





# SLOHS ASL Fosters Inclusivity and Awareness



REPORTER KANDON SULLIVAN

American Sign Language (ASL) students at San Luis Obispo High School are thriving not only in school but also in their language. Students are valuing this language in school and the real world. Students don’t only love the program and the teacher, but the actual language itself. Some students believe it’s more fun, easier, and more beneficial.

“Initially, I wanted to teach Fifth Grade, but ended up finding my perfect fit teaching High School! Plus, I graduated from SLOHS and have been thankful ever since to return to my alma mater in order to teach! At SLOHS, I’ve taught English, Peer Communications, and ASL; ASL more predominantly than other subjects. I love teaching ASL because I can help take students from knowing a little sign to being fully proficient in sign. My hope is that all of the ASL students can work toward a level of fluency that can help them communicate with members of our deaf community locally and nationally,” said ASL teacher Kristen Nusbaum.

Nusbaum has a big impact on SLOHS students and staff. She is really compassionate about her job, and students feel comfortable talking to her about anything.

“I love the teacher, and she was really welcoming and nice. She made the class a lot of fun,” said sophomore Sofia Narvaro

SLOHS students feel comfortable in the classroom. Most students feel they are in a fun and healthy environment. For most students, Language classes are scary, and not something students look forward to in their day, or even in high school life. At SLOHS, students feel excited and welcomed when they are involved in the ASL program.

“I was at a pumpkin patch with my sister, and she was working there, and these deaf children came and we spoke to them together,” said freshman Stella Beckett.

Not only is this language fun to learn, but it’s beneficial to people who feel excluded from the world because of their hearing. People really do use this awesome language in the real world.

“I like ASL a lot, because it’s different from a lot of other languages that other high schools provide, and it’s just a fun community,” said freshman Nyla Sedeek.

Some people continue to believe ASL is not a real language, but it is! Many schools around the area don’t offer this language. After calling a couple of schools in the area, Expressions found out that Arroyo Grande High School does have a program, but Mission College Prep and Santa Maria High School do not.

“I LOVE teaching ASL! I grew up with ASL as a child when I had the ability to attend Elementary, Middle, and High School here in SLCUSD with my [Deaf and signing] friends: Sarah, Jacob, Robyn, Fernando, and more! We learned ASL in our classes and had the opportunity to watch interpreters sign each and every day,” said Nusbaum.

SLOHS students who attend the ASL program feel compassionate about this language and have fallen in love with it. The community is one of the strongest and most open-armed communities at SLOHS, and students believe it will just continue to grow. If you’re an incoming student or a returning one looking for a language to take next year, try ASL; you won’t regret it.

Source: [Beniciapaw.com](#)

## How do SLOHS Students Celebrate their Mothers?



**Appreciate your mother this Mother’s Day! Graphic courtesy of junior Athena Sterios.**

HEALTH & SPORTS CO-EDITOR TREY WALTER

Mothers birthed every student at San Luis Obispo High School, and they hold the hardest job in the world: dealing with high schoolers.

As Mother’s Day approaches on May 11, *Expressions* asked SLOHS students the question of how they celebrate their mothers for this important holiday.

“I take my mom out for brunch, and I spend the whole day with her. Sometimes we do a movie marathon or we go for a bike ride,” said sophomore Ava Eades.

Mothers have a big responsibility to take care of their children, and this holiday is a great way for them to be reciprocated for the care they give by being pampered for a whole day. Even students with complicated parenting situations still give them the love they deserve on this day.

“I write both of my mom’s cards, and I give the mom I live with flowers, and I try to be on my best behavior for both of my moms,” said sophomore George Ross.

Mothers deserve a lot of recognition for their hard work to raise their children and carry the responsibility of being a parent. It’s necessary to make them feel special for what they do for their children.

“We spend time together, whether that be going out to breakfast or dinner or doing something special together. My kids make me cards that my husband makes them make,” said Agricultural Biology and Veterinary Science teacher Anna Bates.

Moms devote a lot of their time to their children, and they need to be celebrated as much. Mothers are commonly given flowers, cards, or taken out for food on this holiday, so this Mother’s Day, be sure to go the extra mile and make mothers across SLO County feel appreciated, Tigers!

## FFA Students Are Gearing Up for the Mid-State Fair!

REPORTER GEORGE ROSS

San Luis Obispo Future Farmers of America (FFA) students have been preparing their animals in order to present them at the Mid-State Fair and, hopefully, make some money. They take care of their animals at the SLOHS farm and prepare them for the fair.

“I’m halter breaking it so it can get bigger, and so I can sell it for more money. I am selling a heifer at the fair, which is a pregnant cow,” said freshman Matthew Milner.

Halter breaking is the process of teaching an animal to wear a halter and a lead rope, making them easier to handle and control. It teaches them to respond to pressure, which can improve their behavior and muscle definition.

“You sell the heifers for more than what you buy them for, in order to make a profit. Selling heifers also gives you more experience with animals,” said sophomore Blake Schafer.

Normally, you buy an animal from a breeder who owns a ranch for about \$500 to \$7,000, depending on the animal and who you are buying it from. Then you take care of them at the SLOHS farm for four to ten months, and then at the fair, you sell them for more in order to make a profit.

“I am not personally preparing an animal for the Mid-State fair, but I still think it’s a great thing to do because it teaches you how to care for animals,” said sophomore Sean Cowan.

Our FFA students are working hard to raise these animals for the fair and are doing a fantastic job. They are putting in the work up at the farm and maintaining the animals’ hygiene and overall well-being. They are learning real-life skills that they might need to know later on in life if they continue down this path. Keep up the good work, FFA tigers, and we hope to see you and your animals at the Mid-State Fair.

Source: [Farmingtruth.weebly.com](#)



# Let’s Highlight the Digital Media CTE Pathway



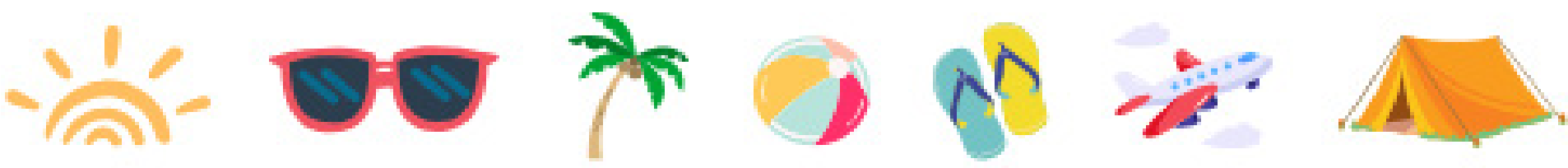
Digital media CTE Pathway teacher Zacahry Roper with his 3D-printed “K2-SO”. Photo courtesy of Roper.

REPORTER ASHUR STEPPO

Students have the opportunity at San Luis Obispo High School to find their career through the CTE (Career in Technical Education) pathway. Students take different levels of classes in different fields taking hands-on learning experiences that prepare them for college and careers. *Expressions* wanted to highlight the Digital Media CTE pathway so we reached out to a student who has taken the pathway and the CTE Digital Media Instructional leader Zachary Roper.

**Expressions:** What do students learn in the CTE Pathway?  
**Roper:** Pathways on our campus have everything from engineering and drafting to culinary arts, to child development. My pathway happens to be Arts Media and Entertainment, which is for careers in the film industry or graphic design industry. My pathway is mainly focused on learning software like Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere, and Blender. Hemerdinger and I both teach parts of the film pathway, which include Intermediate TV Video Production and Advanced Film Production, which is for students that want to actually make their own films or TV broadcasts.  
**Graphic design student and junior Bridger Jensen:** There’s not only creative flow like how to design something that’s appealing, but there’s also a lot of expectations of clients and figuring out how to work in a way that you can comfortably create projects without being a victim to scope creep or while still appeasing the client and not getting too carried away with your own creativity, while still getting to be like creative. I think a lot of that is really useful because most of that is what is actually going to be used in the real world when it comes to those jobs that you come out of that pathway looking for. So, I just think in general, you really get a sense of what the job is actually like.  
**Expressions:** What career will you see out of yourself and students?  
**Roper:** I’ve seen my students go on to get involved in graphic design careers, usually working at their college or university in some capacity doing graphic design. I’ve had a few students the last couple of years actually go on to film schools and are now working on independent films or producing their own short films. So it just depends on what they’re interested in. Some of them want to get into animation; I had a previous student who’s working for Nickelodeon now. It’s wherever their interest lies, they try to find a job within that industry.  
**Jensen:** I see myself getting into illustration and digital artworks specifically. I really want to be a concept artist in the future because a lot of what we learned in class was this creative flow of digital design, but what I think I took away the most from it is how you can develop your technique to create something. You can kind of just create worlds when you’re working on a computer.  
**Expressions:** If you could add a class to SLOHS, what would you add?  
**Roper:** I think for us a big growth area is in animation and video game design. We have a lot of student interest in that and those career fields are booming right now. So if we were to add another class, it would probably be something along that line. But I also really enjoy 3D printing and modeling, so maybe doing something there.  
**Jensen:** I think Roper was saying video game designer. I think the skills of learning how to model along with anime and code would be really useful, especially in the modern world because of how many jobs include animation, modeling, and coding. There’s so many uses for all three of those things. I think a video game design class would be the perfect way to create a culmination of those abilities.  
Tigers, if you are interested in signing up for a CTE pathway, please, feel free to talk to your counselor.

# Tigers, Make the Most of Summer Break!



Fill your summer with endless activites! Graphic courtesy of senior Addi Woods.

REPORTER JOE DIBIASE

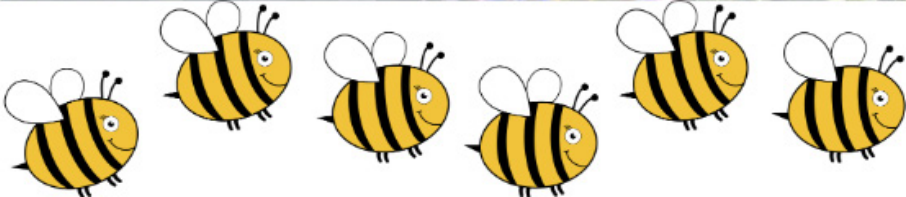
Summer break is just around the corner, and for students at San Luis Obispo High School and across the nation, it’s a fantastic opportunity to make the most of the more than 70 days we have. Whether you have grand vacation plans or simply relaxed time ahead, there are countless ways to fill your days with purpose. Don’t let the sunny months pass by without embracing some new adventures! Think creatively and explore local activities. With only a few summers left in high school, now is the ideal time to create memories and experiences. “People could get outside, do more activities in their community, and also meet new people,” said freshman Nyla Hubler. Embracing the outdoors and connecting with nature in these warm months is not just benefi-

cial but a good way to invest your time. Engaging with the natural world effectively reduces stress, improves mood, enhances focus, and boosts physical activity all at once. Being active and keeping up with your surroundings is a powerful path to personal growth and self-improvement. “During my summer break, I like to go on camping trips with my friends,” said freshman Lorelei Hutchinson. Camping is an excellent example of spending your valuable time outdoors and creating valuable moments with your peers and loved ones. Bonding time with others can raise your sense of belonging, lower your stress, improve your self-confidence, and help you cope through hard times. “For some students, Summer School is a good option. But I am a big believer in taking healthy re-set breaks. I have seen too much burnout,”

said SLOHS counselor Ms. Ingles. Summer School is used by many SLOHS students to not only get better grades or improve their academic GPA, but also to level up in certain areas such as History, Math, English, Economics, and many other options for students to get the classes they need done. But taking a break from school can also be useful to rest and reset for the next school year. We can see that summer break is a very valuable time that we get in our high school years, which most people take for granted. There are various opportunities and activities that we can indulge in during the summer that can be useful to our time. Make sure to do what is best for you and your goals this summer. Make the most of this summer, Tigers! Source: *Mayoclinic.com*



# Bees are dying, and no one seems to have a care



**Native flowers attract lots of vital pollinators, and planting them can help grow the populations of endangered native bees. Photo courtesy of senior Juniper Patrick-Miernicki.**

EDITOR JUNIPER PATRICK-MIERNICKI

Students at San Luis Obispo High School tend to agree that recycling and composting is good for the environment, wasting water is bad, and although inconvenient, biking is also better in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, it seems like no one is talking about an equally important issue: native bees are in danger of extinction, and yes, this is bad.

“The human population has absolutely depended upon the resources we get from our ecosystems, including the role of pollinators to help us produce our food,” stated biology and AP environmental teacher Jenny Macartney.

Decreasing biodiversity of bees will mean less pollination, which will be a huge issue with a growing human population.

It is a common misconception that honey bees are the ones in trouble, but this is not true. In fact, honey bee populations are at an all time high according to the Xerces Society. Native North American Bees are the species declining at alarming rates, and they are also the only species that pollinate some native plants. Important species include the Southern Plains Bumblebee, specialized pollinators which have become twice as rare as other bees in just the last decade.

When asked, many high schoolers agreed that not enough students care about this issue.

“High schoolers are high schoolers, but I think that the people who do care will do a lot about it,” said senior Greta Miller.

While it is true that some people will take a more passionate stance than others, spreading awareness as much as possible seems to be the start to “saving the bees”.

“Awareness is key, the more people know about these environmental issues the more they’ll support organizations that are trying to save the bees,” said junior Mila Shih.

Whether it’s a lack of time or just pure apathy, it is clear that not enough people care, and that environmentalists have a long way to go to save native bees and the entire ecosystems they maintain. So what can we do to help?

“Planting native flowers is one of the best things you can do. You can go buy native flower seed bundles and just scatter them in the ground,” answers Miller.

This simple act of planting native flowers, along with spreading awareness against non-regulated pesticides are just a few things students can do to help.

Educating yourself on native plants that key pollinators use to survive is extremely important. Education on the topic is the root of solving problems, and more people will care if they know what is going on. It is so easy to turn a blind eye, to ignore species going extinct and to choose apathy, but everyone will pay the price eventually.

Quality of produce will decrease as the native bees continue to be endangered, and with it quality of life. It will take some effort, but it’s an issue worth caring about.

Sources: *Biologicaldiversity.org*, *Calmatters.org*

# Do Honors Classes Help or Hurt Students?

REPORTER ADDISON HOPPLE

Students at San Luis Obispo High School are seen taking the opportunity to take honors classes like honors math and honors English for most grade levels. But is it worth taking an honors class? Is all the extra work and sometimes unneeded stress worth the extra GPA boost?

SLOHS honors classes allow students to branch out and create a learning environment that provides them with resources and more opportunities, and advanced learning that helps students in the future

“Aside from the ‘grade bump’, and more importantly in my opinion, I believe honors math classes open the door for students to take more advanced classes. Every day is a challenge, where we consistently build upon prior knowledge and gain new skill sets - skills that are foundational not only for higher-level math but for the overall future of our students,” said honors geometry teacher Roxanne Politte.

Honors educators help create a fun learning environment that lets students leave aside any stress from school and extra work in classes.

“I believe that in SLO High School honors teachers have made taking honors classes very obtainable, and they are understanding of extracurricular activities,” said sophomore Maddie Purdy.

Though many students feel that honors classes are a great way to boost their GPA, step out of their comfort zone, and learn from a more advanced curriculum, they sometimes feel stressed and can fall behind on work from other classes.

“The class was overall more stressful than I anticipated the normal English 9 class would be. The workload was very stressful, but it taught me what it is like to feel those levels of stress and pressure to do your best in a complicated class,” said freshman Joe DiBiase.

Though honors classes can make some students feel burnt out and even overwhelmed, taking an honors class can give students an edge in their learning. It can help them be more prepared for college and other hard working jobs, and overall succeed in their classes.

Sources: *Appily.com*, *Collegeraptor.com*



**Enzerink’s grade 9 honors English class is deep in analysis as they prepare for their Lord of the Flies test. Photo courtesy of freshman Kandon Sullivan.**



# Are AP Tests Actually Useful for Students?



*An AP class where kids have a stable environment and can excel in classes. Photo courtesy of sophomore George Ross.*

REPORTER GEORGE ROSS

San Luis Obispo High School students take AP tests in order to earn college credit, enhance their college applications, and demonstrate overall college readiness, but is it actually worth it?

“I didn’t take the test because I just wanted a boost to my GPA for the classes, and it’s a lot of stress to take that test and you have to pay for it,” said senior Benjamin Davidson.

Many other students feel the same way and believe it is a waste of time. These tests are very hard and many SLOHS students don’t pass, therefore not getting the credits for their college classes.

“I have been studying by reading and writing about my AP chapters in my AP world history class. I’m not really stressing about it that much because I know I have been studying,” said sophomore Russel Issa when asked about the upcoming AP world history test.

The benefits of the AP tests are that if you pass, you don’t have to take those classes in college because you get the credit. It depends on which college you are going to though.

For example, if you are going to Cal Poly, you can get nine credits for that class and you won’t have to take it.

“A lot of colleges these days are choosing not to accept AP test scores, so it really comes down to whether or not the student has enough money,” said AP Economics teacher Gregory Ross.

Only 25 percent of the top 153 colleges allow students to receive AP credit, and the ones that do are mainly for your General Education. General Education includes classes you have to take in college and not major specific. By doing this it also prevents students from additional tuition fees. Most schools that do accept these credits are public education, and if you are taking AP classes you probably don’t want to go to a public education.

As you can see, taking AP classes might be beneficial in the fact that they challenge students to have a more rigorous pace, but if you are taking them to help you get into college it is not overall beneficial. So Tigers, make sure to choose your classes carefully, and keep your future in mind.

Sources: [Collegeboard.org](http://Collegeboard.org), [Progressivepolicy.org](http://Progressivepolicy.org)

## Nature has a Positive Impact on the Mental and Physical Health of SLOHS Students

EDITOR CATHERINE TUCKER

Many San Luis Obispo High School students recognize the area has fantastic views and great hikes nearby. The newest buildings also have large windows looking out into the hills, which are particularly green and lush this time of year.

“I’m someone who likes to be in nature, and this campus improves my mood whether walking to class or running on the track,” said senior Leila Johnson.

Johnson is not alone with these opinions. Research has shown that attending an open high school campus with an outdoors feel that has windows and access to nature, improves students’ overall well-being. The benefits include reducing anxiety, crime, and improving overall academic performance.

“I love being at a school that is surrounded by nature. It helps keep me focused and impro-

ves my mood,” said senior Nolan Connelly.

Nature causes a feeling of calm for many students and humans in general. SLOHS students appreciate getting to be outside and get some fresh air between classes, causing them to clear their mind and reset. However, not all students feel the same way.

“I honestly feel like I learn the same way, and that nature doesn’t affect me in the classroom setting, I’m just looking at the teacher anyway,” said freshman Sophia Chaves.

At SLOHS, we have classrooms that have no windows. Which means in class, you do not get the outdoor feeling that a lot of students love. Although some students echo Chaves’ apathy towards classrooms open to the outdoors, it is the general consensus that seeing nature and getting fresh air in between classes is extremely beneficial.

Get outside, Tigers, especially if you don’t always get to see nature from the classroom. It will improve mental health and instill a feeling of calm.

Source: [NIH.gov](http://NIH.gov)



*Room 203’s window features an impressive view of two mountains. Photo courtesy of senior Cate Tucker.*

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***A dog on the table is not an unfamiliar sight in the agriculture and science teacher Ms. Bates' classroom. Photo courtesy of sophomore Oliver Nemetz.***



# Cash or Class? Dealing with a High School Job.



*How do SLOHS students balance school and jobs with such a massive workload? Graphic courtesy of Sophia Chaves.*

REPORTER SOPHIA CHAVES

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the 2024 employment ratio for high schoolers aged 16-29 is 22.5 percent, but as prices skyrocket, more San Luis Obispo High School students may consider getting a job.

High school students are stepping into the workforce while still navigating the challenges of teenage life. Having a job in high school can build valuable skills, offer financial independence, and boost confidence, but it can also bring added stress, time management struggles, and academic pressure.

For a lot of students, having a job means more than just earning money: it's about gaining independence, learning how to manage time, and figuring out what responsibility looks like. Still, it's not easy with the late nights, academic impact, and no free time. Jobs that allow creativity, like designing clothes and concepts are perfect for school since it allows for time spent inbetween.

"It's probably good to work part-time while in school. I worked all through high school, and it's nice because I had my own spending money, I could go do what I wanted, and saved up for stuff that I wanted but just don't overdo it because school is a full time job in itself, so if you're gonna work, keep it at a minimum," said CTE instructional leader and teacher Zach Roper.

By emphasizing the freeing independence of having a job, but also noting the time management and responsibility it takes to preserve that delicate balance, it shows how difficult it is to determine which one to prioritize. School is a full-time job, especially with extracurricular activities, it's easy for students to lose track of their priorities.

"It [having a job] doesn't affect my mental health or anything, but it

helps me procrastinate, cause I don't have enough time. So I kinda prioritize work over school sometimes, I guess, it adds to my bad grades," said senior Finn Zovich.

Being a student can become second to work and effect your career in the future instead. Jobs can greatly impact academic performance and stress levels for any student. Having enough time to sleep, do sports, and complete school work is important for growing teenagers.

"I think that [having a job] depends on the person, and how easy it is for them to transport places and how busy they are," said senior Sama Alzraiee.

Students who can't drive yet or who don't have a mode of transportation may have issues getting to and from their workplace. This poses a huge issue for families who can't afford a vehicle or live in a place that is inaccessible to public transportation, like buses or subways.

"Sometimes I'll have to make a sacrifice and go to work instead of hanging out with my friends or another extracurricular activity," said senior Ava Van Brasch.

Students will inevitably have to miss out on their activities, but this doesn't change its inconvenience. Manual jobs such as retail or restaurant jobs may be difficult to maintain activity due to school. When a student gets a job, they have to be aware of the responsibilities and sacrifices needed to preserve their employment. Missing sports games and school events isn't fun. Someone can apply for a job anytime they need, but high school only happens once.

As more students join the workforce, the challenge lies in finding the balance. Between education and independence, the real lesson isn't in the classroom or on the clock, but learning how to navigate both.

## SLOHS Students and Teachers Show Down: Trimesters vs. Semesters.

REPORTER KUNAL PATEL

As the academic year draws to a close, San Luis Obispo High School stands at a crossroads, with teachers engaged in a dramatic debate over the merits of a trimester versus a semester schedule. For several years, SLOHS has adhered to a trimester system, one that, while functional, has also revealed some awkwardness in rhythm and pacing.

"I think other students would favor trimesters since that is all they have known, but I've liked semesters more because they offer a more relaxed pace," said sophomore Cade Yerty.

Many current SLOHS students express a strong preference for the trimester schedule. The quick turnover of classes and the opportunity to explore a broader range of electives contribute to this inclination.

"I'd say I prefer the trimester schedule that we have right now just because I like that we get to have new classes three times and you get to do more electives," said sophomore Casey Stephens.

The statistics from the recent faculty vote further illuminate these preferences. A total of 79 teachers participated, with 56 members, or 70.8%, casting their ballots in favor of continuing with the trimester schedule. Only 14 teachers, equivalent to 17.7%, opted for the semester block schedule, while 9 members, representing 11.3%, chose to reject both options and advocate for a fallback semester schedule of 5/6.

"As someone who has been at SLOHS for almost 4 years and is about to graduate, I do prefer the trimester, and it makes us have more classes and electives, such as ASB."

said senior Milo Nemetz

With such a rich tapestry of opinions and preferences woven into the fabric of SLOHS, the question looms: could the school consider transitioning to a semester system in the coming years? The interplay between tradition and innovation continues to shape the discussions around scheduling, promising an intriguing journey ahead for both students and faculty alike.



# Breaking Records or Rules? The Debate on Transgender Athletes

REPORTER SOPHIA CHAVEZ

Debates over fairness and inclusion in athletics continue to unfold nationwide, and schools such as San Luis Obispo High School have become focal points for discussions about transgender athletes. From locker rooms to starting lines, students, coaches, and administrators are navigating the complex questions about identity, competition, and equality.

On February 6, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) announced policy changes on transgender student athletes’ participation in college sports. Following President Donald Trump’s new order, only biologically female student-athletes are allowed to compete in women’s sports. This new policy ignites controversial conversations among our student body.

“I think transgender athletes should be on the team that aligns with their biological identity, unless they stopped having those hormones growing at a really young age,” said three-time varsity athlete and freshman Hazel Williams.

In a recent poll with the New York Times, 79 percent said that biological males identifying as women shouldn’t be allowed to participate in women’s sports. Many argue that transgender women have an athletic advantage over biological women, citing biological differences in strength, speed, and body composition.

“I think that [transgender athletes] are fine. They can do what they want as long as they don’t dominate others,” said freshman Track and Field athlete Kaia Lynch.

Lynch’s comment reflects a common concern among some student-athletes: that transgender competitors may have an unfair advantage in certain sports.

One widely publicized case is Lia Thomas, a transgender woman who competed at the collegiate level and sparked national debate after winning a D1 championship.

“I think that transgender athletes should compete on teams that connect with their gender identity because it’s important for them to feel comfortable with their coaches and that they feel accepted in their team,” said freshman soccer player Nyla Huebler.

Huebler emphasises the need for inclusivity and emotional well-being, especially during a time when transgender rights are facing increasing legal and political challenges. The fight for transgender rights is far from over, with many of Trump’s new policies restricting gender affirming medical care, many in the LGBTQ+ community are feeling added pressure.

“I have had a few conversations with students. Most have been welcomed on sports teams, or at least welcomed to try out, even if they did not make the team. Parents are sometimes faced with tough decisions, and I have been able to talk to them about these decisions. There is no one general response,” said SLOHS athletic director Adam Basch.

Basch helps pull back the curtain on our school’s policy, emphasizing the complex conversation surrounding these athletes.



**Scales of justice weighing the logo of the National Collegiate Athletics Association on the left against the transgender flag on the right. Graphic courtesy of freshman Sophia Chaves.**

“Anything is possible in our current political landscape. I have not heard much talk at Athletic Director meetings or CIF meetings about changing current policies. Any students or parents who are concerned or curious should feel free to contact me directly,” continued Basch.

SLOHS’ policies aren’t concrete, and neither are the current laws set around transgender individuals, but in our student body, we need to uphold behaviors and ideologies that include and protect everyone, ensuring that our campus feels like a safe space.

In a world where identity and fairness collide on the playing field, the question isn’t who gets to compete, but how we define inclusion, and who decides it.

Sources: *Static01.nyt.com*, *Ncaa.org*

# The Cal Poly Swim and Dive Team Faces Cuts, and Athletes Feel the Impact

REPORTER KANDON SULLIVAN

Many students at San Luis Obispo High School in the swim community are furious at the new decision made by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The new decision has cut the Cal Poly swim and dive program completely.

The decision to cut this program was made on March 7. Although athletes currently enrolled at Cal Poly scholarships will still be honored, student athletes are still devastated and trying to find alternative options.

“When you sign to swim at a college, you have to cut all communication with other colleges, so I turned down other schools and let go of other offers to commit to Cal Poly. I’m not going back to any of those other schools, and I’m just gonna go back to Cal Poly and swim on the club team,” said SLOHS senior swimmer (committed to Cal Poly for swim) Caterina Poletti.

This new decision made by the NCAA hasn’t only affected college athletes and Cal Poly swim and divers, but also swim and dive commits and high school students. This includes students at SLOHS, whether or not they wanted to go to Cal Poly for swim and dive, or if they were already committed, like Poletti.

“I had considered [swimming at Cal Poly] before the cuts. I’ve seen the pool before, and it’s very nice, and I thought it would be fun to swim there,” said varsity freshman Sylvia Flushman.

Student Swim and Divers at SLOHS have

considered staying in SLO and swimming at Cal Poly before these cuts were introduced. Although some students may be devastated. There is potential for the program to come back. The petition was made on March 10 to save the program and already has almost twenty thousand signatures.

“I feel like they shouldn’t have cut the program, and that it’s violating some of the principles that the NCAA has always stood for,” said varsity sophomore Logan Woods.

People, students, and athletes aren’t just upset but devastated about the new NCAA cuts. This cut happened because Cal Poly did not acquire enough money to pay for the program, more likely known as “budget cuts.”

“Although I was excited to swim at Cal Poly, I’m still pretty devastated by everything that has happened. It definitely is a little pressure off of me not having to worry about going into another year at swim and I probably won’t swim as much over summer and overall has released a lot of pressure, but it’s also hard to stay motivated when you know the next four years of my life aren’t gonna be spent in the pool,” said Poletti.

Overall, student athletes are frustrated with these new decisions. Although there CAN be a change, there most likely won’t be as the team will have to fundraise 25 million dollars to save the program. Will this team be forever cut, or will a miracle happen to save these swimmers and divers?

Sources: *Espn.com*, *Ksby.com*

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# How Much Sleep Do SLOHS Students Get?

REPORTER SAM VALERY

Teenagers, especially those at San Luis Obispo High School, need eight to ten hours of sleep per night. Younger teenagers may need closer to 11 hours. Older teenagers may require slightly less sleep, around eight to nine hours. Studies have shown that most adolescents only get about 6.5 to 7.5 hours of sleep per night, and some get less.

“I only catch about four exhilarating hours of sleep each night—from midnight to four in the morning,” said senior Nolan Evers.

Achieving eight hours of sleep is crucial for overall health and well-being. Sufficient rest is essential for the body and mind to recover and rejuvenate, influencing various aspects such as the immune system, metabolism, mood, and cognitive function. Prioritizing restful sleep can lead to enhanced performance and improved quality of life.

“What I think I can do to get better sleep is not be on my phone too long and maybe clear my mind before going to sleep,” said senior Lily Henry.

Studies have shown that sleep deficiency changes activity in some brain parts. If you’re sleep deficient, you may have trouble making decisions, solving problems, controlling your emotions, behavior, and coping with change. Sleep deficiency has also been linked to depression, suicide, and risk-taking behavior.

If you don’t get enough sleep, you might have trouble learning, focusing, and reacting. Also, you might find it hard to judge other people’s emotions and reactions. Sleep deficiency can also make you feel frustrated, cranky, or worried in social situations. The symptoms of sleep deficiency may differ between children and adults.

“I typically receive approximately seven hours of sleep each night,” freshman Charles Rocco Depaola.

The cumulative effects of sleep loss and sleep disorders have been associated with a wide range of deleterious health consequences, including an increased risk of hypertension, diabetes, obesity, depression, heart attack, and stroke.



**Some San Luis Obispo High School Students dozing off in class. Photo illustration courtesy of senior Sam Valery.**

Three symptoms of not getting enough sleep are changes in the way you feel, feeling fatigued or lethargic throughout the day, and yawning frequently. Feeling irritable. Change in mood, including feeling depressed, anxious, stressed, paranoid, or experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Source: *Kidshealth.org*

# SLOHS Swim & Dive: A Look at the Season so Far



**The SLOHS pool deck is at rest after vigorous work being put in by athletes. Photo courtesy of sophomore Oliver Nemetz.**

REPORTER JOE DIBIASE

The San Luis Obispo High School Swim & Dive team is showcasing their hard work as they make significant strides this season. The athletes’ dedication, evidenced by their consistent attendance at practices, has created a strong foundation for success.

The rigorous amounts of time spent in the pool perfecting dives and striving to make challenging intervals are paying off with impressive results and contributing to many meet victories for the Tigers.

“Varsity athletes make big-time commitments to the team. We participate in two morning practices every week as well as five afternoon practices. The practices are always hard but super rewarding,” said senior Isabella Irion

As shared, hard work has paid off for the athletes striving for better results in the water. Each practice has the chance for major improvement. Bonding and encouraging everyone on the team can be just what someone might need to boost their confidence.

“We just finished our last dual meet and are preparing for League, which means one final swim meet filled with hard races. Just remember, swimming isn’t about your final meet times, it’s about looking back at the start of the season and seeing how far you’ve come,” said JV Boys Swim

coach Janeil Nance.

The pressure is on the Tigers’ shoulders the entire season, especially during League Championships, and when we are up against many other schools for our final races. The effort and growth from the athletes is what is most important, and seeing impressive results is what is most important.

“It is an amazing environment; everyone is so supportive and kind,” said freshman Amira Esty.

Team spirit and making sure everyone on the team is hyped for the sport are just as important as performing your best. Thoughts can even be the breaking point between a win and a loss. Keeping a strong mental health as an athlete can have numerous benefits, like stress reduction, improved mood, enhanced concentration, and increased self-esteem levels.

The upcoming CIF Sectionals (May 7-10) and CIF State (May 15-17) tournaments will be an awesome opportunity for the fastest swimmers on the team to showcase their talent and the hard work they have been putting in for the last two months. And always remember to just keep swimming, Tigers!

Sources: *Activenorfolk.org*, *Health.ucdavis.edu*

# SLOHS Athletes are Preparing for Spring CIF

REPORTER KUNAL PATEL

San Luis Obispo High School Spring CIF teams are about to start, but how confident are our athletes, and what are their teams’ chances of winning their CIF title? CIF is something that these athletes work for the whole year, and this is basically the playoffs for all California high schools.

*Expressions* asked many athletes about how they thought they were going to do in CIF, and players gave an array of responses.

“I think if we perform to the level we can, we will do good, and our team has a good chance of giving them the business,” said sophomore Trey Walter.

Lately, SLOHS Track and Field has been doing great. In 2022 and 2023, our boys and girls track team secured the D2 CIF Championship.

However, Track and Field isn’t the only sport that is preparing for the playoffs. The prominent Varsity Baseball team here at SLOHS has been putting in the work during their season as well.

“I believe that we are gonna be very good for our CIF run. I think we have good pitching, defense, and our offense,” said sophomore Forrest Avrett.

As of April 14, the SLOHS Varsity Baseball team is going strong in league with a record of 6-2 and with their regular season record 8-7. The Tigers will need to lock in for their upco-

ming games to have good momentum going into the playoffs.

Another sport that SLOHS has been quite successful in is Swim and Dive. They have their sectionals for CIF on May 7 and are looking forward to doing great.

“Even though I got injured during the season, I think our swim team will be able to do well in the playoffs. Some of our kids are really good at their respective events, so I think we could go far,” said junior swimmer Kinan Issa.

Whether you are a sports fan or just a Tigers fan, make sure you go support our teams in their CIF games. These games will start to take place on the week of May 16.



# Meditating Your Way To Academic Success

REPORTER ATHENA STERIOS

At San Luis Obispo High School, students are actively pushing themselves to academic greatness while maintaining mental balance. With increasing demands of homework, extracurriculars, and social activities, students turn to techniques that help center themselves and find stability in their mental health.

As more students try to prioritize their academics, the stress of conforming to student standards can be overwhelming. They turn to integrate mindfulness into their daily routines to help balance all aspects of student life.

“Being outside in nature and exercising helps me relieve added stress from school,” said senior Ariel Gatti.

Several SLOHS students use mindfulness as a strategy to stay grounded and stabilize mental health.

“When I practice my version of mindfulness, I notice more success in my academic life and improved focus in class,” said senior Riley Passanisi.

The SLOHS wellness center has taken major steps to support students’ mental

health, helping them to reach mental and academic greatness. It is a quiet, welcoming, and safe space on campus for students to regroup, refocus, and reflect.

Student support counselor Amanda Greenfield says the difference between before and after students enter the wellness center is significant.

“Students are better able to regulate their emotions after they leave. They come in feeling distraught and go back to class focused and more prepared for the day,” said Greenfield.



*Find your center. Graphic courtesy of junior Athena Sterios.*

Whether it’s taking a few breaths, going out in nature, or just relaxing in a calm space to decompress, students practicing their version of mindfulness and staying in touch with their spirituality will exceed in all aspects of daily life.

Spirituality in education is an important tool for students to use. Students who practice spirituality exceed academically, while also maintaining a healthy mental state during all activities.

Mindfulness, meditation, and spiritual

practices, in whatever form, are becoming key factors in how students approach their education and life balance. Students are learning to pause and breathe in the face of due dates, college applications, and packed schedules.

It is clear that SLOHS priorities go beyond academics. By looking out for students’ mental health, success isn’t just about what you achieve, but about how you take care of yourself along the way.

Sources: *NIH.gov*

# SLOHS Art in the Making: Realism vs. Abstract



*Left to right, photo courtesy of Megan Elzer next to “Non-Objective I” by Roy Lichtenstein. Art courtesy of junior Madeline Bessems.*

FEATURE EDITOR MEGAN ELZER

San Luis Obispo High School has many art classes that many students take advantage of to gain greater access to an artistic education and career. These classes cover a wide variety of artistic styles and techniques. Artists who start young often mix realism and abstract ideas to develop their style, which is essential if they want to stand out in the industry.

“Over the years, I started to fall in love with light and color; artists like Monet inspired my new view on art. I began to create art based on realism- heavily inspired by emphasizing color and a stylistic approach to proportions,” said junior Madeline Bessems.

It’s not uncommon for artists to lean towards realism, as observing your surroundings and learning from real life is a proven strategy. Realism originated in the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1848, but is often thought to be older due to its roots in classical art, and was made to be a rejection of Romanticism. Framing art in a realistic approach instead of a romanticized one, as the French monarchy supported, allowed artists to humanize themselves and their art.

Whenever I see something that inspires me, like on a trip or a hike, I’ll draw it then color it at home. It’s why I think realists have a more prominent role due to realism being more defined,” said freshman Yazmin Sklar.

Abstract art, on the other hand, originated in the early 20th century and contains different art movements instead of one singular movement. Before abstract art, art was dominated by the logic of perspective and the need to reproduce an illusion of visible reality, but due to the vast changes in the fundamentals of science and philosophy, this created the need for artists to depart from reality in their art.

“Abstract art is a lot newer and more subjective, so I don’t think it is as prominent in our society today, although it is still an integral part of the art world,” said senior Amaya Jayakody.

However, abstract art is still new to the art world, and while it is prominent for its branching out, it’s safe to say that realism art is more popular than abstract art, due to being easier to comprehend to become a better artist at SLOHS.



# ULTRAKILL is “Layers” of Indie Excitement



Go play some ULTRAKILL. Photo courtesy of junior Julien Sheetz

REPORTER JULIEN SHEETZ

Some people argue that indie games are the saviors of the gaming industry. For the most part, people will say that this is due to the uniqueness and creativity these developers bring to the table, and many students of San Luis Obispo High School can agree that ULTRAKILL is one of the most unique indie games out right now.

In ULTRAKILL, you play as V1, a small and agile robot created for the sole purpose of being able to destroy anything in its path amidst a brutal war happening within the nine layers of hell. Though being the player’s character, V1 is not the main character. The main character is Gabriel, an angel whose main goal is to kill you as he believes it would align with “God’s will,” whom you fight two (soon to be three) times throughout the game.

“I love ULTRAKILL, the amount of techniques and combos you can do allows you to create your playstyle. [It] sets itself apart by taking a unique approach to combat, combining Quake’s fast-paced FPS gameplay with Devil May Cry’s style meter to create a truly unique game,” said senior Amy Funk.

ULTRAKILL was created by Arsi Patala, also commonly known as his online persona, “Hakita”. Development on the game began in early 2018, a demo was released in mid-2019, but it didn’t make an official release

until September 3, 2020. The game was set as “early access” on Steam and to this day is still receiving updates.

“My favorite part of the game is both of the Gabriel fights because they both have really good music to accompany them. The graphics aren’t the greatest, and it looks like an old PS2 game, but the music and gameplay make up for it,” said junior Brandon Espinosa.

The majority of people who play this game have a very good experience, which isn’t surprising considering that when looking at the whopping 142,000+ reviews on the Steam page, nearly all of them are overwhelmingly positive.

“I think it’s an amazing game. Fantastic music, in-depth lore, and a unique style. I love it. I adore the play style and having to work around with your arsenal as it changes constantly, and it’s high energy, so it makes for a great stress relief,” said senior Oliver Lyons.

In conclusion, nearly everyone who has played ULTRAKILL left with a good experience. The game, while being unfinished, continues to interest and inspire gamers around the world who are looking for a decent indie game to pass the time, so if you find yourself in this situation, give ULTRAKILL a shot; you won’t be disappointed.

Sources: *Steampowered.com*

# Beyoncé Rode Her Way to Grammy Victory, Chris Stapleton’s Reign Comes to a Halt

REPORTER ATHENA STERIOS

In a surprising twist at the 2025 Grammy Awards, Beyoncé won Best Country Album and Album of the Year for her genre-bending release of “Cowboy Carter”. Her win ended the recent streak of country favorite Chris Stapleton, who had made a name in country music and had taken home the award in previous years. The moment sparked conversation among many listeners about music and genre boundaries.

“No one saw this coming,” said junior Paloma Peffly.

Peffly is an avid Chris Stapleton fan.

Beyoncé’s win sparked many questions about who gets to be considered a “country artist.” With “Cowboy Carter” conflicting with traditional country values, many critics started to reexamine the boundaries and expectations of the genre.

Beyoncé’s take on the genre has traditional country artists like Chris Stapleton argue that it’s a genre crossover. Stating that her album lacked the grit and soul of country music.

“It felt more like a Beyoncé experiment than a tribute to the genre,” says junior Sienna Sell.

Although some critics celebrate the win as a new take on country music and a breath of fresh air in the industry. Conversations about race, genre, and modern-day country music are being circulated through media.

According to The New York Times, Beyoncé’s album is not only exploring the boundaries of



Chris Stapleton’s and Beyoncé. Photo courtesy of junior Athena Sterios.

country music but openly testing the limits of the genre itself. One would assume that the fan-favorite artist and one of the most commercially successful pop stars of the 21st century would receive unwavering support from fans and critics. But in response, “Cowboy Carter” has been seen as remarkably unremarkable.

Described as “mediocre” and “not worth the listen,” critics say that there isn’t much special about this new take on country music. A long listen, with 27 tracks and a runtime of an hour and 18 minutes, this album falls short of fan expectations.

“The album was underwhelming and doesn’t meet country standards,” says a regular Beyoncé enthusiast and senior Cate Tucker.

Overplayed as a trending TikTok sound, polluting For You Pages, and quickly becoming known as songs that loop endlessly in your brain, the “Cowboy Carter” album walks the line between a cultural reset and an offensive take on country music.

Responding to the media’s questions and criticism of her album, Beyoncé herself said, “This ain’t a Country album. This is a ‘Beyoncé’ album.”

A Beyoncé fan or a country music supporter, either way, a Grammy Award was unexpected. Wavering in reviews, “Cowboy Carter” succeeded in making people listen.

Sources: *Nytimes.com*



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