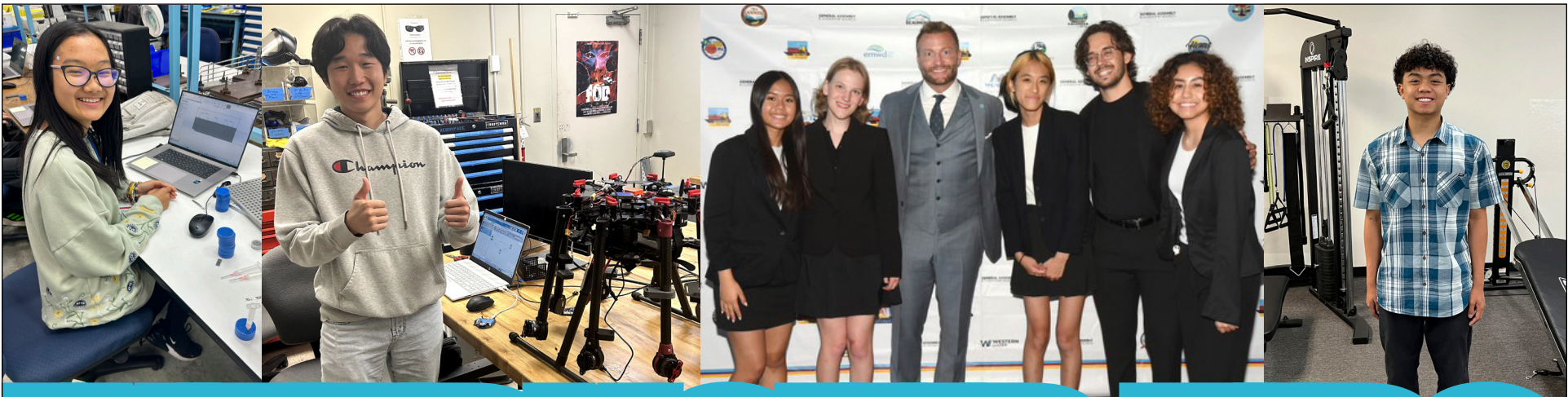


ORACLE

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INTERNSHIP TIPS

With so many great career paths to choose from, have you ever wondered what it would really be like to work your dream job? Read about Oracle’s guide on completing a high school internship to gain insight and first-person experience.

Compiled by Zoey Bahng, **LIFESTYLE EDITOR**, article by Bianca Naranjo and Kailey Reichman, **STAFF WRITERS**

Picking a career path can be intimidating to many highschoolers, especially without a perspective on the realistic routine of the job. A great way to dip your toe into professional work is through a high school internship, which develops necessary communication, time management and problem-solving skills. Every high school student should get the chance to embark on this rewarding experience and following tried-and-true advice for success as an intern is a great way to guide this journey.

Whether you are taking your first step toward your dream job or exploring your future career options, there is likely an internship opportunity out there that can guide you toward the right path. A good place to start in your internship journey is to consider which positions and programs are right for you. You can begin your search by utilizing websites like LinkedIn or InternshipFinder, then filtering opportunities based on education level, areas of interest and location. These platforms will typically include helpful information like requirements to apply, an overview of the internship experience and a direct link to the program’s website. If these sites are too intimidating, you

can also seek your school counselor’s help. It is recommended that you search for summer internship opportunities during the winter to give yourself ample time to apply to, interview for and hopefully secure a position. Starting early will also prevent you from having to compete with college students for internships.

After you have determined the internships you would like to apply to, start compiling the materials for a stellar application. Make sure to check the company’s website to see if they have specific instructions for interns—if the company has a designated high school internship program, it will greatly facilitate your application process. Often, companies will follow viable applications with interviews to truly scope whether you are a good fit for them. Internship interviews should be treated just as seriously as a professional job interview: be presentable, punctual and polite and keep your answers clear and concise.

Once you have officially become an intern, get ready for a challenging, yet incredibly fulfilling, summer. Especially at the start, it is important to show growth and commitment as you learn your internship expectations and

guidelines. Rhiannon Jewell, senior and former intern at Promeli Videoworks experienced this sentiment: “I had to figure out the kind of style that [my mentor] wanted me to do. Figuring that out was challenging at first.” These beginning trials help interns ease into the standards of a professional environment, preparing them for jobs in college and beyond. As students adjust to the pace of their internship, they often build the courage to find where their strengths and passions lie. Jewell confirmed her love for film-making as she experimented behind the scenes of Promeli Videoworks: “Those were definitely the most fun days because there was a lot of stuff to do and because you were hands-on with the equipment and working with a lot of different people.”

The challenges of internships are exactly what make them an excellent high school learning experience: students get to explore their passions at entirely new depths and make new mistakes with little pressure. So take the chance and apply to that company you have admired, and you will understand the intricacies of a professional environment while possibly discovering where your future leads.

TROY TECH PROGRAM SUMMER INTERNSHIP

The Troy Tech internship program’s goal is to empower students to gain valuable experiences in their career paths early on. Demanding responsibility and commitment, the internships are a worthwhile debut into the professional world.

The program helps to facilitate the process of finding, securing and completing a six-week, 150-hour internship. Troy Tech coordinator Laurie Downum describes it as “the final course in the four-year Troy Tech program that allows students to apply what they’ve been learning in their chosen... pathway in a professional setting.” Downum guides students from the junior-year pre-internship course all the way

through the Troy Tech Fair, an annual event that showcases the seniors’ plethora of internships. Here, underclassmen can gain inspiration for their future internships, continuing the cycle.

Of the many notable companies that are trusted partners of the Troy Tech internship program, Boeing is one of the most sought after. When senior Barbara Cao interned at Boeing last summer, she was able “to see what a typical day in the life of an engineer would be like.”

Whatever goals you hope to fulfill beyond high school, the lessons learned through the Troy Tech internship program will help you find and reach for them.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURIE DOWNUM

Warrior Clubs: Competition Compilation

Future Business Leaders of America

Future Business Leaders of America is a club that aims to encourage students to become entrepreneurs.

By Salman Waheed
STAFF WRITER

The Future Business Leaders of America placed second in the Southern Section Leadership Conference at Cal State Fullerton Jan. 25 and will attend the State Leadership Conference at the Anaheim Hilton Hotel April 24-27. The 112 Warriors who attended the SSLC either competed in an objective or performing event. During objective events, students received score placements based on their performance on a 100-question multiple-choice test, taken individually or as a team. During performing events, attendees presented business presentations to a panel of judges.

Troy FBLA began preparing for the SSLC during September 2024. Throughout the school year, students were encouraged to form study groups and host individual preparation sessions. FBLA held several club meetings to check on the progress of each event team. FBLA concluded the competition with 62 top-10 finalists, nine sectional champions and 35 auto-qualifiers for the State Leadership Conference. Students had the opportunity to attend host sessions and seminars to learn about various aspects of the business field



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TROY FBLA



such as public speaking or how to prepare resumes. According to Business Teacher and FBLA Adviser Jonathan Laubhan, attending events like the SSLC allows students to immerse themselves within the business profession and interact with peers of their age. “One of the things that I love seeing is how our students are able to network and connect with students from other schools,” Laubhan said. “I think [the SSLC] is also a great opportunity for our students to develop professionally, from a leadership and learning standpoint.”

Speech and Debate at Cal Invitational

Speech and Debate is a program for high schoolers to gain public speaking experience through a variety of events categorized as either speech or debate.

By Paulina Lee
STAFF WRITER

Warrior Speech and Debate team participated at the Cal Invitational UC Berkeley tournament Feb. 14-16. The tournament brought together competitors from across the country. Unlike competitions at local high schools, this invitational had a larger group of competitors and stricter judging criteria. Speech and some debate events such as Public Forum and Lincoln-Douglas, were held in person. Several Warriors advanced to higher rounds in the competition, including Hayoung Lee, Celina Zhou, Nathan Chen, Skylar Zhuo, Sera Yu, Samantha Luo, Helen Fang and Kathleen Hong. The UC Berkeley Invitational serves as an opportunity to compare one’s skills to students from all over the country before the state and national tournaments. Success at this event can lead to a chance to attend the National Speech and Debate

Association tournament in June. NSDA is the largest organization in the U.S. that hosts speech and debate tournaments. According to Vice President of Practices of Speech and Debate Helen Fang, although the UC Berkeley invitational does not directly qualify students for the NSDA, it is a good indicator of how well-prepared they are compared to other competitors. Preparation for the event included weekly after-school practice sessions, peer feedback and learning from student captains. Student captains play a crucial role in coaching and preparation by developing curriculum, leading practices and assigning homework, said Fang. “We are a student-run club, [so] many of the people relied on each other for feedback,” Fang said. “There was definitely a lot of preparation that went on behind the scenes.” According to Speech and Debate co-president Avni Patil, the captains play a key role in the club’s success. They create practice curriculums, lead training sessions and ensure that Speech and Debate is accessible to students who may not have the resources to attend private academies. Their leadership has contributed to the club’s growth and achievement. “All my experience [in] competitive debate came through Troy Speech and Debate,” Patil said. “Our captains put so much effort in preparing a

curriculum and designing practices that without them nothing [in] our club would be possible.” When Fang and Patil first joined Speech and Debate during their freshman year, there was only a handful of members. Today the team has expanded to over expanded to around 50 members, with a diverse range of events, including Public Forum, Lincoln-Douglas and Parliamentary Debate. By standardizing their curriculum, creating lesson plans and relying on event captains to coach the members, Speech and Debate was able to improve the overall organization and performance of the team, Patil said. “This year, many underclassmen [reached] advanced rounds and even nationals,” Patil said. “I am proud to say that Troy Speech & Debate is making a name for itself in the Speech and Debate space.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF TROY SPEECH & DEBATE

Mock Trial competes at JSerra tournament

Mock Trial is a program where students can imitate a courtroom proceeding to gain experience in the field of law.

By Salman Waheed
STAFF WRITER

The Mock Trial team competed at the JSerra Catholic High School Mock Trial Tournament Feb. 22, March 1 and March 9. Since the beginning of second semester, Warriors worked with the competition trial case packets to prepare for the tournament. The team held mandatory and one-on-one meetings to revise their case statements and arguments. Mock Trial competed in the four preliminary rounds of the tournament. Warriors formed a team of eight witnesses, four defense attorneys and four prosecution attorneys for the courtroom simulation. During each round, team members worked



on making their case arguments more concise. School teams were assessed by a panel of judges, consisting of one residing judge and three practicing attorneys. The judicial panel gave Warrior Mock Trial fourth place out of the 18 total teams that attended the competition. Scores for each school ranged from one to 10, with 10 being the highest. Mock Trial also competed at the first round of playoffs for the tournament on March 9. According to Mock Trial Adviser Alexandria Williamson-Gillespie, students built camaraderie with fellow team members during the

preparation process. Williamson-Gillespie emphasized the importance of students understanding that Mock Trial is not just specific to law, but can also help students in their daily lives. “Most of these students are not going to be lawyers,” Williamson-Gillespie said. “The biggest thing that [students] are taking away is how to evaluate what they read and hear, and that it is a really amazing thing that they can apply to many other contexts.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TROY MOCK TRIAL

Warrior club Teens Against E-waste hosts first e-waste drive of the year

The club distributed boxes around campus to collect electronic waste and delivered the e-waste for proper disposal.

By Kylie Tien
STAFF WRITER

Campus club Teens Against E-waste hosted an e-waste collection drive on Troy’s campus March 3-14 to discourage electronic waste pollution. Founded in 2022 by President Jacqueline Zhou, the club educates members and raises awareness about sustainable technology use and the hazards of electronic waste from disposed technology. During meetings, the club educates members about the harm e-waste inflicts on the world and discusses ideas for upcoming events. Troy’s e-waste club is a branch of the worldwide Teens Against E-waste collective. According to club secretary



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JACQUELINE ZHOU

ECOLOGICAL ENDEAVORS: *Teens Against E-waste volunteers hold collection drives for batteries and other items throughout neighborhoods and the Troy campus.*

Mugilan Nambi, the club hosts e-waste drives on and off campus and campaigns to Congress for better policies surrounding the handling of electronic waste. “We are just a branch, there are a lot more at different schools and the overall goal of the organization is to collect one million batteries,” Nambi said. “We have a campaign called Promoting E-waste Avoidance and Reduction Legislation [and] we write letters [to] support e-waste legislature.” During the recent e-waste drive, collection boxes were distributed around the campus. Batteries, small electronic devices and chargers were among the accepted items. Once the drive ends, members will deliver the e-waste to an Orange County hazardous waste collection

center for proper disposal procedures. The Teens Against E-waste club completed their first community drive in 2022 and accumulated an abundance of support from community members. They have since expanded their drives to other local areas and Troy. In 2024, the club decided to change its drive format, which they are implementing for this drive, Nambi said. “We have different styles [where] sometimes we will go out to some community park, have a stall, go door to door and we host something there,” Nambi said. “We also just have [the drives] that we are doing at school where we coordinate with teachers in their classrooms.” The club posted about the drive

on community bulletin boards and garnered large amounts of positive feedback through emails and phone calls from members of the community. According to Zhou, the amount of community support the club receives for their drives serves as motivation for continuing the club and collections. “It is just [the club] being able to recognize that we are making an impact on the community and the community starting to see that we are making an impact too,” Zhou said. “[We got] really good feedback because a lot of the community members would come up to us and say what a good job [we are] doing.” This year, the E-waste club wants to see contributions from big supporters in their previous drives, whilst expanding to other programs around Troy. The club hopes to gain more support from departments such as foreign language and Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. Teens Against E-waste encountered challenges when coordinating the team and planning the drive. An important takeaway that should be taken from this initiative is the effort it takes to plan large initiatives such as their e-waste drives, Zhou said. “I think it is really important that we protect our environment, especially with how [our] climate is right now,” Zhou said. “To actually show up and [take action], it takes a lot more planning and getting to know your team, [it takes] trusting them, being able to rely on them and everyone [having] the responsibility to get the thing done.”



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◆ EXECUTIVE ◆ STAFF

Andre Gonzalez
adviser

Edyn Mai
Kaitlyn Zhang
chiefs

Finley Dalley
management

Iman Babiker
copy editor

2200 E. Dorothy Lane
Fullerton, CA 92831

Phone: (714) 626-4518
Email: oracle.troy@gmail.com
Website: www.troyoracle.com
Instagram: [@troyoracle](https://www.instagram.com/troyoracle)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/oracle.troy/

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Warrior alumnus Brandon Kim furthers club Drones4Kids

Warrior club Drones4Kids provides students with the opportunity to learn about aviation and gain hands-on experience.

By Anastasia Efremova
STAFF WRITER

Drones4Kids, founded by alumnus Brandon Kim in 2022, aims to help students with a passion for aviation learn about drones and participate in competitions.

Brandon Kim established Drones4Kids as a Warrior club during his sophomore year. During the summer between his freshman and sophomore year, Kim got his commercial drone pilot license, which allowed him to use his skills for commercial education. Through his participation in the Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps program, Kim was inspired by the drone sector available to cadets. He wanted to make these opportunities and experiences more accessible to students who are interested, which led to the creation of the club.

The club initially gained four members dedicated to expanding their knowledge of drones and aviation. Since then, it has grown into a non-profit organization dedicated to providing opportunities to students passionate about aviation, Kim said.

“We [now] offer services, sometimes programs, at libraries,” Kim said. “We offer to teach kids how to fly drones, how to code with drones [and] everything related to drones.”

Most instructors and volunteers are from Troy, but the organization accepts participants from different counties. Volunteers sign up to be a part of Drones4Kids on their website, and can apply for leadership positions in both the club and non-profit. These students train and help out during events and classes, gaining experience in not only aviation, but also in instruction and communication. No prior experience is necessary to participate. According to Vice President of Drones4Kids, Danika Mei, the club helps students step out of their comfort zones.

“A lot of kids are playing video games nowadays,” Mei said. “We want to get them offline and with the controllers. Especially since a lot of people on this campus have



PHOTO COURTESY OF DRONES4KIDS

TERRIFIC TUTORS: *Drones4Kids members show children how to operate and fly drones with controllers.*

never even flown a drone before.”

Kim faced challenges in getting adults to trust an organization run by someone with less familiarity in the business field. According to Kim, he was able to demonstrate the impact that Drones4Kids brings to the community by educating students and was able to support himself, his club and establish a client base.

“It is ... hard for people to respect a kid who just recently graduated high school [who is] running a nonprofit,” Kim said. “[People] look at [my non-profit] and they see ... this guy is really inexperienced, but I try to let my people [know] that I know how to play the game.”

Recently, Drones4Kids had its first-ever competition at Troy High School, and 47 middle and high school teams attended. While there had been NJROTC competitions before, this was the first one where anyone could participate, regardless of their involvement in NJROTC. The turnout was comparable to that of a national competition and was the biggest one that occurred so far in California, which resulted in some challenges regarding coordination, Kim said.

“We were kind of blindsided by the amount of people that showed up,” Kim said. “But towards the end we were able to finish the competition on a good note. It was stressful, but [we]

had a lot of fun running the program.”

The competition provided an opportunity for students to socialize and express their creativity and skills through flying different types of drones. They developed their own strategies to improve teamwork and communication in order to help them succeed in such a large scale event. For club volunteers, it provided a learning experience in helping organize and running a competition of that size.

Before Kim graduated from Troy, he spent his senior year deciding that he would stay near his non-profit in order to help it expand and grow beyond just LA county. In the future, Drones4Kids aims to partner with libraries in the Fullerton school district, so that local students can participate in events that were previously unavailable to them, Kim said.

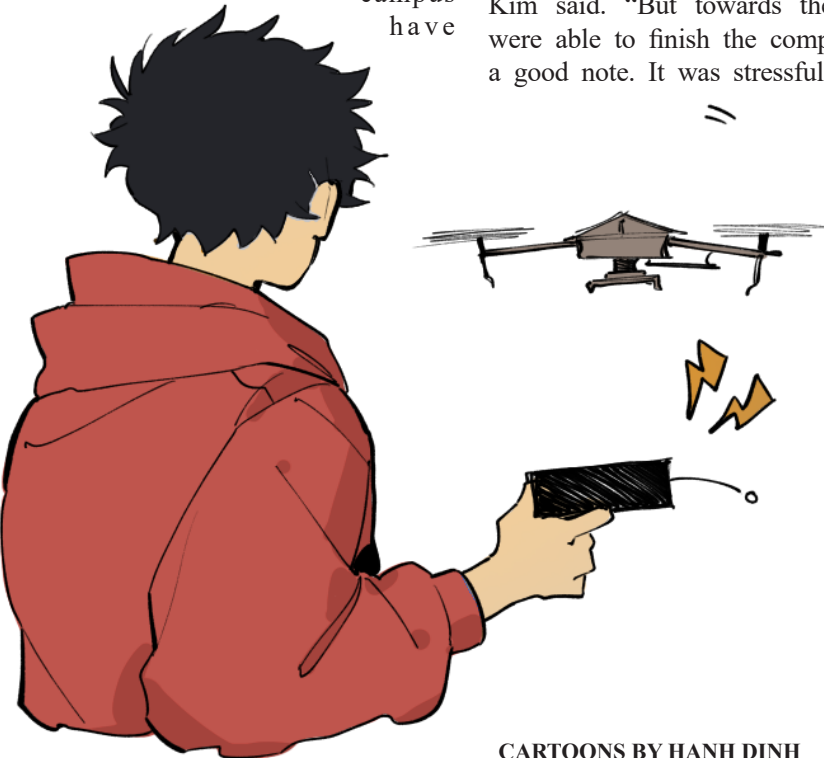
“I think Drones4Kids has the potential and it already [has been] shown through the fruits of our labor that we have the ability to become a lot bigger,”

Kim said. “We [are looking] to become similar to an after school program. We are starting to apply to Fullerton areas, local [zones] around here.”

Throughout the years, the club has attained numerous achievements and awards for their contribution to education, including the Certificate of Congressional Recognition on Jan. 30. The award is awarded to outstanding organizations for numerous services, including supporting innovation, civic celebrations and others. Drones4Kids also expanded to three different counties, enabling it to provide STEM education and resources to more students.

Since Kim’s graduation in 2024, club co-founder Brian Kim has taken over the organization and club. He recruits volunteers, organizes all events and classes and assists with minor details. Upperclassmen who have been part of the club since its founding also help run and organize it.

“When I am not available, [they] help with minor events that I might not be able to go to,” Kim said. “They have been sticking through thick and thin. Right now, I am surrounded by a great group of volunteers, [and] I am extremely thankful for all their help.”



CARTOONS BY HANH DINH

TROY TODAY

Troy PTSA SLG hosts new Kindness Campaign

Troy PTSA Student Leadership Group hosted their 2025 Kindness Campaign March 12 and March 14. The event was held in room 411 during lunch-time hours. Students made friendship bracelets and wrote notes of appreciation in an effort to spread kindness around campus. Compared to previous years, the format of the campaign changed. Students previously wrote kind notes in class, and the class with the most amount of notes recieved a donut party. Troy PTSA SLG and their Chair of Kindness Campaign Samantha Luo began planning for a new approach to the event towards the end of January. Student volunteers created flyers advertising for the event and hung fliers around campus. Students received hours for volunteering with the organization. The campaign had a budget of \$100 which was used to buy beads, string, cards, snacks and other supplies for the event.



Troy Theatre presents the play “Rumors”

Troy Theatre performed its second play of the school year, Rumors, in late February, putting on four shows in total over the span of two weeks. The plot of the play revolves around an anniversary party gone wrong as the guests arrive and promptly realize the host has apparently shot himself, and rush to conceal it in an effort to preserve his reputation. Rumors is a farcical comedy, meaning it involves improbable situations that are heavily exaggerated to make the audience laugh, and takes place in only one location throughout both acts, with a small cast of characters.



GRAPHICS COURTESY OF CANVA

Warrior Girls Tennis Completes Another Successful Season in League

Look back on girls tennis’ triumphant season this year, from learning to believe in themselves to winning the championship in league.

By Kusuma Kothamasu
SPORTS EDITOR

Girls Tennis made a big comeback this season with their championship in league after they won 7 out of 8 games. “The competition was a lot tougher this year as we played multiple schools with multiple tournament players,” varsity captain junior Michelle Tan said. “We were able to bounce back from the first loss against Sunny Hills, our win in the second guaranteeing us the positions as winners in the league.” Harboring a reputation of winning all their games in the league, they had a big legacy to hold up this season. Along with after school practices during the season, the summer consisted of physical and mental preparation. The girls built up their endurance levels and strokes while helping each other boost their confidence while focusing on game strategy. Closing a tough season, Tan recalled the reason for their strong team, “Even

as we faced challenges along the way, we pushed through, changing our tactics through different training methods and different lineups. The hard work and dedication everyone put in made the successes even more meaningful and more rewarding.” Currently, preparation for games consists of the girls practicing their game play amongst each other. Working long hours almost every day, the athletes continued to work on improving their technique. However, the team is implementing more physical training and workout sessions to increase endurance and strength. “Everyone brings a unique strength to the table, and that diversity is what makes us a strong unit,” Tan said. With a blend of various experiences and backgrounds, the team is constantly motivating each other to improve their skills. This drive to perform better is what pushed the Warriors to win almost every match. Their consistency with practice schedules and hard work allowed the team to win matches with impressive scores, such as 17-1 against Bolsa Grande and 14-4 in their first league match against Villa Park. Tennis’ first and last matches against Sunny Hills allowed them to secure a championship in the league.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TROY TENNIS

Winning Warriors: Varsity Girls Tennis pose for a photo following their tough win, 14-4, in their first league game.

“The first game against Sunny Hills was one of the most important. Despite our loss, it was eye-opening, especially for newcomers, as it was the first time they had to handle the pressure of a game with a close score. After this tough match, we were able to gain a closer understanding of each other.” This season, with the intense competition, the players ensured their understanding of the game, their

opponents, and their teammates, as well. This connection made them undefeated. “Since we had such good chemistry, we were able to understand each others’ playstyles well,” Concluding girls tennis’ successful season this year, Tan said, “I feel a mix of pride and gratitude as the season comes to an end. I’ve seen our team grow, both individually and as a unit, which I’m really proud of.”

New Head Varsity Baseball Coach Scott Pearson Joins the Warriors

Following a long and unknowing journey, the new Varsity Baseball Coach Scott Pearson recently began coaching the Warriors with goals to hopefully improve the team to Division I and win CIF.

By Seungwoo Lee
STAFF WRITER

With a vibrant jersey and a sparkling clean bat, the batter walks towards the base and braces himself to hit his first grand slam run. Alongside the batter is Coach Scott Pearson, who returned to coaching after a brief retirement, fueled by his passion for inspiring and connecting with players. Pearson fell in love with sports at an early age, even playing until he was in college. However, his real passion is coaching and inspiring others. “I played [baseball and basketball] in high school and college and didn’t think I was ever going to be a teacher or coach because I was a business major, but I

got injured. My coach in high school asked me to help him coach. And I saw him lifting weights with his kids and having fun, and I said, ‘You get paid for doing this?’ He said, ‘Yeah,’ so I switched to a PE major.” Pearson said. After college, Pearson coached for over 30 years, from weightlifting and physical education to Division I baseball. Eventually, he took a year off to plan for his retirement, however, he returned to coaching after missing it so much. Currently, Pearson is the Warriors’ new head Varsity Baseball Coach. He mainly focuses on improving individual player techniques and mastering the fundamentals before any team-oriented strategies. He also plans to put more emphasis on a “pressure on defense” strategy in upcoming games. Since Pearson is a new coach, the players might have difficulty shifting to a new training style. So, he planned multiple team bonding sessions for the athletes to come together, such as their ongoing Skid Row event. The Warriors will be helping out the community and also

building stronger bonds with the team he will be coaching for this season. Pearson desires to level up the team to a Division I level of gameplay. The Warriors are currently Division Six as of last season. However, Pearson believes the Warriors will improve significantly and aims to win their CIF playoffs. “To make the playoffs and honestly to make a deep run in the playoffs. My goal was always to win CIF championships, and I’ve been blessed to be able to coach six of them and win four of them. I want to get back in there, if we are in the division where we should be, then I believe we have a shot at winning it.” Pearson said. Even though achieving goals is a significant factor in coaching, Pearson’s favorite

part of coaching is the connection he builds with students and athletes, overseeing their growth as a person. He highlights how players he coached come back to him later and how it is a blessing for him to see them go and become successful. “I’ve taken a year off, I missed it. Tremendously. I missed most of all the connections, the connection with the kids and the relationship with the kids, and my coaches, like my staff and the administration at the school. It was just that I felt empty and I couldn’t wait to get back into it and it feels great to be back, and I never thought it would be Troy. I think God’s plan is perfect.”

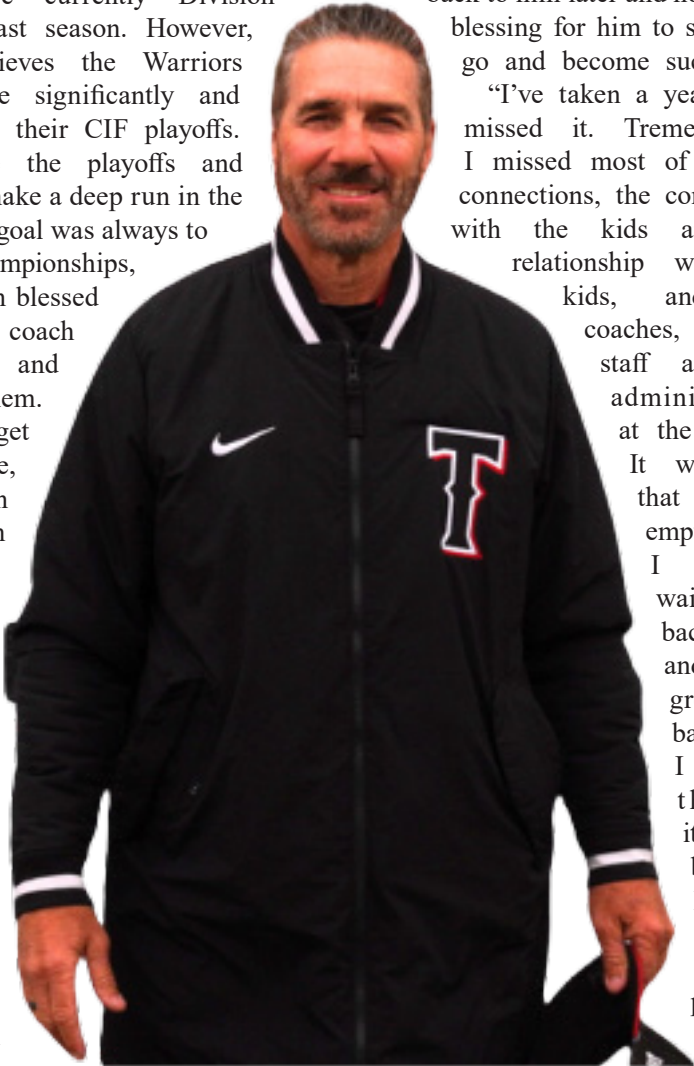



PHOTO BY AIDEN CHONG

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF CANVA




BLACKPINK

Follow along BLACKPINK members’ experimental solo careers, and explore their fresh new beats as they each create a name for themselves in the music industry!

Compiled by Kate Berger, ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, article by Riddhi Arora and Celeste Hollingsworth, STAFF WRITERS, graphics courtesy of Canva and Billboard




LISA

Follow




Through the empowering lyrics and invigorating beats, Lisa’s alter ego commands the stage in her solo debut album “Alter Ego,” released Feb. 27. Lalisa Manoban, more commonly known as Lisa, made history as the first Thai artist to have debuted with YG Entertainment. As a BLACKPINK member, Lisa is best known for her talented dancing along with her fiery rapping. However, as a soloist, this flame burns brighter than ever, revealing her electric nature in “Alter Ego.” “Alter Ego” embodies Lisa’s transformation into a bold and innovative artist who is not afraid of defying norms. For example, she exudes confidence in the fourth track “Thunder,” singing “know you said I’ll never get by, Now look at me, I’m so high.” She focuses her lyrics on embracing her popularity and “Rockstar” lifestyle, making this album a testament to the security her solo career has brought her. BLACKPINK’s songs are typically empowering, but Lisa brings “empowering” to a whole new level. She creates a musical identity for herself that expands upon her BLACKPINK roots, crafting an album where listeners can hit shuffle and find confidence in each track.

In Lisa’s latest album, she fully embraces her alter ego: a performer that radiates hypnotic energy. The opening track “Born Again” features famous rapper Doja Cat and multi-talented vocalist RAYE. Lisa blends her own smooth hip-hop style with many artists, allowing her to extend the range of hip-hop styles featured in the album. Lisa raps alongside Megan Thee Stallion in “Rapunzel,” mixing Megan’s fast-paced style while bringing her own flawless vocal riffs. Lisa’s smooth voice transforms from singing to rapping throughout the song, and this versatility is what sets her apart from other artists. Through such diverse features, Lisa is breaking barriers within the hip-hop genre by incorporating her range of vocal talents.

Lisa’s solo career is the perfect representation of what it means to push boundaries. Through “Alter Ego,” she breaks out of the constructs that come with being placed in a group like BLACKPINK, and unapologetically takes control of redefining a new Lisa.




ROSÉ

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


Rosé takes her spot as “number one girl” with her solo career’s overwhelming success and popularity. Making quick strides towards an accomplished solo career, she recently released a new album “rosie” on Dec. 6. Rosé’s new solo career allows her to explore a variety of genres such as pop-rock and alternative, which present a more emotional side to her music and truly express her talented voice. She is known as the golden voice of BLACKPINK among fans, and this rings true through Rosé’s soft yet powerful voice in “rosie.” Rosé proves that she can be as sweet as a rose and as bold as its thorns in “rosie.” “Rosie” has been an unavoidable success, with catchy songs like “APT.” featuring Bruno Mars at number one of Billboard’s Global 200 list. Rosé effectively intertwines Bruno Mars’ rhythmic style with her own melodic voice to create an addictive sound, as shown through the duality between the repeated chant “APT.” and the catchy melody. “APT.”

is also one of the only songs that features Korean in “rosie,” which is quite the change from BLACKPINK’s partially Korean discography. In addition to fast-paced, catchy songs, Rosé also shares vulnerable lyrics detailing the heartbreak of yearning for an unrequited love. For example, the first track, “number one girl,” features Rosé pouring her heart out: “I’d do anything to make you want me, I’d give it all up if you told me I’d be the number one girl.” The song also features a somber piano melody, allowing her to fully share her vocals without the constant overshadowing of electric production. BLACKPINK is known for their constant intense production and cheerful lyricism, but Rosé’s solo career allows her to explore unknown waters. In those waters, she reveals her depth to long-time fans and newcomers alike through heartfelt lyricism.

Rosé’s solo career has enabled her to reach creative potential and provide fans with a more emotional album. Through exploring various genres, Rosé is now able to find her true self as a singer-songwriter. The popularity of “rosie” is a promising indicator of her future solo career, and she is bound to make a lasting impact on the music industry.



JISOO


Follow

Hitting fans hard like an “earthquake,” Jisoo’s solo album “AMORTAGE” resonates with its audience through catchy wordplay and smooth, light-hearted beats. Released on Feb. 14, “AMORTAGE” introduces a redefined version of South Korean singer Jisoo to the world of K-Pop after her announcement of leaving YG Entertainment in 2023. While the album only features four songs, it still manages to explore various stages of love while maintaining a brief run-time. Since “AMORTAGE” is a compound of the words “amor” and “montage,” Jisoo hints toward the nuances of her album before listeners even press play. With her debut album, Jisoo makes her mark on the music industry as a solo artist, effortlessly blending her own nostalgic pop style and deep messages to captivate fans worldwide.




From intense passion to utter heartbreak, Jisoo’s extensive description of various love stages makes her album electrifying with each listen. Throughout the album, the songs’ chronology reflects the stages of a relationship, presenting a love story in a flowing narrative. For example, the first song, “earthquake,” captures the electric and exciting feeling of having a crush for the first time by using an earthquake as a metaphor. As the album progresses, the songs continue to resemble the ups and downs of a relationship, culminating with “TEARS,” which references how a relationship’s hardships can strengthen a person. The album perfectly encapsulates the nuances of a relationship through Jisoo’s heartfelt narratives that touch listeners’ hearts regardless of their romantic experiences or backgrounds.

“AMORTAGE” gleams with heavy vocals, allowing Jisoo’s music to glisten in a sea of unoriginality. In the song “Hugs & Kisses,” Jisoo sings with a much deeper, huskier voice that contrasts her higher-pitched voice in BLACKPINK. Jisoo’s unique, coarse vocals showcase her raw emotions, as they are not hindered by typical vocal filters. Her sudden shift to a darker tone sets her apart from other more upbeat and high-pitched K-Pop artists, allowing fans to resonate with her unique alluring voice.

Whether someone is in “TEARS” or in the mood for “Hugs & Kisses,” “AMORTAGE” displays everyday moments with a broad spectrum of colors, not just black and pink.



JENNIE

Follow

The long-awaited release of K-Pop singer Jennie’s debut solo album “Ruby” blends genres ranging from R&B to rap, creating a melodic harmony that echoes a “pretty girl mantra” across the globe. Released on March 7, the album features popular artists from a variety of different genres, including Kali Uchis, Doechii, Childish Gambino and Dua Lipa. With her solo release, Jennie smoothly blends the artists’ different styles in a seamless mixture, bringing the creativity modern music needs to create noteworthy hits.

“Ruby” glimmers with lyrical artistry, intertwining metaphors that shine as bright as rubies. In hit single “Handlebars” featuring Dua Lipa, Jennie describes love as a bumpy ride, commenting “I trip and fall in love, just like a Tuesday drunk,” which symbolizes the exhilarating chaos of romance. In “Love Hangover,” featuring Dominic Fike, she confesses “We say it’s over, but I keep [messing] with you.” The alcohol metaphor pertains to Jennie’s radical honesty, exemplifying how intoxicating the pull of attraction between two people can be. Throughout “Ruby,”

Jennie’s lyrics invite listeners into a world where her clever metaphors are embedded with deep meaning, taking listeners on a journey with each lyric. With “Ruby,” Jennie blends various opposing genres, showcasing her large range and talented abilities. In the tenth track “Damn Right,” Jennie embraces a smooth R&B vibe and features singers Childish Gambino and Kali Uchis, bringing musical variety to the seemingly K-Pop-centered album. Fluctuating to a more playful tone, the sixth track “ExtraL” flips genres to incorporate more pop and R&B into a cohesive blend. Jennie’s ability to effortlessly switch between music styles and genres while still maintaining a strong K-Pop vibe elicits excitement from the first song to the last. With no two songs alike, “Ruby” establishes Jennie as an artist who is not afraid to explore the music industry and experiment with various styles.

With its dynamic style and bold creativity, “Ruby” makes a name for Jennie in the music industry as a standout artist who puts her own unique twist on K-Pop music. Each track unveils a new layer of her artistry, showcasing a creative approach to music and lyricism. In “Ruby,” Jennie defines her sound and symbolizes what it means to be “like Jennie.”

BLACK-PINK’s rise to fame took K-Pop from the national stage to the world stage. This picture-perfect group includes singers and dancers Jisoo, Jennie, Rosé and Lisa. However, this flawless dynamic did not come about naturally, as it was craftily formed by the K-Pop agency YG Entertainment. YG Entertainment fostered their performance abilities, allowing BLACKPINK to break records such as being the first K-Pop girl group to reach number one on U.S. and U.K. Billboard charts. Each member claims a unique personality, ranging from reserved and elegant to witty and confident. As mentioned in an interview with Jimmy Kimmel, their name represents the duality of their nature, from feminine to savage. Considering that BLACKPINK is grounded in the girls’ unique talents and personalities, their solo careers will only continue to build on their solidified role in the music industry.

FACULTY FUN FACTS

Take a look at these amazing fun facts provided by our faculty, and take your chances guessing which fact belongs to which staff member!

Compiled by Kaitlyn Zhang, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



"I play on a D2 women's Rugby team with the Southern California Rugby Football Union."



"I got to hold and play with baby tigers who were about to be sold out of a trunk of a car in the South Coast Plaza Parking lot when they were being cared for at a local animal hospital."



"While visiting a friend in Washington DC, unbeknownst to me, she set me up for interviews with a senator and the Reagan-Bush RNC. I was hired to start immediately on the Reagan-Bush Presidential Campaign as assistant to the Chief Accountant. When Reagan was elected President, Angela Marie Buchanan was appointed U.S. Treasurer. She was able to select one person to accompany her to the Treasury, and she asked me to go as her Personal Assistant. It was an amazing experience. I was liaison for the Savings Bonds Division, her travel companion, set up and arranged all speaking engagements, and handled all correspondence. Never underestimate a business degree! It affords a wide range of opportunities."

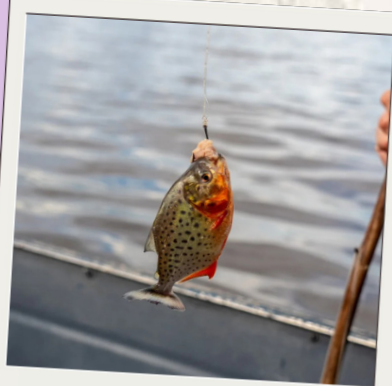


"I have sword-fought Tom Hanks before."

"I built the house I live in."



I have been piranha fishing on the Amazon with ----- We have also held Anaconda snakes, monkeys and a baby sloth on our travels there!



"Scuba diver since age 12."

FACULTY INCLUDED

Tamra Donnelly

Andraya Eisenman

Jesse Knowles

Alexandria Williamson Gillespie

Deborah Henniger

Nga Ngo & Charlotte Kirkpatrick

Presence of politics on social media is needed in America’s democratic society

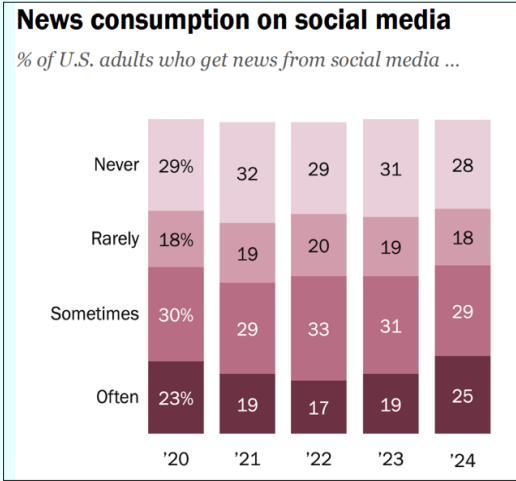
By Chelsea Engelhardt
STAFF WRITER



Social media holds a key role in politics; it would be a crime to take that away. The presence of political issues on social media is an essential aspect of democracy. Social media plays a major role in the spread of news and opinions. The drastic rise in the usage of public forums as sources of information has spurred debates on its appropriateness. However, there are many upsides to the utilization of social media as a vehicle for the dispersal of important opinions. Although the presence of politics on social networks has apparent flaws, its easily accessible news is immensely beneficial to society because of its free speech and efficiency. First of all, the use of social media to drive and inform the public on political matters helps unite society more than ever before. With the click of a button, protests can be organized, unions can be created and movements can progress rapidly. The University of Kentucky News

claims that social media is a great way to rapidly spread news and a cheap way to communicate and advertise for political causes. According to Lindsey Picery and Kody Kiser, staff writers and researchers at UK News, social media has incredible democratic potential for society because it gives any individual the power to reach millions of people directly with no immediate costs. This representation of democratic ideals brings the United States closer to the foundation built on the ideal of power to the people. This also applies to politicians, who have increasingly used social media to communicate with the general public. For example, North Carolina Attorney General Jeff Jackson became popular on the social media platform TikTok, using it to explain government policies and actions. His audience has the opportunity to learn more about government policies and feel as if they have more of a say in them. With such uses, social media is a very powerful tool. On another note, social media is a great resource for quick news. Technology is constantly improving and becoming increasingly important for everyday uses, including the daily news. When comparing

social media to major news networks, social media holds a high value in speed and other aspects. Social media has drastically changed the speed of journalism forever. With common newspaper outlets, if a significant event occurs, they will publish about it the next day at the earliest. On the other hand, content creators and independent journalists on social media can post about it the second it happens, bringing information to people far quicker than ever before. This is important because it further gives the people access to exactly what is going on immediately. For example, Mohammad Zaanoun is a documenter and journalist who



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF PEW RESEARCH CENTER

used social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok to provide important information regarding the bombing in Gaza. This eliminates the delay of information. Overall, social media is critical in the spread of information in modern-day society. Not only does social media play a major role in unifying movements, protests and political change, but it allows everyone to have a voice. This is a great use of cheap publicity and a fantastic example of modern democracy in America. Therefore, social media is not only important for the flow of political information in the United States, but it is greatly advantageous to society.



GRAPHIC BY OLIVIA WON

Social media’s influence on politics has blurred the lines between fact and opinion

By Scarlett Clark
STAFF WRITER



Social media is a polarizing political weapon which may compromise our democracy. The United States presidential election of 1996 involved the first use of the internet in political campaigns—as candidates Bill Clinton and Bob Dole employed technology for an upper hand. Since then, the internet’s role in political campaigning and promotion has

skyrocketed. Barack Obama’s pioneering use of social media in his 2012 campaign normalized social media’s role in politics, and that influence has spread drastically in the political sphere. This is especially true of our current executive administration. The New York Times found that nearly half of American citizens get their news from social media—this has become a problem in our country. Social media is far from a reliable source, and its use for politics and news has only caused a colossal spread of misinformation. Social media platforms are rife with false news. Pew Research Center found that about a quarter of Americans have “shared

fake news on social media, both knowingly and unknowingly.” With minimal accountability online and an ability to spread ideas instantly, fake news thrives on social networks, and massive audiences receive baseless information daily. This has become a cultural norm because of the sizable implementation of social media in day-to-day life. In an environment where it is so difficult to filter out misinformation, it’s no surprise that falsities spread like wildfire on the internet. Social media is simply not the place for the realities of political or social issues. In addition to the slew of false information on social media, there is a great deal of biased filtering in the social network algorithm. When someone interacts with a post that aligns with a particular political affiliation, their algorithm will note the preference and filter their feed toward the direction of that bias. Rise Marketing stated that social media companies are “aiming for content relevant and relatable to you,” therefore using a user’s interactions with the platform to generate “relevant” content. This creates a cycle of one-sided information—social media platforms will show users what they want to see, and therefore, that is the reality they are being exposed to, and what they are more likely to believe. There is no objectivity on social media, making it a horrible place to receive unbiased information. All of this bias and falsity hinders the ability of our political system to function free of information bias, resulting in negative

consequences for the strength of democracy. Social media must be limited in its influence on politics. The National Library of Medicine claims that social networks have the power to “influence individuals toward a particular way of thinking.” This is a danger to democracy. If every American receives a different, biased version of the truth, politics can be swayed by the amount of misinformation online. Social media provides users with facts and opinions interchangeably and reinforces conspiracy and falsity. This cycle of fraudulence and bias is severely unhealthy for the American people and will have a negative impact on our political standing in the long run. However, it seems that we are currently moving in the wrong direction. Mark Zuckerberg, Chairman and CEO of Meta, announced plans to remove fact-checkers from Instagram and Facebook. Meanwhile, the appointment of corporate tech leaders to government positions has further compromised neutrality in the media. Instead of abandoning fact-checking, those in power should lean towards objectivity. Individuals should turn to credible news sources, like the Associated Press, ABC News or the Wall Street Journal. Engaging with diverse perspectives and viable information is paramount to a well-informed democracy—something that social media drastically limits.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF ABC NEWS

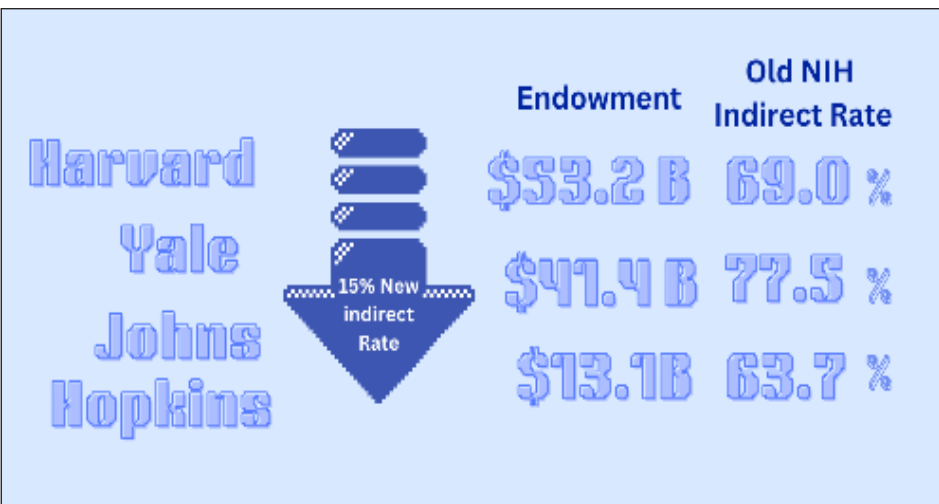
The recent National Institutes of Health cost-cuts are unsustainable

By Ethan Ferrer
STAFF WRITER



Government money cannot be a greater concern than human lives—the people should be put first. Medical research cannot be cut off for the sake of federal spending. On Feb. 7, the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, announced a drastic cut in federal research funding. This plan would limit funding for indirect costs, such as building maintenance and administrative support, to 15%. This means that funding for these costs would be limited to 15% of an original research grant. Effectively, anyone receiving a grant would have to cover these costs themselves. Although a federal judge on Feb. 21 extended a restraining order on the funding cuts, proceeding with such cuts would result in serious ramifications. Such effects include delayed research into critical medical conditions, funding losses for universities and a loss of jobs in the scientific field. While this would free up an estimated \$4 billion in spending, the resulting losses of decades of research and billions of dollars from educational facilities are not worth it. Cutting NIH funding would harm the progress of medical research. According to NPR News, applications for

\$1.5 billion in research funds are being stalled because of the planned cuts. By significantly limiting funding grants, researchers and institutions must cover unaffordable costs. Johns Hopkins University scientist Rick Huangir faces the possibility of stalling 25 years of work due to the potential absence of funding. Many other scientists share his predicament. But this is not only a question of numbers—by dramatically lowering cost limits, hopes for cures would be dashed, and patients wishing for treatment would be turned away. The United States has been one of the world’s leaders in science and medicine for decades; if funding is cut, such progress would be significantly hindered. Moreover, NIH cost-cutting would adversely affect state universities and economies. According to NBC News, schools and universities such as Johns Hopkins University could lose \$200 million a year, severely impacting their ability to conduct research. With this, the Center for American Progress notes that state economies obtained over \$36 billion in total research funding from the NIH, with individual states such as California receiving over \$5 billion. Without regular NIH funding, university and state money must be allocated differently. The well-being of medical patients would be sacrificed in favor of adding to the federal government’s pocket change—this cannot be allowed to happen.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Although supporters of the NIH funding changes emphasize how they would free up \$4 billion for federal spending, this money should not come at the expense of scientific research. This is no insignificant amount—\$4 billion could be used in countless ways around the nation, such as with infrastructure and energy-efficiency improvements. But this newfound budget should not come from scientific research. Some people depend on medical developments to stay alive, and by cutting funding to scientific departments throughout the U.S., the federal government would be abandoning these people. Hundreds of thousands die annually in the U.S. from diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer’s alone. Anyone can fall prey to these diseases; cutting research costs would only worsen the effects. Overall, lowering NIH funding would be detrimental to the nation. In stopping vital research on critical diseases and conditions and removing a significant amount of money from state-based circulation, the U.S.’s scientific and economic departments would be greatly hampered. Though such cost cuts would result in more money for federal spending, such a benefit does not outweigh the disadvantages. When medical funding is removed, patients lack treatment, and when patients lack treatment, they suffer. Government money cannot be of a greater concern—the people should be put first.

mark my words

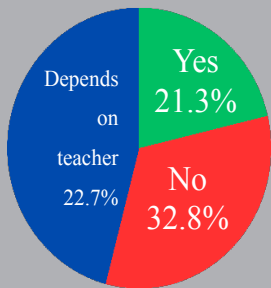
Warriors speak out on campus issues

Read what the Warrior population has to say about bathroom and hall pass policies.

“Students shouldn’t be limited on how long they need to use the bathroom for.”

- Gosha Rassokhin, Sophomore

Do you find the bathroom/hall pass policies at Troy generally reasonable?



See the full list of responses here!



“I think that the teachers who pass out the paper hall passes work well. As long as they still allow the students to leave to use the restroom after using all the hall passes though.”

- Jay Duarte, Junior

“No timer. Yes, most restroom/personal business can be completed within the permitted 7 minutes, but there are circumstances in which one may take longer. Additionally, students who finish early and have 3-5 minutes left have been known to stall entering their classroom until the timer runs out.”

- Natalee Winberg, Senior

“I appreciate that we are able to use the restroom during any class at any time that is reasonable.”

- Jonathan Demian, Senior

“That hall passes are reasonable and that people who go generally come back on time.”

- Sanny Yang, Senior

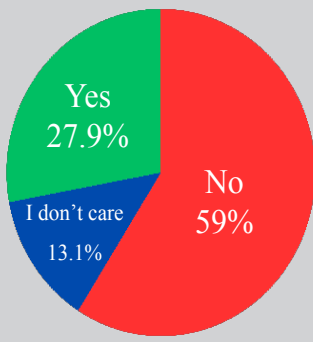
“None of my teachers really enforce hall passes. As long as it is not the middle of a test or important lesson, they don’t care when I go.”

- Anonymous, Junior

“I think QR codes are a bit hard to force as some kids do not have internet access, QR code scanners on their phones or do not have access to a phone in general, and I feel like forcing a kid to do a QR code may put them in a situation that they feel embarrassed by their peers for something possibly out of their control.”

- Taryn J, Senior

Do you think there should be a timer put on hall passes?



Dear Colleague: our clubs will not go—defending Troy High’s diversity

By Jayden Beaumont
STAFF WRITER



On Feb. 14, the United States Department of Education sent out an address, or more aptly put, a warning, to universities and K-12 schools. It stated that any schools implementing diversity, equity and inclusion practices will lose federal funding. This message has been deemed the “Dear Colleague Letter” due to its lukewarm opening. It gave schools a hasty two weeks to dismantle any programs that aim to foster or celebrate diversity on campuses, completely undermining affirmative action. Additionally, the letter intends to target scholarships for people of specific ethnic backgrounds and eliminate special graduation ceremonies for people of color. Many educational institutions find themselves faced with the impossible decision between necessary funding and their own principles. Because of the unprecedented nature of the letter, its true impact is currently unknown. But all of the Department of Education’s demands will significantly affect Troy students. Still, perhaps the most imminent and threatening issue for

the Troy community is the possibility for cultural clubs to be removed from campus. In a time so fraught and confusing for the country’s education, it is important to reflect on why Troy values its diversity and why cultural clubs are so important. Cultural clubs are neither racist nor discriminatory—in fact, they are the opposite—and therefore, the Dear Colleague letter should not be targeting them. The worry over the possibility that these clubs might be banned comes from a section of the letter that states, “Federal law thus prohibits covered entities from using race in decisions pertaining to ... administrative support ... and all other aspects of student, academic and campus life.” The wording is vague, but “administrative support” could encompass club advisers, and “aspects of student life” could include any campus events that focus on cultural clubs, including events like International Day hosted on Nov. 8, 2024, or even the clubs themselves. The letter claims to be fighting racial discrimination by invoking Title VI, the federal law prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. But, Troy’s cultural clubs are not discriminatory. Pilipinos Sharing Smiles Together President Jaclyn Feliciano said “Although our club does stand for Filipinos, we do accept every person to come and join our club.” Ultimately, their goal is to share their culture with each other and the whole school. Cultural clubs create spaces for students with common ethnic backgrounds to practice their customs and traditions. Interclub Commissioner Eshani Deshpande said, “[Cultural clubs] are important because they create more inclusivity [and help you] find people you relate to.” Celebrating diversity is not racism; it is a necessary part of the Troy community. Not only do cultural clubs help students connect with their own identity, but they also share their culture with others. There are around 130 clubs at Troy and 12 of them have cultural associations. Deshpande explained that while not everyone is interested in the many STEM or service-based groups on campus, having cultural clubs means that almost all students have a place they belong. They help students find their place on Troy’s campus. “It’s not just a club that’s

labeled as an extracurricular, but also a way for us to make friends, and bond with each other,” Feliano explained. These clubs also allow students to express their cultural identities. “Especially on this campus, we have a lot of diversity so it’s very easy...for a certain culture or type of ethnicity to get lost here,” Latinos Unidos president Jonathan Cruz said. “It’s important for [students] to embrace who they are.” The clubs host events and parties. For example, they celebrate cultural holidays that are not widely recognized. They also help share their culture with the other students. For example, on Nov. 1, Latinos Unidos performed for the Day of the Dead. It’s not only members of the clubs who benefit from their existence, but all of the students who get to learn about different cultures because of them. At this point, Troy should not dissolve its cultural clubs, as there is no legal reason for it. The letter itself stated that it “does not have the force and effect of the law,” meaning that schools don’t have to comply with its demands. According to USA Today, lawyers have urged schools not to panic. The letter so far serves only as an unjust threat, but schools must not be intimidated. Luckily, the California Department of Education understands this. In an address sent out on Feb. 21 in response to the Dear Colleague Letter, state superintendent Tony Thurmond said, “There is a legally mandated pathway to attempt to revoke federal funds; a Dear Colleague letter is not it.” Until very specific legal steps are taken to terminate federal funding, California public schools will continue all their diversity initiatives in order to create the finest and fairest education for all. The future is still uncertain, but at this point in time, the removal of cultural clubs would be unrealistic and overreactive. The district and Troy have a responsibility to protect their students; whatever course of action they choose to take should

be in everyone’s best interest. “We are focused on moving the needle or student achievement no matter what,” Thurmond wrote. There is nothing the U.S. Department of Education can do to change that. Cultural clubs are a necessary, integral part of Troy. They help honor the variety of different cultures on our campus and allow students to express themselves and their identities. To take them away would be to remove what makes the community so vibrant and unique.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PSST, VSA AND SASA



DIYA ON DISPLAY

Take an inside look at Sophomore Diya Kankanala’s mesmerizing mesh of modern and traditional Indian dance!

Compiled by Eileen Um, **FEATURE EDITOR**, article by Emma Gong, **STAFF WRITER**, photos courtesy of Diya Kankanala

Soft notes flow through speakers like a rhythmic heartbeat, leading dancers in a whirl of practiced steps and spins. Sophomore Diya Kankanala moves fluidly to the beat, syncing her body to the rhythm and sound of the music. As a loving enthusiast for the various forms of dance, Kankanala performs with a deep appreciation of the diversity and cultural representation of music and movement.

Kankanala’s journey in dance began long before she was born, as her mother was a cultural dancer in India. For Kankanala and her family, dancing isn’t just an

extracurricular, it’s a way to connect with their roots and the people around them. As a member of the South Asian Student Association, Kankanala has performed in both traditional and modern Indian dances. The association adapts their dances to fit modern music and themes and coordinates with other branches in their area. Together, they form a loving and culturally colorful community in which they can share their heritage with others.

“[Dancing] deeply resonates with my culture,” Kankanala said., “It’s getting your community involved in Indian culture and dance specifically.”

As Kankanala jumped into the wondrous world of music and movement, she found herself exploring different forms and productions of dance. She recalls feeling especially impacted by her time acting in “The Awaaz of Bollywood,” a story-based performance inspired by the famous movie, “The Sound of Music.”

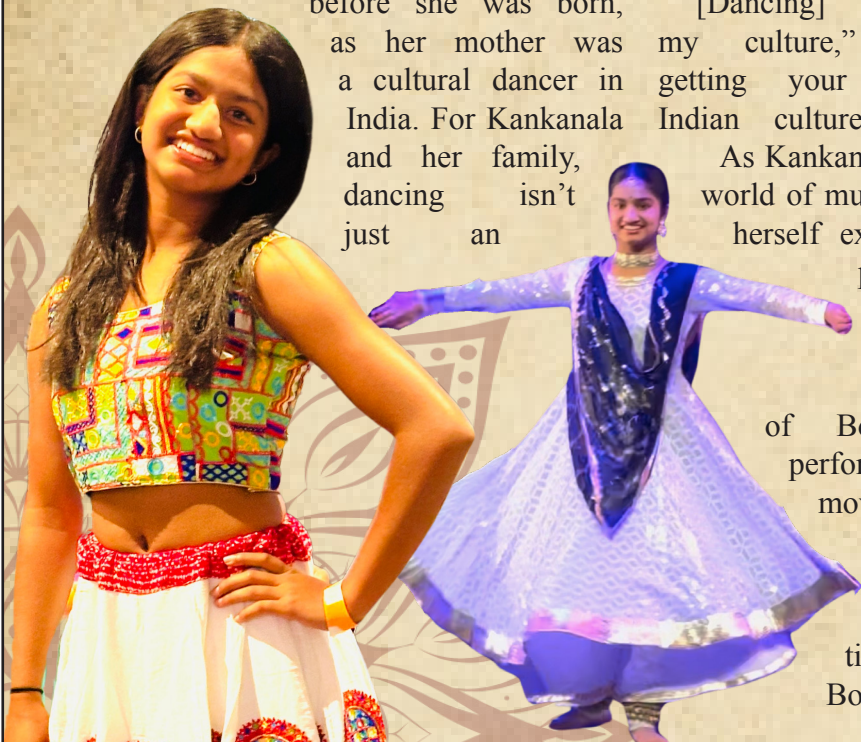
Using “awaaz,” the Hindi and Urdu phrase for “sound,” the NDM Dance Studios titled the show “The Awaaz of Bollywood”, adding a cultural

twist to the classic. In this production, Kankanala was required to combine performance skills, acting and dancing simultaneously to bring the story to life. Kankanala was able to experience a similarly nuanced performance process when she helped film Disney Junior’s new video premiere for “Mira the Royal Detective.” Filming the video required countless takes, a process that Kankanala initially found difficult to keep up with. However, once she adjusted to the tempo of the filming, she felt excited for the opportunity to experiment with effects like costumes, makeup and even flower props falling from the ceiling.

“We got to meet people, like the actors. It was a very wholesome kind of [experience],” Kankanala said. “We bonded really well with those 20 kids.”

Now, Kankanala honors her heritage with a deep passion for modern dance, combining them into a lifetime commitment. Alongside her other career-related pursuits, she hopes to return to lyrical dance, find a part-time job as a traveling dance instructor, and run workshops to continue sharing her passions with others.

“It’s not just the dance and learning how to dance, but it’s also the music and having a flow with it, with your body itself,” Kankanala said. “For me, [dancing is] my joy.”



RIYA IN RHYTHM

With sharp moves and powerful facial expressions, Sophomore Riya Kunathan performs striking Bharatanatyam dances!

Compiled by Eileen Um, **FEATURE EDITOR**, article by Kathleen Hong, **STAFF WRITER**, photos courtesy of Riya Kunathan

Dancers dressed in vibrant saris adorn the stage as Sophomore Riya Kunathan follows the music’s rhythm, with emotions from joy to shock dancing across her face. Through Kunathan’s sharp moves and precise coordination, she weaves together intricate stories through her dances. As a Bharatanatyam dancer for nine years, Kunathan’s passion provides her with a space to express herself and thrive on the stage.

Kunathan’s dance journey began when her mother enrolled her in a Bharatanatyam dance class. The class allowed then six-year-old Kunathan to connect to her cultural roots. According to Kunathan, many Indian dance styles possess similar movements and patterns, however, Bharatanatyam is unique for its larger use of Abhinaya, or facial expressions. She enjoys utilizing Abhinaya to convey hidden meanings and storylines through her dancing. She vividly recalls dancing the story of the Indian god Rama. Kunathan relied on her emotions to express the ancient tale to the audience, enjoying its exaggeration and drama. Soon, she expanded to lyrical and acro dance styles in seventh grade. Today, Kunathan continues her passion as a member of the Arpana Dance Studio.

“Dance, to me, is an art,” Kunathan

said. “With this type of dance, it’s your way of conveying a hidden message that you want people to decipher.”

Throughout her dance journey, Kunathan struggled to manage her schoolwork while dedicating herself to Bharatanatyam. However, through mindful reflection, she learned how to balance her priorities, which allowed her to fully immerse herself in her passion. One skill she’s been working to refine is her Abhinaya, such as expressing more difficult emotions, like embarrassment. But Kunathan maintains her persistent efforts by practicing in the mirror. Kunathan’s efforts continue to shine through her performances, such as the Arpana Dance Company’s showcase at the end of May, the Samarpan. The gathering allows students and groups to display their efforts through this annual recital, allowing Riya to flaunt her continuous growth.

“When I started going to Troy...[Bharatanatyam] required a lot of dedication and time,” Kunathan said. “So I [learned to see] how you can balance your school and outside of school life.”

Kunathan is now working towards Arangetram, a large solo showcase where the dancer performs for hours in front of a huge audience, which usually occurs during the dancer’s junior or senior year. After her Arangetram, she will become a true member of the Arpana Dance Studio. As Kunathan reflects on her journey, she encourages the Troy population to have faith in their efforts, for they will bring success and fruition by the end.

“Your commitment [and] hard work always pays off,” Kunathan said. “What you’re doing is right, and you’re going in the right path.”

