books, aircraft manuals and photographs, which he then turns into searchable PDFs.

“It's something I've always wanted to do,” Wolcott said. “I've always been into history and military history. My family has a long service history. So, getting to basically contribute in my own way is nice for me. It is a big privilege. I'm very excited. I'm happy to be able to get more experience behind the scenes of the museum.”

Col. Patrick “Paddy” Gough, vice chair of the board of directors of the museum and a graduate of CSUF, said he discovered the value of oral history while doing his own oral history project as a CSUF student.

Years later, Gough became the president of the Cal State Fullerton Alumni Association, where he met Fousekis, who told him about the El Toro Oral History Project, which had stalled due to a lack of funds.

Gough reached out to Marine Lt. Gen. Keith Stalder, the national commander for the Marine Corps Aviation Historical Society and the Aviation Museum.

He then met with Lt. Gen. Terry Robling, who had been interviewed for the El Toro project, and Brig. Gen. Michael Aguilar, president of the museum.

“I started thinking, especially when Gen. Robling told me that he was interviewed for the oral history project, wouldn't this be a great idea to bring the two entities together?” Gough said. “The major university in Orange County and the legacy and the heritage of Marine aviation at large, but specifically in Orange County.”

“So that's how we got here,” Gough said. “And now, today, I think it'll be a great opportunity to solidify that relationship and make it go beyond that.”



PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOULDING, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Some visitors walk among a few of the fighter jets being refurbished at the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOULDING, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Cameron Cook and his son, Colton Cook, 10, check out one of the displays at the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro. The oral histories will soon be available at the future Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum, set to open at Great Park in Irvine as early as spring 2027.

GOLF

Coach plans a back-to-basics approach to ‘right the ship’

By **Brian Robin**
contributing writer

As Jason Drotter saw it, he had no other choice but to literally call in the troops. Not that the drive west on Interstate 10 out of Palm Desert is ever brimming with scenic excitement. But even if there was more to see than windmills, dinosaurs or the Cabazon Outlet Mall, none of that would purge the images Drotter couldn't shake from his rattled mind from the previous three days.

Images of the Cal State Fullerton men's golf team's season imploding before his very eyes. Images of a year of careful preparation disintegrating in three days of sloppy golf. Unthinking golf, devoid of mental toughness. And there's nothing guaranteed to incite Drotter's fury quicker than watching his players lose strokes because of mental weakness.

And the late February Wyoming Desert Intercollegiate on a very easy Classic Club course provided Drotter an endless reel of 3D golfing horrors that even National Geographic-quality desertscapes wouldn't purge. The Titans finished 14th out of 15 teams in a tournament in which they finished second last year. Worse, they were 29-over-par —60 strokes behind first-place Charlotte — on one of the easiest courses they'll see all season. While wasting Tegan Andrews' 9-under-par, sixth-place finish.

"What I didn't see is the toughness on the golf course. The inability to recognize there's trouble and step up and just rip it," Drotter said. "Instead, I saw an inability to recognize there's trouble, getting paranoid there is trouble and hitting it in the trouble. That's a mental weakness that needs to be addressed."

"It's on me. It's always on me. The success of the players is all them; the lack thereof is the coach's responsibility. And I missed it. It smacked me in the face on the last trip. I saw some things that, quite frankly, I've seen in my career, but only from an individual here or there. Seeing it throughout most of the lineup is really difficult for me to accept and a big challenge for us moving forward."

Thus, Drotter wasted no time moving forward. He spent the return trip to Fullerton on his phone. First, there was the call to Brian Kane, the Titans' sports psychologist, for emergency sessions. Then, there was Drotter ripping up his entire March practice schedule — partly to accommodate Kane's mental sessions.

And partly to accommodate Drotter's next call. That went to "Captain Kurt," Kurt Boehmke, the administrative sup-



Cal State Fullerton men's golf coach Jason Drotter walks across the green with assistant coach Trevor McNary.

port coordinator for the CSUF Department of Military Science. Drotter asked Boehmke to put together a "golf boot camp" for the next three weeks.

"The bottom line is we're starting over, and I'm going to do some stuff I haven't done in 10 years — a "Navy Seal-style" ROTC boot camp," Drotter said. "It's going to be only six golf hours in the 20 hours I have (each week). We're going to tear them down and build them up, and we'll focus on the mechanics and the physical part of golf in April. I have to do a year's worth of work in two months."

"I've been really depressed for the last three or four days. I'm upset. I really didn't see this coming."

Instead of 12-14 rounds of qualifying, nontournament golf, where players compete for spots in the five-man tournament lineup, the Titans are looking at 6 a.m. 10-mile runs three days a week, along with a three-hour obstacle course the other two days. When the Titans actually pick up golf clubs, practices will be geared exclusively toward pressure situations: short-game work from 120-yards in, dealing with 5-10-foot putts and other game elements that reveal a player's

mental character and course management skills.

If this is a novelty to his players, Drotter's attitude setting it up forces him into embracing a mindset that doesn't fit into his mental Samsonite. The Titans have three tournaments in March, starting with this weekend's Grand Canyon University Invitational, a tournament they won last year. Breaking down and building his team back up is so paramount to Drotter right now that he's not paying attention to scores and finishes.

Square that mindset from a coach who watched the Titans finish second as a team in the last three conference tournaments — by a combined six strokes.

"I probably won't be able to deal with that; I've never done that in my life. But that's the plan," he said. "My only concern is one thing only: toughness. Can you handle adversity? Do you have perseverance? If there's a problem on a hole, can you step up and rip it without worrying about it? That's it. That's what I'm concerned about moving forward. Period."

Now, re-enter Kane. Remember when Drotter ripped up his March schedule?

This came with not only a psychic and time cost but a financial one, because Drotter canceled his travel schedule to Phoenix for this week's tournament and rebooked one to get the Titans a day with Kane before the tournament. A disciple of the late Ken Ravizza, the former CSUF professor who revolutionized sports psychology, the Arizona-based Kane will work with the Titans on accountability and practice plans.

With Drotter's concerns centering on everything from the Titans' lack of mental toughness and course management to Big West Conference 2023 Champion Russell Howlett's swing issues, the one thing he doesn't have to worry about is Andrews. The defending conference champion became the second player in program history to be named Big West Golfer of the year, Andrews is rounding into form with two top-five finishes this season.

As for Howlett, the news isn't nearly as rosy. Expected to be CSUF's No. 2 after his 71.8 scoring average, Drotter said the Big West Honorable Mention selection last year lost his swing over the summer and not only hasn't gotten it back, but it's gotten worse, leaving Howlett mechanically and mentally adrift. Drotter said he doesn't expect Howlett back in the lineup in March, forcing him to use two players he had no intention of starting.

Then, there's Matthew Schafer, who now finds himself CSUF's No. 2 player. A sterling ball-striker who has enough of Drotter's mental toughness and who carried a 72.66 scoring average last year, Schafer's considerable ceiling; Drotter called him "one of the best drivers of the ball I ever had. ..." is capped by an average short game and below-average putter. This was illustrated in painful detail during one fall tournament where Schafer hit 17 of 18 greens, didn't miss a fairway — and shot 71.

Freshman Will Tanaka, who finished seventh at last month's Orange County Collegiate Classic at Coto de Caza, and senior Patrick Ordonez, who won a tournament playing as an individual last year, are the wild cards. How they progress over the next month will go a long way in determining how well the Titans fare — and how many more impromptu phone calls and meatball surgeries on team dynamics await Drotter.

"We have a massive hill to climb, but this is my job. I'm not going to give up on them, and I'm not going to give up on this year," he said. "I will do everything in my power to climb that hill and get them ready. We're going to work hard, right the ship and see what we can do."

CSUF

TITANS

GIVE

DAY OF GIVING

MARCH 12

THE NEXT GIANT LEAP STARTS
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