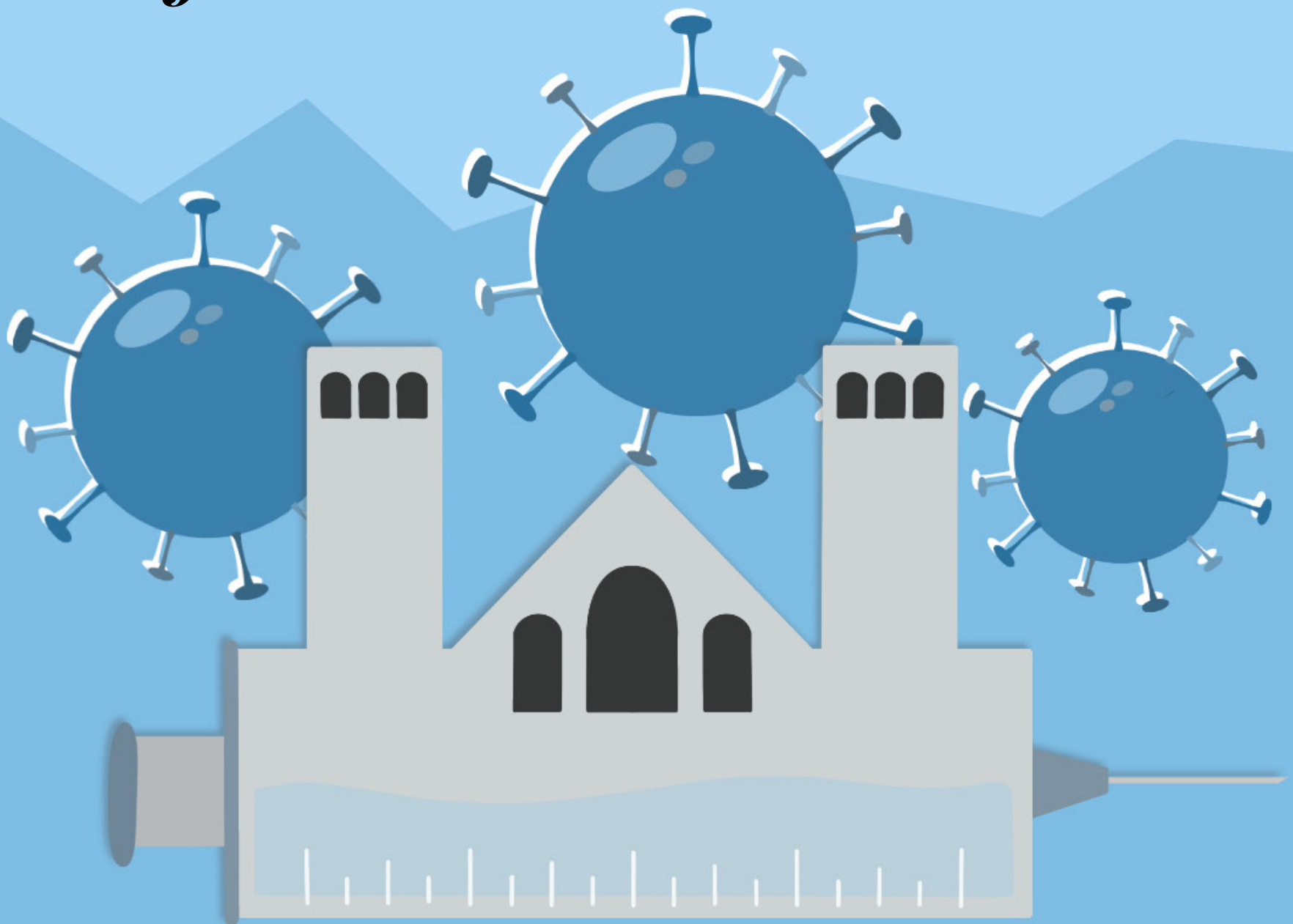


THE | CORSAIR

May 5, 2021 | VOLUME 121 ISSUE 5 | SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

UC & CSU Require Vaccine for Fall 2021 Semester



Taylor DiPrimo | Sports Editor

On April 22, the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) schools announced a joint proposed plan that requires students, faculty and staff to be fully vaccinated before returning to campus in the Fall 2021 semester. This plan excludes those with religious or medical exceptions and is contingent upon at least one of the vaccines having full approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The FDA currently labels the COVID-19 vaccines under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).

EUA permits the FDA to facilitate unapproved products during public health emergencies to prevent serious and life-threatening diseases and viruses to the public. The UC and CSU's plan will be implemented once the FDA lifts the EUA and fully approves a vaccine.

In December 2020, CSU stated that they plan for "the majority of instruction and activities in fall 2021 to be in-person." This plan is now reliant on students to get vaccinated and update their immunization documents as necessary.

In the statement released on April 22, the UC system also stated that "physical distancing, mask-wearing, and frequent hand-washing and

cleaning, will continue to be crucial for daily campus life."

Marya Philpott, a student who plans to transfer from SMC and Pierce College to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) this fall, feels safer attending her new campus with the set guidelines in place for the return on-ground.

"If people want to go on campus, they should be prepared to take proper safety precautions for everyone else, so I agree with [the UC and CSU's] decision," said Philpott.

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FRONT COVER

Take a Shot
Illustration by Carolyn Burt | The Corsair

On April 19, all adults in the United States became eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. This is a cause for celebration for many — myself included — after the difficult months the state faced over the winter season. In December, California received its first shipment of the Pfizer vaccine, and began vaccinating essential healthcare workers. At that same time, Los Angeles became the latest epicenter in the country, where it was averaging over 15,000 cases a day during the holidays.

As the vaccine rollout began to gain momentum, cases began to decline. California began to expand vaccine eligibility to government employees, those 65 and older, teachers and faculty, and those with underlying health conditions. I watched as more of my peers became eligible, waiting for my day to come.

Finally in April, I was able to schedule an appointment of my own. I was stoked, until I remembered I have a fear of needles and that excitement morphed into a pit in my stomach.

For my first shot of the Pfizer vaccine, I was accompanied to my appointment by my mom. Before taking a seat, I let my pharmacist know of my fear of needles and he offered to sing a song to distract me. As he sang “Old McDonald” I let out a deep breath, and by the time he got to “Ee i ee i o,” the shot was done.

Despite knowing how quick of a process and minimal pain getting the first dose was, that didn't stop me from feeling just as anxious for the second dose. This time around my mom was unable to take me — the first time in my life I've gotten a shot without her by my side. Instead, one of my friends stepped in to accompany me for moral support. To help ease my mind, he had me focus on what life would look like once I was fully vaccinated.

For the past year, my time spent with friends has been either virtual or outdoors with social distancing in place. Birthdays and other milestones celebrated via car parades, meeting up at a park,



Illustration by Carolyn Burt

or over video chat. As the year progressed, Zoom calls became draining, and as the weather became gloomy, there was less enthusiasm to meet up outdoors. There was a lack of motivation and with it a lack of social interaction.

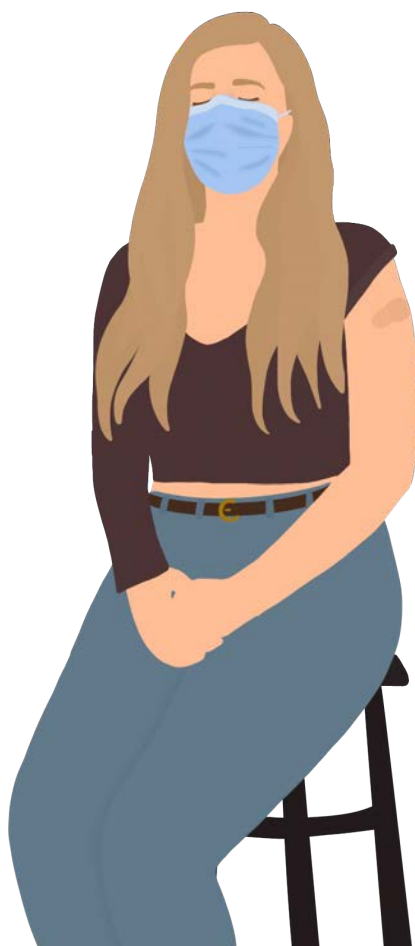
Soon my friend group will be fully vaccinated, and with it we'll be able to meet up at each other's apartments to play our favorite games like Settlers of Catan and Super Smash Bros. We can watch a movie together on the couch, without having to research the best video conference software to “share a screen” with. Simply just being able to be in one another's company, face to face, without worrying if we're putting one another at risk for coronavirus.

Being fully vaccinated also allows me to feel safe about the reduced risk of COVID-19 exposure in my day to day life. As I return to indoor activities where masks are still required, I now feel much more at ease partaking in things like boxing classes or courses on-ground. There are still things I'm holding off on, such as going to the movie theater or traveling by airplane, as there is a mental adjustment I need to make as well.

While things are looking brighter for the Golden State, that is not the case for the remainder of the country or continent for that matter. Just north of the U.S. — Ontario, Canada has entered another lockdown. A provincewide stay at home order, originally set to end May 6, has been extended by two weeks, and non-essential businesses remain closed.

In India things are even more heartbreaking, with COVID-19 taking the lives of 120 people each hour over the past two weeks. It's easy to think out of site, out of mind — a mentality many had when news of the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China first began to spread in December 2019. This is a global pandemic, and what happens in another county, state, country, or continent, affects us all.

Normalcy finally feels within reach, but we can only get there if we each do our part. Our mantra has grown this past year; wash your hands, keep a social distance, wear a mask, and now — if you're eligible — get the vaccine. By taking these steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19, less people will be exposed and lives will be saved.



Editor-in-Chief

Carolyn Burt

Carolyn Burt

The Proctorio Dilemma: Virtual Monitoring Controversy

Willow Sando-Mccall | Staff Writer

The Associated Students (A.S.) of Santa Monica College (SMC) passed a resolution to pursue alternatives to Proctorio on Monday, April 26. Concerns highlighted in the resolution include “invasion of privacy, data concerns, connectivity issues, and racial bias, among countless others,” according to a survey conducted by A.S. in November of 2020.

Proctorio is a software that records users taking their tests. The system flags students for turning away from their computer, talking, or walking away from their screen. It also prevents opening new tabs or windows.

Teachers have access to the recording to confirm that the student was not cheating. Some teachers also require Proctorio to scan the user's room or show their photo ID.

A.S. Vice President, Caden Gicking,

and A.S. Director of Instructional Support, Rafael Pacheco, authored this resolution. “It just didn't really seem fair that kids were getting flagged for suspicious activity when in reality they didn't do anything wrong or academically dishonest,” said Gicking.

In the Nov. 23, 2020 survey conducted by A.S., 77.2% of students strongly disagreed with the use of Proctorio.

Both teachers and students met on Thursday, April 29 to discuss Proctorio during an Academic Senate meeting. There were also members of A.S., Academic Senate, Academic Affairs, and Black Collegians. Many attendees expressed their concerns about the service being invasive, racist, transphobic, anxiety-inducing, and faulty.

SMC student Jennifer Hernandez explained the difficulty of sharing a space with her brother while taking a test and living with a big family. “I just can't tell my family, you can't occupy your own

space in your own home,” said Hernandez. “It's incredibly difficult for me to feel comfortable having a camera on and needing to scan my room because it's not just my room, it's my brother's room...He never gave permission to be on camera and have his space [shown] to my professors.”

President of the Black Collegians, Jonnae Serrano, was failing her math class due to issues with Proctorio. During her first test, her internet failed and she had to restart the exam. “I was having panic attacks after exams because they were shutting off,” said Serrano. After switching to a math class that did not use Proctorio she received an A.

Journalism professor Sharyn Obsatz also expressed issues of accessibility for low-income students. If a student's computer was outdated, the program could potentially crash it, which happened to one of her own students.

A.S. suggested alternatives to Proc-

torio such as Zoom proctoring, where a professor observes students taking their test while on Zoom, and browser locking tools, which prevent the user from opening new tabs. These options were said to be less invasive while still preventing cheating.

Other options they mentioned were open-note tests or essay prompts which many teachers at SMC already implement. “What students don't feel comfortable with is being recorded online,” said Pacheco.

Although the majority of SMC students oppose the use of Proctorio, and A.S. put out their official stance, it is still the teacher's decision. “Most of the power is on faculty and staff, they're the ones that are going to decide if students are going to have to use Proctorio or not,” said Pacheco. A.S. will present the Proctorio resolution at the Board of Trustees meeting on May 4.

Students Support Vaccine Requirement

Continued from Page 1

“It also helps me because I have ADD and depression, so getting out of the house really helps when I am trying to learn.”

Madison Fuentes, a student graduating from UCLA this semester, feels confident in the joint decision from the universities. “I definitely think it was a good decision...it's the right move to ensure the safety for all the students returning,” said Fuentes. “It goes to show the importance of staying educated and continuing to research whatever news comes out about the vaccine, and so far we've seen that it's pretty safe for the majority of the population.”

Neither Fuentes nor Philpott know of any returning students who outwardly oppose the requirement. “All of my friends are either planning on getting vaccinated or have been fully vaccinated,” said Fuentes.

At this point, SMC has not announced whether they intend to require vaccinations before their return on-ground. The most recent announcement, sent out on March 15 from SMC President Dr. Kathryn E. Jeffery advised students to “continue to follow all health and safety guidance...[and] consider getting vaccinated when it is your turn.”

Madeline Humphrey, a student from Chapman University taking classes at SMC, feels more secure about returning to the SMC campus with a required vac-



Maxim Elramsisy | The Corsair

The California State University Northridge Vaccination site in Los Angeles on May 1, 2021. One of the largest capacity vaccination sites in Los Angeles, the site can vaccinate up to 4,000 per day.

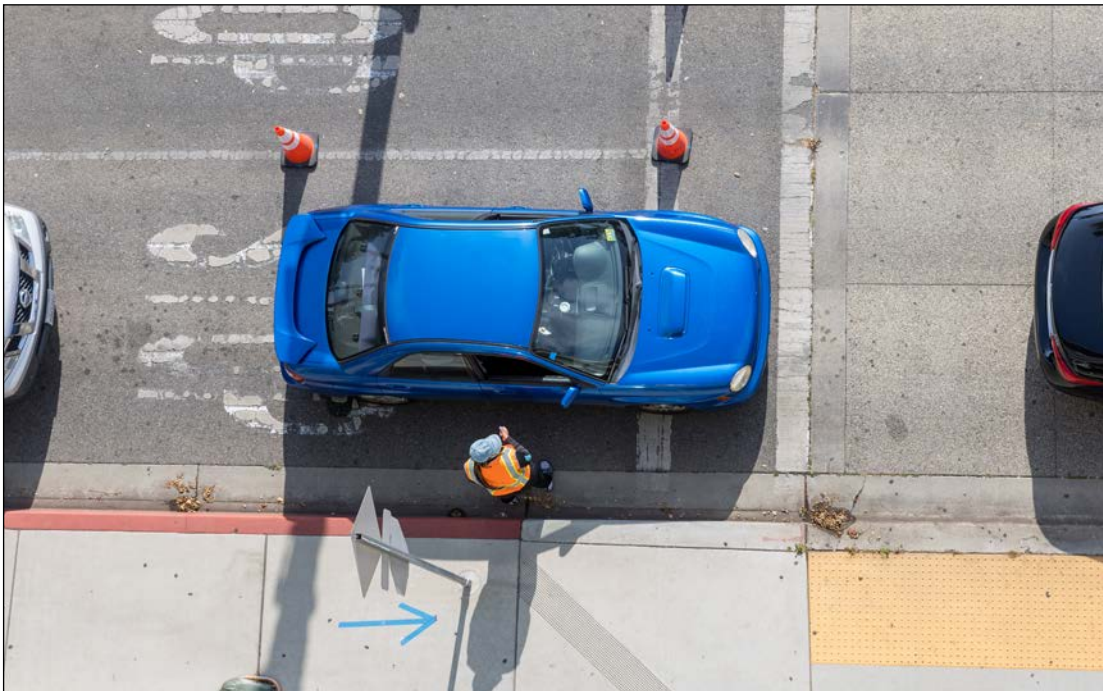
cination from the college. “It's the step in the right direction for SMC to bring students back on campus, and with the vaccination being mandatory, I would feel more comfortable being a part of that,” said Humphrey.

As for the students who are unsure if they would be willing to take the vaccine, Humphrey added, “I think that

there are a lot of different reasons to be anxious about it...but for anyone who is concerned about the side effects, it's a lot better to have a day or two of not feeling great than to obtain [COVID-19] and potentially expose others.”

The FDA is expected to amend the EUA to include approval for adolescents aged 12-15 to obtain the Pfizer BioNTech

vaccine, showing a 100% efficacy rate amongst the age group. As cases continue to decline, and more people get vaccinated, the potential for full FDA approval becomes more likely. The UC and CSU's plan will go into full effect once this progress continues.



A line of cars check into the vaccination site at California State University Northridge in Los Angeles on May 3.



Registered Nurse Katie Rouse prepares syringes with doses of the Pfizer vaccine at a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination site at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Santa Monica, Calif. on April 13.



A woman with a fear of needles elected to lay on a yoga mat while receiving her vaccine at The Broad Stage vaccination site in Santa Monica, Calif. on May 4.



A nurse administers vaccines to people in a long line of cars at California State University Northridge in Los Angeles on May 3.



University Northridge in Los Angeles on May 3.

Photos by Maxim Elramsisy



A former Sears department store in the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza was converted into a vaccination site, run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in Los Angeles, Calif. The site administers Johnson and Johnson Vaccines on April 9.

Vaccine Season

Maxim Elramsisy | Photo Editor

Countries around the world are racing to vaccinate their populations before new mutations take hold within their communities. Many places on the globe are in dire straits, with rising infections and increased strain on healthcare providers. Staggering statistics from India, a country that seemed to be managing the pandemic with strict lockdowns, yet without vaccines to distribute, are on the defensive.

The United States, on the other hand, is home to several vaccine producers, yet still, the rollout has been challenging. In less than six months since the vaccine was given emergency use authorization, the country has seen significant challenges in the supply chain, production, transportation, storage, and administration of vaccines. Millions of doses have been discarded due to manufacturing defects, a deep freeze in the south stopped trucks from transporting doses to sites, doses expire or are disposed of with their bottles. All part of a long list of failures, incidents and inefficiencies as people work to meet this historic public health emergency.

Each state has managed the vaccination logistics separately and approached unique challenges differently, but at this point, California matches the national average of percent of the adult population fully vaccinated, currently about 32% according to the Centers for Disease Control.

A campaign to “Vaccinate all 58” counties is mobilizing federal, state, and local resources to get shots in arms. Los Angeles County, by far the largest county in California, has met the challenge with some of the largest vaccine sites in the country, like Dodger Stadium, but still manages a number of smaller sites, and many pop-up sites created to ensure vaccine access across the many demographics that make up Los Angeles County. Vaccines are offered free of charge, and in many places, with no appointment necessary and without restrictions on residence, citizenship or age for adults. The Pfizer vaccine is currently the only option approved for minors 16 and older, as clinical trials in younger ages continue.

In a Student Trustee meeting on May 4th, Dr Jeffery announced a goal of having a vaccine clinic on the main campus to give Santa Monica College students and employees more opportunity to get vaccinated.

As the number of vaccinated people increases, recent data suggests that the effort is working. Infections, hospitalizations and deaths are declining steadily. April 2021 was the first month in Los Angeles County since September 2020 where the 7-day moving average of deaths did not surpass 30 according to the New York Times database. As health restrictions are lifted, businesses, and schools will reopen and people look to resume “normal life”, health officials will pay close attention to this data looking for signs of progress or regression to give further guidance. Until then, the vaccine season continues.



Since the pandemic started, Gilbert's El Indio Restaurant has served the community through pick up orders and outside dining. They recently began limited indoor dining. Located on the corner of Pico Boulevard and 26th Street, in Santa Monica, Calif., on March 24, 2021.

Jorge Devotto | The Corsair

Santa Monica Reopens

Paige Strickland | Digital Editor

Los Angeles businesses have suffered greatly throughout the pandemic. As cases began to rise in the spring of 2020, Mayor Eric Garcetti issued an emergency order placing temporary restrictions on businesses in L.A. County such as bars, movie theatres, and fitness centers.

In August 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom introduced the "Blueprint for a Safer Economy" for the state of California. The blueprint includes a four tier color system which regulates what is allowed to reopen for each county and at what capacity, based on case rates. The four tiers consist of purple—the most restrictive tier—as widespread, red as substantial, orange as moderate, and yellow—the least restrictive tier—as minimal.

L.A. County entered the Orange Tier on April 5, 2021 by having between 1.0 and 3.9 new cases per 100,000 residents as well as a test positivity rate between 2% and 4.9%. Theme parks, hotels, and gyms are now open at 25% capacity; while movie theaters, restaurants, and museums are open at 50%, and hair salons can open at 75% capacity so long as everyone is wearing masks. With improvements on the rise, L.A. County is expected to approach the Yellow Tier sometime this week.

A skateboarder and some bikers enjoy warm weather on Santa Monica's portion of the Marvin Braude bike trail, located in Santa Monica, Calif., on March 29, 2021. Nearly a year earlier, Los Angeles County ordered the closing of all public beaches including the Santa Monica State Beach from Friday, March 27 through Friday, May 15, 2020.



Jon Putman | The Corsair



Yasamin Jafari | The Corsair

Nahid Abotalebpor colors a customer's hair on March 30, 2021, in Los Angeles, Calif. She has worked at Beauty by Malous as a hairdresser and manager for 30 years. "We lost 60% of our customers during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Abotalebpor.



Community Needs to Return on Campus

Ashley Cox | Digital Editor

Feeling connected can only happen when students are in person, and physically next to one another, rather than vying for a sense of belonging through a screen. When the unease of the last year still lingers, and they hear people refusing to wear masks or social distance, hesitation toward returning is a valid worry. With the state giving out vaccinations to anyone over 16 in California in-person learning is now safe and possible.

Santa Monica College (SMC) President, Dr. Kathryn E. Jeffery, announced on March 15, 2021, that the school will begin to offer in-person courses for the upcoming fall semester. Jeffery states in a Message from the President, that returning to campus is a “dynamic situation,” and if COVID-19 cases increase once classes resume, SMC plans to pivot back to the online format.

“I really miss going to the library and having study groups,” said Orion Young. Young is a postgraduate and a returning SMC student for the fall 2021 semester. “It’s also harder to have your professors remember you. To leave an impression on them on the online format.”

Like Young, many students feel as if on campus school makes them part of a larger community. Whether it’s through sports, theatrical arts, clubs, or journalism in the newsroom, classes and activities bring a sense of comfort. It’s harder for those learning over Zoom to bond with their instructors and peers.

There are no office hours for students to have a private discussion in person with their professors, because they’re limited to video conferences.

The lack of these emotional bonds, with peers and teachers, only hurts students in a time where quarantine already takes its toll on everyone’s well-being. The CDC website conducted an online survey in June 2020 asking about mental health related to COVID-19. Adults in the U.S. reported an increase in anxiety, depression, and trauma and stressor related disorder symptoms that began as a result of the pandemic. In addition to having normal everyday stress, students can add technical difficulties, a lack of belonging to classes, and unresponsive professors to that strain.

SMC will still offer some online learning this fall for those who are still wary of taking classes in-person and those working full time. The flexibility of the online format makes a lot of sense and is convenient for those living out of state, but having on-campus options offers relief to students that need to have some classes on ground and not through a screen.

The online learning format makes students feel isolated compared to when they are around one another on campus. Going to a physical location provides a sense of solace. There’s an energy that students can feel in a classroom shared by others without the barrier of a repetitive virtual Zoom meeting.

Corsairs Men's Volleyball Team Eyes Post-Pandemic Return

Michael Goldsmith | Staff Writer

When 10th-grader Steve Whittle envisioned his pre-pandemic college experience as a novice volleyball player five years ago, he couldn't have predicted what was to come. "A year ago I would have said I feel very disappointed, sad, and upset about the [pandemic]," said the current Santa Monica College (SMC) freshman. "It was disappointing to have my senior year of [high school] volleyball be cut short, and junior nationals for my club team to be canceled...But I've definitely come to terms with it."

The uncertainty of pandemic times helped push the University High School Charter volleyball captain towards a community college path, with his eyes on a NCAA Division I (D-I) transfer in two years. When asked why he decided on SMC over other local community colleges, the Los Angeles native and Inglewood resident responded, "[SMC's] transfer program was absolutely the biggest factor...[as well as] the kind of diversity we have here at SMC. My high school was very diverse, and I want my college experience to be the same way."

The recommendations of former teammates also factored into Whittle's decision. "Two of my old high school volleyball teammates...said that they loved it," the 6'3" middle and outside hitter stated. "The culture that [SMC] has — there is a very big sense of group, of family."

Newly-appointed Head Coach Liran Zamir hopes to get his team back to the state playoffs during his first year in tenure, having replaced current Corsairs Women's Volleyball Head Coach Turhan Douglas. The SMC men's volleyball team won the 2015 CCCAA Championship, while finishing in the semifinals from 2014-2016. When asked why incoming freshmen might want to play collegiate men's volleyball in the Golden State, Zamir responded, "California is the place to play men's volleyball. Every team, every high school, every club — they're all super strong." The Israel native who grew up playing competitive volleyball in his home country continued, "All the best players in America are here [in California]."

As to the rich talent pool of volleyball players at local Los Angeles-area community colleges, Zamir explained, "Many players don't get to go to those [D-I] schools, because the number of players [and] scholarships [are so limited]. Those players who are not going to D-I directly from high school...will go play two years at a community college."

Zamir's team took a step towards post-pandemic normalcy last week, conducting in-person training for the first time in over a year. The outdoor conditioning sessions were the first opportunity for many players and coaches to meet face-to-face. "I really expect us to start playing in the fall," said Whittle. "The way that California has been going with COVID now — cases are dropping, and the vaccines are a lot more



William Phelps | The Corsair

Steve Whittle at the Corsair Field at Santa Monica College (SMC) in Santa Monica, Calif. on May 4, 2021. Whittle is eager to play for SMC when the volleyball team resumes competitive play in spring 2022.

available than ever before...Most, if not all, of the volleyball team [has been] vaccinated." Whittle remains cautiously optimistic that he and his team will be able to play at least "some games in the fall".

In regards to the recent announcement by the UC's and CSU's to require COVID-19 vaccinations for students, Whittle responded, "I think it's great

that they're requiring [student]-athletes to get vaccinated...and I really feel that [SMC] should follow in that same footprint."

SMC's current and future student-athletes hope that collegiate play is once again possible in the near future — with spring semester non-contact sports like swimming having already begun playing competitively.

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