



10-2020

The Pacifican October 2020

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Recommended Citation

University of the Pacific, "The Pacifican October 2020" (2020). *Student Newspaper, The Pacifican, Pacific Weekly*. 1174.

<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/pacifican/1174>

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Oct 12, 2020 · 3 min read

The John Muir Controversy

By: Ramneet Jande

An important figure in California's rich history, American conservationist John Muir is known for his activism to preserve the wildlife areas of the United States, especially his beloved Yosemite. With his detailed writings describing the outdoors, he has influenced many Americans to appreciate the wilderness. Muir is responsible for aiding in the conservation of many national parks such as Yosemite. He was a monumental figure in the United States' conservation movement, a movement which at the time was not inclusive, and had many members who promoted racist ideology.

On July 22, 2020, the Sierra Club (founded by Muir in 1892) released a message in which they acknowledged their past racist history and the damage it has caused many people of color. Despite Muir being the grassroots organization's founder, the club is determined to acknowledge some of the controversial and racial statements Muir made. This change comes after the killing of George Floyd, and as various Confederate monuments are being removed by protesters around the country. At the University of the Pacific, President Christopher Callahan also released a statement the day after the Sierra Club's, explaining how Pacific would be reimagining how Muir is studied here, as well as how his writings are displayed to the public. The room that houses the Muir Collection will be designed to teach about Muir's life in full including his views on race.

Professor Mike Wurtz, head archivist at Pacific's Special Collections and Archives, was contacted to see how the restructuring of the Muir collection was going. The archives house the largest collection of Muir archival materials in the world. The documents are public, so that scholars can understand and interpret the documents themselves. Professor Wurtz writes that, "Facilitating new examinations of Muir, including his views of race and of native peoples and African Americans among other groups, is one way we can make a contribution to the national conversation about Muir that is taking place right now." The

Muir collection room will examine the racism that was prominent in the conservation movement in the time Muir lived. Professor Wurtz also included that the rest of the library was also included in these efforts to help visitors learn more about Muir's writings. A university library committee is to be consulted on the project throughout the year.

Professor Wurtz, along with Dr. Bill Swagerty of the history department, co-teach a biannual class on John Muir and his role in the American conservation movement. Dr. Swagerty is the director of College of the Pacific's John Muir Center and has been teaching the class on Muir for 20 years. Professor Wurtz mentions that the class will be refocusing on a "broader view of Muir and the American Conservation Movement since the 1800s to the present, and will provide students an opportunity to explore Muir's views on race themselves through direct examination of his papers."

Dr. Jennifer Helgren, a professor here at Pacific and chair of the history department, provided more insight on the biannual class taught here at Pacific. She mentions that the class taught on Muir is called John Muir's World: Origins of the Conservation Movement. The class content examines the conservation movement and has always discussed the topic of race. Professor Helgren brings up that Dr. Swagerty is currently working on a project that examines Muir's travels and the native people Muir met during that time.

The biannual class, redesigning of the John Muir room, and the research study conducted by College of the Pacific are all steps being taken by Pacific to provide more context into John Muir's life, and how the conservation movement has affected people of color. University of the Pacific's rapid response to this issue confirms that this institution is taking steps, like many others across the country, to highlight the history of the injustices incurred by people of color. While we cannot change the past, we can acknowledge previous grievances and pledge to do better.



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Oct 12, 2020 · 4 min read

Pacific's Experiences with Zoom Fatigue

By: Jane Hwang

Ever since the beginning of quarantine and online classes in Spring 2020, students and professors have been experiencing a new form of exhaustion known as Zoom fatigue. According to Dr. Marlene Maheu, Co-Founder and President of the Coalition for Technology in Behavioral Science, in her article, "Zoom Fatigue: What You Can Do About It", Zoom fatigue is defined as copious amounts of stress and exhaustion that people feel after being in video meetings for a long period of time. Dr. Maheu states that the main causes of Zoom Fatigue are maintenance of good posture for the camera, lack of non-verbal gestures for indications, small screens, inability to temporarily leave for a break, and self-consciousness on voice and appearance over video chat.

As Pacific transitioned to an online learning format for the Spring and Fall semester of 2020, students and faculty had various experiences with Zoom, often new and unprecedented. Diego Paez, Psychology '22, believes his hectic school schedule has led to Zoom fatigue, affecting his ability to concentrate and his sleep schedule. "My concentration is not at work. Being in front of a screen for a long time doesn't help with sleeping because it keeps you from doing so," says Paez. "It's really hard to look at a screen and think or read because I get a lot of headaches, especially when I don't have blue light."

Paez also notes that he lacks motivation for completing school work, since the overload of virtual learning is "mentally draining." Additionally, with an increase of time spent on the internet, distractions are easy to come by and can be more entertaining than the hours of school work.

Although Zoom fatigue has been affecting students across the board, many have come to enjoy the benefits of online learning. Kristel Tabzon, Philosophy '24, doesn't really mind having to do everything online because of two main reasons: pacing and mental health.

"I enjoy classes because I am able to go at my own pace. I've always been somewhat of an independent learner and being able to not rush while taking notes helps me take in a lot of the information with ease. I am also able to do my school work anywhere as long as I have internet access, this is useful whenever I have to travel." She also talks about how virtual classes have allowed her to manage her social anxiety. "The online classes have affected my mental health in a good way. I am in my own home and it is not mandatory to show my face in most of my classes which helps a lot with my social anxiety."

Professors at Pacific also have been dealing with the transition to virtual learning and spoke about their experiences. Dr. Matthew Normand, Chair of the Psychology Department at

Pacific, discusses the difficulties of teaching online. He mentions how instructors “can do many things that they do in the classroom such as lecturing, assigning groups and homework, and answering students’ questions, but it takes more planning and time to execute small classroom activities.” For example, Dr. Normand says that with on-campus classes, it is easier for teachers to just stop class to arrange people into groups for projects. However, on Zoom, it takes more time to split people into groups because teachers have to decide how many per breakout room, and if they want to have specific pairs, they must plan in advance. Teachers also lose the ability to hear everyone’s thoughts and keep track of time. Dr. Normand also added that he experiences difficulty monitoring student activity with the virtual learning format. He must multitask by watching other students’ screens, the chat box, and the waiting room to make sure no students are left behind.

On top of that, he adds that people might feel Zoom fatigue because of self-consciousness. “There’s that little screen right in front of you where you’re constantly seeing what you look like and the faces that you’re making and you don’t do that in a live meeting; you can just pay attention to other people without being self-conscious of what you’re doing.”

Dr. Jessica Grady, an associate professor of the Psychology Department, also brings into light another issue with online classes, which is grading.

“When grading an exam for my students, I would normally provide handwritten feedback on their handwritten submissions and instead I have to figure out ways to organize my grading so that I can provide the feedback in an online, electronic form so it required rethinking of the simple things that I do all the time.”

According to Dr. Grady, the faculty often try to meet with the university’s Center for Teaching and Learning to discuss ideas for student engagement and care. The Center would read over outside researchers’ papers, notes, or articles while learning about the online platforms used by the university and relay that information to the faculty so they could incorporate and adjust their teaching for the benefit of students.

Even though being online for a long period of time can affect people mentally, there are some ways that people can lessen their exhaustion. These tips are provided by both students and faculty listed in this article:

- Invest in some blue light glasses or have a blue light screen
- Lessen screen time on the weekends
- Take a 15 minute break, whether it’s walking outside or stretching
- Take a lunch break outside if possible
- Find ways to be active, such as yoga or running
- Lower screen brightness



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Oct 14, 2020 · 4 min read

Pacific's Approach to Virtual Wellness

By: **Angel Zhong, Chelsea Igtanloc**

Like countless other institutions of higher education across the United States, Pacific has had to temporarily halt in person classes this semester to protect the health of its students, staff, and faculty. Alongside classes, events, and extracurricular activities, wellness programming is one of the many sectors of campus life that have experienced a substantial transition this fall. Going from providing in-person to remote services within a matter of months is no socially-distanced walk in the park, but Pacific's numerous wellness programs have thus far proven that they are sufficiently up for the task.

In terms of physical wellbeing, Baun and Pacific Recreation have quickly and effectively adapted their programming to the virtual environment. Group fitness classes such as Zumba and Barre are now happening regularly via Zoom which, according to Amber Kavehkar, Pacific's Wellness Coach and Assistant Director of Recreation, have allowed more flexibility for many regarding their day-to-day scheduling. Moreover, while a considerable number of attendees in said classes often opt for the "video-off" option in Zoom, their sense of community and social accountability haven't diminished. Amber Mateer, a Graduate Assistant of Competitive Sports, has encountered a similar degree of success with programs such as Wellness Warrior, a monthly series for officers of sports clubs to learn about the various facets of wellness (e.g. social wellness, emotional wellness, etc.) in a collaborative and interactive setting.

Charlotte Felix, the University Dietician, has also seen firsthand the positive student responses to Pacific's new virtual wellness programs: "I think more people have been able to take advantage of the [campus wellness resources] as long as they know that it's available because of this transition." Being able to contact a campus health professional through phone or Zoom suits the hectic and time-deficient student lifestyle undeniably well, and this has been reflected by the uptick in students reaching out to wellness resources like Charlotte. Finding new ways to connect with students has been integral to ensuring that these resources are accessible, as plenty of students aren't cognizant of what their wellness fee fully covers and/or entails. On Instagram, Charlotte has a monthly Q&A as part of the collaborative *InstaHealth* series hosted by ASUOP and Tiger Health to facilitate more direct student engagement with Pacific's wellness programming. Students can come into the Instagram Live with questions about their diet and, more broadly, health and wellness in general.

Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) has been adapting to this brave new world by moving a number of their regular services and events to Zoom, and also by creating self-guided retreat packets for students to do at a time which best fits their schedule; the weekly

meditation group that took place in the Chapel pre-pandemic is now a daily practice known as “Pacific Pause,” and the morning prayer service is presently an afternoon one, occurring at 4:45 pm every day. Participants are able to share their joys and concerns with one another in a religiously and spiritually inclusive communal space. Rev. Laura Steed, the Multifaith Chaplain and Director of Religious and Spiritual Life, stresses the importance of meeting students where they are and creating opportunities for intentional and uplifting connection: “We are still very much craving that [human] connection, and because life is really heavy right now we have adapted some of our regular meetings to be lighter with more time for community building and support”.

Dr. Carla Strickland-Hughes, a psychology professor and avid participant in Baun’s virtual fitness classes, is an enthusiastic proponent of emphasizing wellness and self-care early in life. As a specialist in aging and cognition, she highlights the importance of curbing the “eventualities” many have come to associate with growing old — cognitive decline, loss of mobility, numbed senses — by building beneficial habits while young — the two most vital being regular aerobic exercise and social engagement. Additionally, Juliana Vargas and Allegra Rocha, student officers in Active Minds, an RSO dedicated to destigmatizing the conversation around mental health, are also passionate advocates of self-compassion. They work with CAPS to inform students about the assortment of wellness services and resources available at Pacific. The importance of wellness has not been corroded by this vast transition from in-person to online interactions, which seems to indicate that the benefits from these virtual resources may outlast the pandemic.

Telehealth was an emerging development in the fields of medicine and wellness long before the COVID-19 era. However, many refrained from trying it due to doubts about its effectiveness. Thus, if there is a silver lining to be gleaned from the pandemic, it would be that it enabled telehealth to prove its efficacy to a number of skeptics. On college campuses, as illustrated by Pacific’s own virtual wellness programming, telehealth can have longevity beyond COVID-19 as a convenient and time-efficient resource for students, staff, and faculty whose schedules don’t often accommodate the time needed for an in-person appointment.

Resources:

@Pacific_RS_Life

<https://pacificrec.pacific.edu/>

<https://2020recreationmovement.com/>

Wellness Coach: akavehkar@pacific.edu

Dietician: cfelix@pacific.edu



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Oct 14, 2020 · 3 min read

Pacific Launches New Website

By: Juliana Vargas

On September 15th, Pacific launched a newly branded website for the university. After 13 years without any alterations, the new website displayed a modern look with bright new colors, eye-catching fonts, and an entirely different layout.

Jeff Harris, Senior Director of Digital Communications who pioneered this new website, mentioned that the main purpose for updating the website was not only to portray who we are at Pacific but to also share our story with prospective students. According to Harris, when reconstructing the site, he wanted the website to be mobile responsive, since versions in the past 13 years were not compatible with smart phones. Additionally, the new website, which reduced from 40,000 pages to 4,000, is more focused and easier to navigate.

“The website was like a storage prior to the new renovation. The 40,000 pages didn’t just go away; they are being relocated to a new student portal we are working on,” says Harris. He also added that they had three “mood boards,” but chose the one stretched the boundaries of Pacific with big fonts and bright colors.

According to the Pacific Tigers site, there has been controversy about changing the university’s traditional colors of orange and black according into navy blue, yellow, white, and burnt orange. “The traditional Pacific orange was inaccessible on the web, however, there are three shades of orange representing the undergrad, graduates, and professionals,” says Harris. The Pacific orange is still in our new logo and in the website, but with no text over it.” This new branding process was put together by a team in a span of over six months. Additionally, the website, which was not before, is ADA compliant and friendly.

One of the reasons the website was rebranding was because of the technological difficulties in the previous website, such as links crashing and poor ability to navigate through all the school's programs. "The launch of the website was not postponed for the mere reason that you can constantly update it and make changes to it. Therefore, all the links crashing or being nonexistent can be easily fixed and constantly updated," adds Harris. He also added that even with all the new adjustments, there is still more work to be done. "Google has to index and oversight the website, and that takes about three to four weeks."

Chelsea Igtanloc, Bioengineering, Class of 23', provided her insight about the latest updates to the site. "I really like the structure and the modern simplicity to cater to younger audiences while keeping a professional approach." However, Igtanloc doesn't like the new colors because they don't "represent Pacific". "There are pros and cons to this new website, and especially since you're so used to the old one, it's great that we have new things coming but it's also hard to adapt to. It's hard to navigate and the font is not to my liking, but it does its job and it's good to make a change once in a while," says Igtanloc.

Over the upcoming nine to twelve months, Pacific will also have a newly branded student portal, where student organizations can post and share their ideas. According to Harris, part of the new branding will extend on-campus, with flags, booklets, etc.



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Oct 20, 2020 · 2 min read

Pacific Holds Virtual Webinars on Politics Amidst Pandemic

By Liliana López

2020 is an unprecedented year for politics. It is a year that has seen a global pandemic, hyperactive wildfires, and inflammatory issues of social justice, all of which will make for an ideologically heated election year. It is amidst this socially distanced environment that Pacific has created a number of virtual events in lieu of in person activities on campus. One of these events is Pacific Talks Politics, a series of webinars featuring numerous speakers who give insight about the upcoming presidential election. The series was created as a collaborative effort between the Political Science Department and President Christopher Callahan. It features various journalists, lawyers, and political scientists, including John King from CNN and Brian Landsberg, a law professor at the McGeorge School of Law.

An election-related event on this scale is a first for both President Callahan and the Political Science department, though the latter has always held smaller events during election season. Although an in-person event would be preferable, President Callahan states that the use of technology like Zoom helps events become more inclusive and accessible to students, and also allows for more speakers, without “being limited by geography.” Indeed, the speakers’ diverse localities and areas of expertise has had a positive effect on Pacific students. One such student is Matthias Lopez, Political Science and Philosophy ’22, who was particularly impressed by the speakers, saying that the discussions were “delivered by some of the most politically aware [people] around. To have that access is rare.” Students, however, are not the only ones learning from the experience. For Political Science department chair Jeffrey Becker, the experience has been especially helpful in gauging student engagement and learning about what topics students would like to hear more on. He hopes the webinars will help students discover diverse career opportunities.

So far, the series has been very successful. The first webinar had around 40 attendees, a number which later tripled to more than 130 when Judy Woodruff from PBS Newshour presented on September 25th. Pacific Talks Politics attendees include current students, alumni, staff, and other community members. Becker, Callahan, and Lopez all agree that the series is valuable in that it provides our community with resources about the upcoming election, and helps voters at Pacific answer important questions about various political issues. Lopez 120% recommends for Pacific students to attend this event because “It is not good enough to be 100% engaged in political discourse. Our country is in a critical state... hence the [extra] 20%.”

After the great success that the series has seen so far, President Callahan would like to continue this tradition at Pacific in the coming election years. Pacific Talks Politics’ schedule can be found at the following

link: https://calendar.pacific.edu/event/presidential_election_series_pacific_talks_politics



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Oct 20, 2020 · 4 min read

West Coast Fires and Climate Change

By: Isabel Acevedo

On August 16, 2020, the August Complex Fire started and quickly spread to break the record of California's largest wildfire. As of September 25th, thirty-nine days later, it has burned 867, 335 acres and firefighters have only contained around forty percent. It was caused by a series of lightning strikes that caused several different fires which have now turned the original smaller fires as one big area of wildfire activity.

Since 2018, wildfires have become a rampant annual disaster throughout California. These fires wreak havoc on the state through mass evacuations, burning hundreds of acres, worsening air quality, and even causing deaths in some areas. Although forest fires are a habitual characteristic in nature, wildfires at this frequency are even more dangerous. Climate changes are aggravating the conditions that allow fire to spread, making firefighters' jobs increasingly difficult.

According to Dr. Lydia Fox, Associate Professor of the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences, the main causes of wildfires are caused by human error and drought. She also states that the area where fires commonly originate is grassland. Other times, recent wildfires have been created by lightning strikes or in one specific case, pyrotechnics at a gender reveal party.

In terms of what part that climate change will play in this progression, Dr. Fox says that "with prolonged drought and warmer, drier weather, fires will be more common. Global warming is leading to warmer temperatures and more severe droughts in California, and other western states. The recent prolonged drought led to a spread of the pine bark beetle which killed a lot of trees in the Sierras, thus, increasing the fuel load for the fires, since dead trees burn easily."

Although forest fires are a natural part of several ecosystems, wildfires are not. According to Dr. Fox, understanding the difference in fire classification is important to explaining the nature of fires. "Natural forest fires are an important way of clearing the underbrush in a forest and reducing the fuel load," Dr. Fox says. "Fires are a natural part of the ecosystem. The problem we are having now is with more intense wildfires. Humans have been encroaching on the forests, and thus, human activity leads to fires (power lines sparking in big windstorms, for example, have caused major fires recently)."

These wildfires not only destroy homes and property, but also the environment. "Forest fires are a natural part of the ecosystem, some plants don't release their seeds until they are exposed to the heat of a fire. But the massive wildfires we have seen in recent times, often

lead to mudslides once the winter rains come,” Dr. Fox continues. “Since the vegetation has been burned off, leaving a layer of ash and nothing to protect the slopes, the soil and ash will get washed down hill. This leaves less soil on the slopes and often clogs up the streams downhill, when they get filled with the soil and ash.”

These wildfires are just another sign that climate change is affecting the environment in more ways that are realized. Dr. Fox gives her opinion on the matter. “The people who deny climate change are not likely to be convinced by any evidence. There is a lot of evidence for climate change, but because the effects increase relatively slowly, many people deny that they are occurring,” Dr. Fox states. “Science has become politicized and short-term economic interests seem to trump concern about the long-term economic impacts of climate change. By the time things get bad, the current group of deniers will be dead, and their grandchildren will be paying the price that their grandparents were unwilling to pay.”

Even with scientific evidence of climbing temperatures influencing the spread of wildfires, people continue to deny the reality of climate change. It has even become a large subject in politics. Most politicians have added climate change as a key essential to their campaigns. This will affect voters’ decisions when they are heading to the polls before November 3rd because voters will side with politicians that advertise their shared beliefs in this matter.

Pacific students had a definite voice in this matter. Registered voter, Alexis Villalpando, Speech Language Pathology ’23, says that climate change is a big factor in her voting decisions because “if we don’t take care of the earth and protect it, then one day it will no longer be able to take care of us, and that is a scary future.”

Ruth Aguilar, Political Science ’23, a Pacific Legal Scholar, and registered voter says that climate change is a big factor in her voting decisions because she “...wants someone in office who is aware of our global environmental problems.”

Voters have taken notice of these fires and the drastic impacts that global warming has inflicted. Although wildfires during a pandemic seem to be early signs of an impending apocalypse, actions to reverse the effects of climate change need to be taken and need to be taken fast. Consequently, the outcome of 2020’s presidential election will be a telling sign for how the American people view the impending doom of climate change, and if they are willing to do something about it before it is too late.



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Oct 20, 2020 · 4 min read

SB-145 Does Not Make Pedophilia Legal: Stop Listening to QAnon

By: Jasmin Prasad

QAnon, a baseless far right conspiracy theory, is back with their continuous spread of blatant propaganda. Most recently, Senate Bill 145, which was signed by California Governor Gavin Newsom on September 11, 2020, has been subject to an unsettling amount of misinformation by far right new sources; such misinformation has undoubtedly made its way onto social media where perhaps the most impressionable people have yet again been misinformed.

In order to understand what the law actually does, it is critical to understand the text so the public truly comprehends that SB-145 does not legalize pedophilia. To believe that it does completely disregards a law that has been in place for more than half a decade. Engaging in false discourse about the bill will only further ostracize the LGBTQ+ community. Falsely maintaining that pedophilia is legal by SB-145's doing only perpetuates an influx in such disgusting behavior.

One of the largest misconceptions of this bill is that it created the act where judges are granted discretion on cases of vaginal intercourse with a 14 year old when the age difference isn't more than 10 years. To believe that SB-145 is the law that created the aforementioned provision is undeniably wrong and perhaps a history refresher is needed.

The law, which has been in place since 1944, mandates the limit to be 10 years. This law allowed judges to decide who is placed on a sex offender registry if individuals between the ages of 14–17 engaged in voluntary intercourse with another individual who was no more than 10 years older. SB-145 did not *establish* this provision. Anyone engaging in false discourse about the 10 year policy is not credible — this is an extrapolation that has been used by many far right wing sources to falsely inform that pedophilia is becoming legal. However, irony exists in the fact that this policy is a problem with those on the far right *just after* the SB-145 bill was passed that grants discretion to the LGBTQ+ community. To repeat, vaginal intercourse between minors and individuals up to 10 years older *has been legal since 1944*.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Jessica Levinson, a professor from Loyola Law School, states that the affirmation that the bill somehow allows for pedophilia to be legal is not true. The AP reports a fact checking analysis of the far right conservative claim and clarifies that the new bill “would expand on existing California law involving statutory rape with vaginal sex to cover anal and oral sex too.” The key word here is “existing”. Prior to this, “voluntary sex between a teenager age 14 to 17 and adult within 10 years of their age is

treated differently depending of the sex act ... in cases of vaginal sex, the law allows a judge to decide whether or not the adult should have to register as a sex offender,” reports the AP. Previously, those who engaged in oral and anal sex were given no discretion and (if adults) and would have to register as a sex offender. Consequently, this disproportionately affected the LGBTQ+ population.

The implications of the additions to the bill are best described by the drafter of the bill, District Attorney Jackie Lacey. In a statement from the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office, Lacey affirms that the bill “allows judges and prosecutors to evaluate cases involving consensual sex acts between young people, regardless of their sexual orientation, on an individual basis.” Or in layman’s terms, justice is applied equally regardless of sexual orientation. As California state Senator Scott Wiener told the “AP,” “[he] is grateful that [his] colleagues saw through [QAnon’s] lies and understood that LGBTQ young people are having their lives destroyed simply for having consensual sex.”

It is clear that attempts to engage in the spread of propaganda of this bill is just another attempt to ostracize those in the LGBTQ+ community (which is sadly something that they are not foreign to). Claims that SB-145 “made pedophilia legal” is quite literally historically inaccurate. However, QAnon has had no problem engaging in the outright spread of misinformation and has made their stance on whether or not they feel those in the LGBTQ+ community should be treated equally quite obvious. According to the Sacramento Bee, QAnon distorted the issue, spreading the hashtag “#SaveTheChildren” and spreading made up conspiracy theories on child sex trafficking.

That’s not to say that an individual could hold the position that intercourse with a minor should always be a strict liability crime with no discretion in sentencing. However, this isn’t the argument that QAnon is making. But the topic of discretion and the judicial history of strict liability is its own discussion and clearly not the focus of this discussion.

Even if an individual were to not care about discretion being granted to those in the LGBTQ+ community, spreading the word that “pedophilia is now legal” is extremely harmful. True cases of pedophilia would only increase if this message is spread to those who are actual pedophiles. And I say this with utmost certainty, the spread of pedophilia is something that the left and the right certainly do not support.

It is crucial to not let hateful propaganda, such as QAnon, misinform citizens on issues such as the Senate Bill 145. They are clearly misinformed on their history and are only working to perpetuate the ostracization of the LGBTQ+ community. This is just one example how extremist propaganda works to get people to abandon the truth and embrace dangerous ideas.



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Oct 30, 2020 · 2 min read

Pacific Organizations Encourage Students to Vote

By: Ramneet Jande

For a number of students at Pacific, the 2020 election will be the first time casting a vote in a presidential election. Issues such as healthcare, social justice, and climate policy are hot topics across the spectrum and are fueling young people to the polls across the country. To encourage student voter turnout, various organizations such as ASuop, Pacific Athletics, and PacAve Records are using a variety of techniques to educate students and urge them to vote.

Launched by The Associated Students of the University of the Pacific (ASuop), Pacific to the Polls is a collaboration with the Pacific Volunteer Center and Pacific Athletics. Its primary purpose is to increase voter registration and to serve as an education initiative. Using Instagram as a medium, the Pacific to the Polls initiative has events, infographics, and giveaways which Pacific Athletics helps with hosting. ASuop hopes that with better voter education there will also be more voter turnout. Randi Holguin, ASuop's president and Business Administration 21', writes that "As college students, this is a part of the educational journey, to become informed and get involved in making a difference with knowledge. It's important that ASuop provides students with proper education, so that they can make a confident vote whichever way they choose to vote." Additionally, Pacific Volunteer Center is aiding voter education by providing information about various propositions being passed, reminding people to vote and of upcoming voter deadlines, and having volunteers make videos about how to vote in their area.

Another Pacific program, PacAve Records, a student run record label, is collaborating with #iVoted Concerts, whose goal is to increase voter turnout. In order to RSVP for a concert on Election Night, students can sign up with their Pacific email and take a selfie with a blank voting ballot or their local polling place and send it to the link in Pac Ave's Instagram bio.

Over 400 plus artists are performing that night, making it perhaps the largest digital musical festival in history. “We were looking to inspire fellow Pacificans and to introduce them to new music that they probably wouldn’t have discovered without the concert,” says Renee Jesse Bagus, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for PacAve and Music Industries Studies, 21’.

PacAve Records initially got the idea to lead a voting initiative after doing research with the university’s library and finding out that Pacific alumni Dennis Ward led a nationwide campaign to change the voting age from 21 to 18. Ward’s movement called Let Us Vote inspired PacAve to help increase voter turnout.

As for the success of the campaign, Bagus mentions that students have been actively making submissions into the contest. “We have been tracking the interactions with IVoted and it has jumped up in the past couple days. We are hoping it spikes in the next couple days leading up to the election,” adds Bagus.

As election day approaches, student organizations hope to have encouraged students to have performed their civic duty by voting in the election.

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Oct 30, 2020 · 3 min read

“Soft Power”: The History and Its Place at Pacific

By: Angel Zhong

From October 2019 to February 2020, the SFMOMA hosted an exhibition entitled “soft power,” addressing the “ways in which artists deploy art to explore their roles as citizens and social actors.” It acted as a transnational manifestation of how culture, in the form of art, can incite meaningful thought and action. Nevertheless, as maintained by Dr. Ahmed Kanna, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Pacific, it’s critical to consider that the term first gained prominence during the Cold War, and was used to denote how the United States spread its influence and empire through non-coercive means in the latter half of the twentieth century. Consequently, “soft power” has historically been burdened with the weight of U.S. imperialism, hegemony, and geopolitical interests. However, like many other words and phrases today, “soft power” is being reclaimed and appropriated as a medium of counterculture, exemplifying how subversion can emerge from the inversion of existing power structures reflected in our ever-changing language.

One can trace the prefiguration of “soft power” back hundreds of years. Though the term obviously didn’t exist in the sixteenth century, the spirit of “soft power” — as it is being remade presently — was captured by the ethos and writings of renowned playwright William Shakespeare. According to Dr. Courtney Lehmann, Professor of English and distinguished Shakespeare scholar, Shakespeare was “prescient” — i.e. profoundly forethinking- — in the sense that he understood the issues of race, gender, and class before they became tangibly rooted in our intellectual and societal landscapes. He repeatedly included and represented marginalized groups in his work, as illustrated by *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*, despite the fact that he was required to entertain and please aristocrats with his plays, i.e. those who benefitted the most from the stratified and discriminatory social structure of that era. As a result, much of Shakespeare’s career was defined by a complex “social calculus”, whereby he performed for the upper class while simultaneously speaking sincerely to the “groundlings,” those who stood at his plays because they were too

poor to purchase a seat. Shakespeare's quietly subversive body of work epitomizes the power of art to become a voice for the voiceless — to humanize, mobilize, and revolutionize by reinventing dominant ways of thinking and sparking a discourse of activism that, in his case, spans generations.

The ripples of soft power can be observed among our own community as well. Inside the classroom, discussions initiated by literature, art, and other products of culture are leading to expanded worldviews. Liz Malone, a fourth-year English major and prominent student activist, asserts that dialogues of discomfort constitute the bedrock of societal progress, as we can't make important external changes until our internal preconceptions are addressed. She continued by contending that art and literature invite us to have these often disquieting conversations because they enable us to empathetically experience circumstances different from our own; thus, partaking in art and literature is activism, and by doing so we are all activists displaying radical empathy. Moreover, art created by students and faculty also illustrates on-campus conceptions of soft power. Jennifer Little, Associate Professor of Art and Graphic Design, devotes much of her work to examining the dynamic sociopolitical climate of the United States. One of her ongoing projects, "Gun Culture", visualizes and delves into "the relationship between right-wing gun culture, conservative politics, white supremacy, poverty, and lack of ethnic diversity in rural America." In addition, this past summer, a recent Pacific graduate organized an initiative to paint a "Black Lives Matter" mural on Argonne Drive in Stockton, showing how both the creation and contemplation of art facilitate solidarity and progress.



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Oct 30, 2020 · 2 min read

Art and Aestheticism Amidst the Pandemic

By **Liliana Lopez**

A candle. A wax seal, ink, and fountain pen. A Grecian bust and a pair of Victorian tintypes. For the umpteenth time, I've purchased random pretty items on Etsy to add to my collection of antique decor. I'm not the only one. Over the course of the last seven months, many people have been unable to participate in activities that they love, such as sports, travel, or concerts. We've had to stay inside, often with little or no opportunity for diversion. As the months of social distancing have stretched over more and more pages of the calendar, many people have decided to learn a new creative skill, or to make, buy, and sell items that are aesthetically pleasing. In March, Instagram was flooded with people posting their baking, and by June everyone was redecorating their room or fixing up their garden. Something had shifted.

Why? Lisa Cooperman, Pacific's University Curator, says that "Aestheticism...may have an uplifting message and satisfy the maker's desire to create.... I also think it stems from a desire to control the materials of our everyday world when so much else is out of control." Before, we were busy, doing errands and chores in and out of the house, concerning ourselves with tasks that took our attention away from the physical spaces around us. Now, the walls look bland, or you've had that same Star Wars bedspread since middle school. Or maybe all our hands are just itching to be doing something busy again, so we take up photography, illustration, or sewing (stores like Walmart or JoAnn's have been out of sewing machines for months. I know. I checked already.).

Students are not alone in finding new creative hobbies. Pacific has also hosted a number of virtual events dedicated to making art, and encouraging creativity among our community. Kaelani Valdez-Nawatani, Studio Art and Art History, '21 has seen "many people set up virtual workshops, open mics, exhibitions and so much more in both the Pacific community and the greater Stockton areas." She herself has created art that is inspired by the coronavirus, and has displayed it in virtual art shows. Both Cooperman and Valdez-Nawatani believe that art can bring people together and can help them cope with the situations at hand, a sentiment that they have described using words such as *safe*, *gentle*, *impassioned*, and *silly*.

While engaging in art, creativity, and aestheticism will not make the pandemic end, it will certainly make the wait sweeter to the palate. Buy that print. Or make one. Get rid of the old Star Wars bedspread. Or upcycle it. Nothing is barred in beauty.