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UHS Academic Decathlon Secures First-Ever Regional Competition Win

44,289.5 point score enough to see team through to state-wide competition



The Academic Decathlon Team celebrated the program's first win at the county-level competition on the front lawn outside the Administration building, abiding by coronavirus guidelines.

By
MOHIT KOSURU
Staff Writer

UHS students won their first Orange County Academic Decathlon, after 12 to 13 years of involvement, automatically qualifying them for the state competition.

The topic for this year was "The

Cold War." The team consisted of nine players, including seniors **Elaine Chao, Adi Krishnamoorthy, Ozhan Zarifi,** and juniors **Kiana Agahi, Vansh Goel, Grace Lee, Donya Sharafkhanian, Arwen Wang,** and **Sophia Wang.**

Teacher advisor **Mr. Chris Esposito** credits their success to their teamwork and balanced preparation.

"The team finally mastered the

art of teamwork and realized that all nine [team members] needed to know the information and practice their performances, so they made goals based on that," Esposito said. "They motivated and helped each other, focusing on their strengths and weaknesses to develop a teamwork support system."

This year, students had to work together online, which dif-

fered from last year where they were able to meet in-person and hold frequent meetings.

"Normally teams meet in-person dozens of times throughout the semester in the library, my room, parks, coffee shops and houses to study and prepare," Esposito said. "This year it all had to be done via Zoom."

The team, however, took full advantage of their time at home, and began preparing for the competition earlier.

"We started to prepare this summer and every week we would have a subject commissioner give a lecture about the topic [and we would take] quizzes to determine the rankings on the team," said Wang, who is team captain.

Unlike previous years, all aspects of this competition were held fully online due to the pandemic. Wang said that they could not do different segments such as super quizzes and listening questions involving music selections.

"It was definitely harder to study together online, but we utilized various online platforms to connect such as Remind and Discord," Wang said. "The AcaDeca website for testing is extremely old so some of our members experienced a lot of difficulties during the competition."

Woodbridge High school, a fierce rival for many years, scored a close 2nd place after winning at regionals for four years straight.

Many team members were doubtful that they would win, due to Woodbridge's winning streak. The closest UHS has been to winning the Orange County Academic Decathlon was getting 2nd place in 2019. Last year, UHS placed 5th and did not qualify for state.

"We didn't really expect to win though since Woodbridge had beat us by 12,000 points last year, and won for three years straight before that," Krishnamoorthy said.

This year, UHS won by more than 580 points with a final score of 44,289.5.

The official awards ceremony was streamed online on January 17. There was an announcement during the meeting that emphasized UHS's first victory. Even though the team faced several hardships throughout the process, the team was honored to have been a part of this experience.

"The online competition experience was obviously a lot more different...but I think overall the experience in AcaDeca was extremely fun as we were able to bond as a team even on online platforms," Wang said.

2021-22 ASB Representatives Elected at COVID-Impacted Annual Election Convention

Candidates' campaigns affected by COVID restrictions, placing emphasis on online outreach

By
HEIDI JIN
Staff Writer

UHS elected Associated Student Body (ASB) positions were announced, following the 30th Annual Election Convention on Monday, March 15.

The elected ASB members for 2021-2022 are junior **Jean Meyer** for President, junior **Mila Nenadic** for Vice President, junior **Wyatt Mackellar** for Student Activities Coordinator (SAC), junior **Kody Alarcon** for Spirit and Rally Commissioner, junior **Quinlan Tobin** for Club's Commissioner, sophomore **Joshua Zhou** for Boys' Sports Liaison, and junior **Yade Cinar** for Girls' Sports Liaison.

This year's Election Convention was held on campus, but was conducted almost entirely virtu-

ally, a first in ASB history. While most candidates did not have any prior experience with an Election Convention, even those who did expressed how this year's virtual format brought its own challenges.

"My experience from running in past elections, especially with the modified election last year, definitely helped guide me this year," Meyer said. "Despite that, this election definitely had its challenges and was in a much different format than last year, when COVID was just beginning."

The social distancing restrictions brought on by the pandemic encouraged candidates to discover new ways to connect with their supporters, especially when they could not meet potential voters in-person.

"Campaigning was definitely a bit more difficult because you couldn't reach as many people as you could in a regular year because of the cohort system," Mackellar said. "So it pretty much was really heavily influenced on social media."

Due to social distancing and online learning, many candidates placed a strong emphasis on their virtual campaigns instead of solely focusing on the conventional in-person campaigns. This year was the first time that ASB enforced specific regulations on campaigns over social media.

"I would say that COVID has had some effect on my campaign," Nenadic said. "In the past social media has been a huge aspect of campaigning and this year especially. It was the key to running a successful campaign."

In an effort to provide additional platforms for candidates to promote themselves, ASB moved the previously in-person "Meet the Candidates" session to Zoom. The "Meet the Candidates" session, which took place after the election primaries, was held on Monday, March 8. The event allowed candidates to introduce themselves to Election Convention delegates with a short, informal speech.

"This year's elections for the elected seven went similar to how

it would in a normal year, but there were changes to events and dates in order to respect cohort and safety measures," Meyer said.

Since an in-person Election Convention was no longer possible due to school closures in the spring of 2020, the UHS ASB hosted an online, direct election with two rounds of final voting that was open to the entire student body.

This year, however, the Election Convention returned to being an indirect election. Depending on class size, each homeroom elected one to three delegates to attend the convention. ASB placed delegates into ten separate classrooms, with around ten delegates in each of the rooms. Delegates then watched the live broadcast of the Election Convention.

A number of candidates faced a close race at the Election Convention. Many students were enthusiastic about joining next year's ASB as elected representatives, and a significant number of them moved past the primaries. Among all elected ASB positions,

SAC was the most competitive.

"I think for SAC it was especially stressful because it was the position that the most people ran for, and five people went to the Election Convention," Mackellar said. "We ended up going for five rounds at the Election Convention, which was really rare because most positions would have met a majority by then."

Overall, candidates felt that the experience, although not exactly like a typical year, was fruitful.

"My experience has been really fun," Nenadic said. "I thoroughly enjoyed the entire process, from hanging up posters to attending 'Meet the Candidates.'"

ASB will continue to modify the election process in response to any changes in the upcoming school year, but the general rules of the election will likely remain the same.

"We don't know what the schedule or calendar will look like for the coming school year, which will almost certainly affect the rules for next spring," Meyer said.

UHS Mock Trial Team Takes First Place at Orange County Finals

County final win over Valencia High School spells second victory for the program in five years



Mock Trial team members celebrated remotely over a group Zoom call, after defeating Valencia High School in the final round of the county championships.

COURTESY OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF CALIFORNIA

By
CHAITANYA KOTRA
Staff Writer

The UHS Mock Trial team placed first in Orange County, after defeating Valencia High School in the county finals round.

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This is the second time that the UHS Mock Trial team has won the county finals, the first time being in 2017.

The county championship took place on Thursday, February 25, against Valencia High School. The team competed in eight rounds from February 2 to 25 and were undefeated by the end of the county season. The competition was held by the Orange County Constitutional Rights Foundation virtually on Zoom in adherence with coronavirus safety guidelines.

Senior **Cheyenne Hwang**, the president of the Mock Trial team, described the excitement surrounding the championship round.

“The match was equally nerve-racking and exciting. The other team, Valencia High School, was

also impressive, but ultimately our team’s cohesion and overall strength won us the championships,” Hwang said. “Uni’s team hasn’t won [county] since I was a freshman 3 years ago, so it was nice to win back the title in my final year.”

Sophomore **Ryan Alavi**, playing a witness on the team, agreed that it was an exciting competition, and recalled the many hours of practice that the team as a whole had invested in the months before.

“Winning was the best feeling ever because all our hard work paid off,” Alavi said. “Our hours of practice all came together and it was amazing.”

Junior **Scott Burke**, one of the prosecution attorneys, described the gratification that came from winning the final round

against Valencia High School.

“The match was a close one; we faced Valencia who had beaten several hard-hitting teams to make it to the championship round,” Burke said. “With victory came the satisfaction that the many hours spent practicing had paid off.”

Junior **Simona Forster** expressed how much she enjoyed being part of the team, describing their growth and success.

“I have been on the team since my freshman year, and it’s been amazing to see how our team has learned and grown so much over the past few years,” Forster said. “Lots of practice and feedback from our awesome attorney coaches and alumni coaches was definitely the key to our victory. We have been practicing every week since the summer.”

On the days they were competing, the team spent hours on Zoom preparing, competing, and reflecting on the trial.

“Trial days were long—on Tuesdays and Thursdays in February we got on a pre-competition call at 3:30, trial started at 5, and then we were on a debrief call until 9 PM some nights,” Forster said.

The amount of time and effort is something that the team collectively believes was a major contributor to their victory at the championship. As restrictive as this year’s circumstances may have been, the new virtual format of the Mock Trial team’s practices and meetings allowed for them to meet more frequently and consistently, especially with the postponement of the competition by several months.

“With our competition happening in February, rather than its

usual time in the fall, our team had much more time to practice than we would during a normal season,” Burke said. “Additionally, with the implementation of Zoom, we were able to schedule meetings with team members and coaches more frequently and conveniently, adding to our ability to prepare as a team. I am sure the extra time we put into practicing this year contributed to our county victory.”

Sophomore **Karina Pandurangadu**, a prosecution attorney on the team, emphasized the importance of their confidence as a team, and how it ultimately contributed to their victory along with their many hours of practice.

“The match was, above all, fun. There were some questionable calls but we were confident throughout the trial,” Pandurangadu said. “The victory felt like all the hard work we had put in since the summer had finally paid off. We’ve put in hours of work every week since July, the practice on both the team level and individual level helped us prepare for unpredictable situations and allowed us to win major arguments.”

Hwang also believed that the overall support and cooperation amongst the team played a major part in their victory. “What won us our victory was all of the practice and preparation we had been putting in all year, in addition to the collaborative and supportive environment we had on the team,” Hwang said.

As the county champions, the Uni Mock Trial team represented Orange County at the California Mock Trial State Championship, held on Zoom from March 18-21, but did not place in the top eight teams.

Teachers Eligible for COVID-19 Vaccine

Some UHS teachers excited at the prospect of upcoming vaccinations



COURTESY OF SHUTTERSTOCK

Vaccination sites have become specially available for teachers, school staff and childcare workers around Orange County in response to the policy development.

By
JULIET CURTIS
Staff Writer

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently declared all Pre-K-12 staff members nationwide eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination as of March 2nd. Such staff members and childcare workers were additionally given special priority by pharmacies within the CDC’s Federal Retail Pharmacy Program during the month of March. With this new teacher

eligibility also came the contrast in opinions between those who are eager for vaccinations and those who have vaccine hesitancy, though many UHS staff members are part of the former.

“Actually, no, I did not have any hesitations about receiving the vaccine,” English teacher **Mr. James Garcia** said. “I have been so excited to see this pandemic come to an end that I was nothing but ecstatic to be able to get the vaccine.”

The addition of teachers as a group eligible for the vaccine has put further strain on the already high demand for vaccina-

tions. In response, many new pop-up vaccination locations have been created specifically for teachers in order to pursue their prioritization, and the OC Department of Education has even partnered with school districts to establish yet another vaccination site for teachers.

“Even though we are allowed [vaccinations], it has been a challenge to get an appointment... with the demand being high and the supply low,” Vice Principal **Mr. Matthew Pate** said.

While vaccine eligibility is the cause of many teachers’ celebrations, obtaining vaccinations has been long-awaited by the majority of UHS teachers since the start of the school year.

“It would have been awesome to have the vaccine before returning back to work in person, and I certainly considered IVA because of the absence of a vaccine and testing protocols but decided against it,” Mr. Garcia said. “The existence of an effective vaccine when we started in-person learning would have drastically changed the makeup and look of the in per-

son staffing and student body.”

While head UHS staff members are very excited and encouraged by this new vaccine eligibility, vaccinations are not required for teachers to continue working, nor are schools’ executive administrations across the country managing teacher vaccinations. Rather, the decision of whether or not to get vaccinated remains up to the teachers themselves.

“[UHS Administration] does not keep track of which teachers get a vaccination...but the district has helped facilitate [vaccine management] through an app called Othena, if one wants to use that app,” Mr. Pate said.

The lack of a tracking system for teacher vaccinations and the lack of their requirement for the reopening of schools has frustrated Americans and sparked health concerns. However, vaccinations ultimately still remain optional and remain teachers’ own responsibilities.

“The school obviously wants all the teachers to be safe,” school board member **Cyril Yu** said. “But at the end of the day, vaccinations are entirely up to the teachers.”

Behind the Business: Vaccines

Business is business as always, but should that really be the case with the COVID-19 vaccine?

By **EVAN CHOE**
Staff Writer

Some might still remember when the novel “coronavirus” was the popular subject of jokes and TikTok videos, a disease no one knew or really cared about in America. Now, it has claimed the lives of over half a million U.S. citizens, and we have only recently seen a decline in case numbers after a peak in January. On March 11, 2021, we “celebrated” the official anniversary of COVID-19’s status as a global pandemic. All of the struggles and adversity that this nation and the world have had to overcome has been immense - but we already know that. What many actually want to know now is not how far we have come, but how much farther we need to go.

First and foremost, we can examine our own state of California. Currently, the state has just started Phase 1C, the third component of the first vaccine phase. This first phase consists of Phase 1A, Phase 1B, and now Phase 1C. After this, California will move on to the second phase, one that has yet to be fully detailed. We have already vaccinated the majority of our healthcare workers in Phase 1A earlier this year and have also distributed vaccinations to most in Phase 1B, which primarily focused on the elderly (age 65 and older), educators, emergency workers, and those in the food and agriculture sectors. Additionally, we have just started Phase 1C, which addresses anyone between ages 16 and 64 with underlying health conditions. At a later determined date, Phase 1C will move towards vaccinating those over the age of 50 and workers in other sectors that are more prone to COVID-19 transmission.

It is a promising sign that California has nearly completed the first phase. However, the second phase is expected to be the largest and most time-consuming part of the process, given that it will deal with anyone up to the age of 64 without any underlying health conditions - the majority of people living in California. This second phase will be conducted on an age-based priority system that has yet to be truly detailed in full.

Now that all the phases have been outlined, it is important to examine local, statewide, and national statistics.

Statistics offer scientific clarity and phases simplify complex production and distribution processes into digestible steps. However, medical experts have also offered their opinions on how things are going currently, and more importantly, what we will look like several months from now. During a New York Times interview, Dr. Anthony Fauci, Chief Medical Advisor to the President, stated in regards to herd immunity (the reduced chance of spread to non-vaccinated individuals and individuals in general as a result of overall vaccination numbers), “I think the real range is somewhere between 70 to 90 percent [vaccinated].” He also addressed when high school students would most likely be vaccinated, stating, “we anticipate data on high school-aged individuals, namely individuals 12 to 17 years old, by the beginning of fall.” He later added that elementary school students



The Pfizer Vaccine One of the companies producing the COVID-19 vaccine is Pfizer, the world’s second largest pharmaceutical company.

are expected to be vaccinated at a much later date, likely following high schoolers in 2022.

Many have felt that not enough is being done to distribute vaccinations and that even when administered, the process has often been chaotic and disorganized. According to an opinion poll conducted by Monmouth University, 22% of participating individuals are somewhat dissatisfied with the rollout of vaccines, and 13% are very dissatisfied. Harvard Research Fellow Stephen Kissler stated that, “rapid COVID-19 tests could help life return to normal in the U.S. but that regulatory issues are getting in the way. Most rapid tests are only available with a prescription.” It seems like the age-old impediment of bureaucracy has arisen once again, as vaccine distribution rates have been slowed by the need for extensive paperwork, vaccination financial discussions, and government-authorized green lights. However, it is worth acknowledging that vaccine distribution rates have far exceeded the original expectations laid out by Operation Warp Speed, which was conceptualized in March of 2020. It was originally estimated that it would take 10 years to vaccinate every individual in the US. Now, it might only take a fifth of that time.

Additionally, much of the COVID-19 research and progress has been left in the hands of private corporations who are acting more out of personal interest or financial gain than humanitarianism. Despite the climbing death toll of the virus, Pfizer executives have recently stressed how much more lucrative this “business model” could get. Pfizer CFO Frank D’Amelio has stated, as cited by The Intercept, “we think as this shifts from epidemic to endemic, we think there’s [financial] opportunity here for us,” as well as stating how the company could, “take advantage of opportunities from a demand and pricing perspective.” These statements were made during a Barclays Global Healthcare Conference over Zoom as an assurance to investors that Pfizer’s foreseeable future is one of exponential profit. Whether one sees this as classic American capitalism at play or rather a sickening marginalization of human life statistics in favor of monetary gain is up to the reader. However it is slightly disturbing how much disregard such statements seem to have for the American compared to the American dollar. Business is business as always, but should it really be business when providing

a nationwide health service that has the potential to save the lives of millions?

Johnson & Johnson and Moderna have also quietly assured behind-the-scenes that they plan to raise vaccine prices in the near future as well. Executives such as D’Amelio have voiced how a change in the medical environment could reap major rewards for pharmaceutical companies. Many experts are already discussing how COVID-19 could become a perennial issue similar to the flu. One might see how this could be constructed into a major business venture for vaccine producers who read indefinite endemic as unlimited financial gain.

Now, that is not to say that companies such as Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson should not be praised for their medical breakthroughs, but rather, Americans need to understand that Pfizer and other vaccine producers are not acting purely out of goodwill. It is remarkable how far this nation has come in terms of progress regarding COVID-19, and many of these same companies have suspended ordinary market pricing for vaccines in order to help ease the burden on overcoming the global pandemic. There might even be positives to draw from the mass corporatization of vaccines, as competition between these companies could push each other to produce more rapidly, research more intensively,

and maintain reasonable pricing in order to produce the optimal vaccine product that has the edge over other available ones. However, it might be important to note that it becomes somewhat unclear as to whether these companies are working tirelessly to aid the American people or working towards a future of price hiking until vaccines reach a point of unaffordability? The answer is most likely a bit of both, but that distinction has to be made first. Turning to the future, it is doubtful that these companies are looking to maintain a constant and reasonable price instead of seeking whatever kind of upward financial projection they can make possible.

“Business is business as always, but should it really be business when providing a nationwide health service that has the potential to save millions of lives?”

One main point as to the messiness or moral ambiguity to the tackling of the global pandemic is tied to various anti-vaccine groups’ hesitation about possible side effects. In a recent poll conducted by Kaiser, 68% of respondents said that the vaccine’s effects are unknown, 59% worry about serious side effects, 55% believe the vaccines are not as safe as they are said to be, and 31% think they might get COVID-19 from the actual vaccine. These numbers are alarming and could undermine the progress being made in vaccine distribution. False rumors, trumped-up claims, and conspiracy theories regarding the vaccine have made their rounds across the internet, conversations, and protests around the nation.

Two main forms of lies have been consistently spread amongst the anti-vaccine community, those being false linkages between someone receiving a vaccine and their soon untimely death and side-effect rumors such as the vaccine’s potential to cause infertility, a classic in the anti-vax handbook. One doctor refuting such claims,

Paul Offit, dryly remarked “[An individual] gets the vaccine. Two weeks later he dies of a stroke. Why? Because he was in his late 80s, and people in their late 80s can die of strokes. The vaccine doesn’t make you immortal.” It should be clear at this point that the vaccine does not cause infertility, nor is linkable to premature death, nor trauma or any concoction of the above. Health officials have made it clear that there have been zero common side effects that have been recorded amongst the millions of individuals who received a shot, save a few, incredibly rare cases of anaphylactic shock, as cited by WebMD. However, many have claimed to have experienced short-term side effects like fatigue. Americans should certainly not be unsure about whether or not to receive a vaccination, and surely 59% of them should not be concerned about potential side effects. Despite this, the anti-vaccine movement marches forward today and tomorrow and likely for many years to come, sabotaging the work of healthcare officials, doctors, and vaccine distributors who work tirelessly to protect many individuals who do not even care enough to wear a mask for their own and others’ personal safety.

As such, the vaccine distribution process has at times been messy, financially incentivized, or undermined by the anti-vaccine community. There are many ways in which this virus has been perpetuated by viruses of other natures; of greed, of ignorance, of lies. Sometimes it is hard to be a patiently waiting American, a dutiful mask-wearer, an individual who trusts that these roadblocks and obstacles will wane over time as the vaccine prevails. However, the light at the end of the tunnel is approaching. We have looked back at a year of loss and of tragedy, but for the first time since the pandemic started, we can say that we can look forward to a future worth standing up for. That future seemed miles away only a few months ago, but now we have the key to the door, that key being widespread access to vaccination.

As of March 18, 2021	One shot	Fully Vaccinated	Total Population
Orange County	743,671 (23.0%)	408,443 (12.8%)	3.176 million
California	8.3 million (21.0%)	3.95 million (10.1%)	39.51 million
United States	70 million (21.3%)	37.4 million (11.4%)	328.2 million

Vaccine Numbers According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), COVID-19 in California, and the OC Health Care Agency. (Updated as of March 18, 2021)

The US Should Recognize Deaf History Month

Why understanding the influence of Deafness on American culture and society is important

By **JULIE SAKAMOTO**
Staff Writer

Throughout history, the U.S. government has dedicated certain holidays and commemorative months to celebrating the unique cultures and backgrounds of various ethnic and marginalized groups. These times serve not only to celebrate but also to educate others on the various groups' histories, and their contributions to American history. These are important times that help us better understand our own cultures and identities, as well as others. While there are hundreds of celebratory dates throughout the year, there are currently only 12 national observances that are officially recognized by the government.

One of those unrecognized, and largely ignored, observances is Deaf History Month, which is celebrated from March 13 through April 15. This commemorates the achievements of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and recognizes their contributions to American history, society, and culture. According to the National Association of the Deaf, Deaf History Month was created with three key moments throughout Deaf American history in mind: the Deaf President Now protest on March 13, 1988, the signing of the Gallaudet University charter by president Abraham Lincoln on April 8, 1864, and the establishment of the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut as the first permanent public school for the deaf on April 15, 1817.

Deaf History Month is celebrated throughout the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) community itself and is nationally acknowledged by the National Association of the Deaf. Various organizations have been pushing to have it recognized by the government. However, that has not happened yet.

The U.S. Congress should pass resolutions that officially recognize Deaf History Month and request the president to validate its importance. In addition, the hearing community must also recognize the Deaf with respect and acknowledge the differences between cultures, especially regarding the Deaf community.

Deafness and its Presence in Current Society

When you look up the word "deaf," chances are, you will find a classic definition pertaining to the physical "disability" of one's hearing. There is a misconception that deaf individuals cannot hear at all - however, there are actually many different forms of hearing loss. Along the hearing loss spectrum, the extent of an individual's disability could range from mild to profound. Some people are born deaf, while a majority of others become deaf at a later age.

The word "Deaf," with a capitalized D, describes people who culturally identify as Deaf and are typically actively engaged with the community. They often have a shared sign language, and shared social norms unique to them. People who are Deaf often take great pride in their Deaf identity. It is especially important to note that deafness is not viewed as an impairment, but rather a difference.

Deafness is a large part of American society. A study conducted by

Gallaudet University, America's leading liberal arts college just for Deaf Studies and Deaf Culture, showed that ASL was the third-most-frequent language to require a court interpreter. In addition, ASL was the fourth-largest monolingual population in America.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation, one of a few national surveys that regularly collects data from people with hearing loss or deafness, approximate that 1 in 20 Americans are currently deaf or hard of hearing. This means nearly ten million individuals are hard of hearing and close to one million are functionally deaf, a term used to describe someone who cannot hear at all, even when given assistance from technological devices.

At UHS, we have our Deaf community with Deaf students and teachers on campus. Our campus offers American Sign Language classes 1&2, open to all students who are interested in immersing themselves in the language. Local restaurants, libraries, and shops often host Deaf Nights and other activities to celebrate inclusivity.

Deaf History

To truly understand the importance of Deaf History Month, one must understand the background and history of the Deaf community.

History has not been very kind to the Deaf Community. Dating back to the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, he suggested that deaf people could not be educated, and that "those who are born deaf all become senseless and incapable of reason."

Essentially, Aristotle believed that being able to hear was the only way people could learn, making it impossible to educate deaf people. As a result, the deaf were often viewed "lesser" than humans. They could not legally hold property. They could not get married because society was afraid that deafness was a hereditary trait that could be passed to their children. They were often denied citizenship and even religious rights. Deafness was regarded as a shameful disability, and any form of signing was ostracized and discouraged. Aristotle's theory caught hold and was widely believed in for the next thousands of years worldwide.

Deaf perception started to change during Britain's settlement of the Mayflower. In 1620, the same year that Bonet was publishing the first book on sign language, the Mayflower landed at Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Among the many immigrants that hopped on ships bound for the New World was a group of settlers originally from Kent County England, who brought with them unique genes that cause hereditary deafness. The result was Martha's Vineyard Sign Language, one of the earliest forms of sign communication.

Martha's Vineyard is a historically significant location for the very first developments of sign language. Soon, Martha's Vineyard was home to the largest deaf population on the continent. These deaf islanders created one of the most highly developed signing systems in history. Everyone on Martha's Vineyard knew the signs and used them regularly to communicate with friends, family, and neighbors. Martha's Vineyard was one of the few communities in the world where deaf and hearing individuals were fully integrated in the mid-1700s.

Martha's Vineyard was an important step forward. This sparked interest within teachers and educators to become invested in deaf education. Specifically, it caught the attention of Thomas Gallaudet.

U.S. Deaf education of the 1800's was a period generally known as the heyday of manualism, a term used to support the use of Sign Language. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, along with French educator Laurent Clerc, established the American School for the Deaf in 1817, marking it one of the three dates for Deaf History Month. The second was the opening of Gallaudet University just a few years later. This was an exemplar of what deaf education could achieve in that period.

Despite these advancements, prejudice and discrimination persisted. There were major disagreements among the educators of deaf people. From these disputes, two groups emerged: the manualists and the oralists. Manualist Edward Miner Gallaudet supported the use of sign language in teaching students who were deaf, while Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone and an oralist, was a strong proponent of speaking, and teaching deaf individuals lip reading techniques.

In 1880, an international meeting of educators banned the use of sign language in the teaching of deaf children. Deaf teachers were excluded from their classrooms because it was believed deaf teachers were not competent. Bell and other hearing people strongly advocated for the suppression of sign language inside and outside of the classroom.

The oralist method had momentum in following years, where the number of deaf teachers declined and verbal methods were predominantly used in deaf classrooms. Oralists saw speech training as the best way to assimilate deaf people into modern American society. Deaf people were once again seen as imperfections in the public body.

Three years after the banning of sign language in public schools,



Deaf President Now! At Gallaudet University, there was a student-led protest to elect a Deaf individual to serve as president of the university.

Alexander Graham Bell, a prominent supporter of the oral method, believed that the so-called "deaf-mute variety of the human race" was a threat to society's progression. He strongly supported legislation to prevent deaf people from intermarrying in the United States. Although this was never instituted, many believed in his radical ideas regarding the assimilation of deaf individuals.

The last major event was Deaf President Now, a student-led protest held at Gallaudet University in 1988. It became a symbol of self-determination and empowerment for deaf people around the world. This was a unique time in which Gallaudet students, faculty, and the national deaf community united behind one goal. Together, they made history. This event marks the last date within Deaf History Month.

For 124 years, Gallaudet hadn't had a single hearing president reside over the university. When it came time to elect the new seventh president, people were rallying for a Deaf president. But despite their rallying and efforts to have a Deaf perresident, Zinzer, the only hearing candidate out of a pool of Deaf applicants, won.

Students began camping out in tents on the lawn of the president's home and wrote to Zinzer asking her to withdraw her candidacy. Zinzer ignored these messages, causing major backlash from protestors. Deaf advocacy groups made it clear that they wanted the next president of Gallaudet to be Deaf. These groups included the President's Council on Deafness (PCD), the National Association of the Deaf, the Gallaudet University Alumni Association, and some faculty groups. The Deaf President Now (DPN) supporters believed that the time had come for a deaf person to run the world's only university for deaf and hard of hearing students. Although Zinzer remained president, the results of this protest reverberated around the world.

DPN was remarkable not only for its clear sense of purpose, cohesiveness, speed, and depth of feeling, but also for its ability to remove the barriers and erase the lines that previously separated the Deaf and hearing communities. In addition, it raised the nation's consciousness of the rights and abilities of deaf and hard of hearing people.

Some of the positive impacts can be seen today. Deaf characters are (for the most part) played by deaf actors. Some of the most known being Millicent Simmonds,

who played a deaf teen in "A Quiet Place" and Russell Harvard, who played a deaf wrestler in "The Hammer". Deaf characters show up regularly on television and film. Hearing parents are often encouraged to use sign language with their hearing babies to stimulate early language and communication development.

So, What Now?

Each of these seminal events represents significant advancements for deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States. The establishment of the American School for the Deaf was the beginning of a long proud tradition of schools for the deaf in this country, which continues to this day. Preservation of these schools is of greatest importance to the community, as Gallaudet University is a central icon, representing the only university in the world that is solely for deaf and hard of hearing students. March 13 represents the day that the deaf community seized its fate during the Gallaudet University "Deaf President Now" movement when Gallaudet selected its first Deaf president.

The Deaf Community faced hundreds of years of oppression and frustration. They were mistreated, misunderstood, ignored, and underestimated throughout history. At some point, enough was enough. They realize that in order for something to change, they need to take matters into their own hands.

It is important to note that the Deaf community is a unique group. They have their own culture, language, tradition, and history. The Deaf community does not view their hearing loss as a disability, but instead, they take pride in it. The Deaf is especially large compared to other minority groups, yet they are often very underrepresented.

Like many other civil rights movements, the Deaf community's rich history has proved to be an inspiring journey. The United States government must recognize and celebrate Deaf History Month. Their reforms caught the eye of hundreds of reformers. International recognition of DPN at Gallaudet University sparked inspiration for the deaf in other countries. Ultimately, Deaf history must be remembered and recognized for its important societal contributions.



American Sign Language One of the most popular languages in the world, American Sign Language (ASL) is a cornerstone of Deaf culture.

A Guide to Scholarships

How students can earn money

By
YASNA RAHMANI
Staff Writer

Higher education is a focal point for the majority of the UHS student body, many of whom envision a future with fulfilling jobs and enriching salaries. However, the cost of higher education and educational programs has become increasingly steep. According to a 2019 report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the average cost of college tuition for a four-year public school has increased by 37% since 2008. Additionally, higher education also requires book fees, application fees, and housing costs that could result in crushing debt

“Because a college education can be incredibly expensive, the application process for these scholarships can be competitive.”

after a student’s formal education is over. These numbers can often make college or educational programs seem financially menacing. Luckily, there are many ways students can tackle financial obstacles, especially with the resources provided right here on the UHS campus.

Many institutions award financial aid to students through scholarships or grants. On campus, there is a committee composed of UHS teachers, counselors, and administrators dedicated to selecting qualified students for community scholarships

and awards based on merit, extracurricular involvement, and volunteer work. As these scholarships require nominations or recommendations by UHS staff, a good start for students who want to receive scholarships is communicating and getting to know their teachers and staff.

Another way students can find scholarship opportunities that fit their qualifications is by exploring the UHS school website. There is a page dedicated to different institutions that offer scholarships for a multitude of reasons.

“The website sometimes has links to Google Forms you can fill out to apply, which I found makes it easier,” junior **Kiera Nguyen** said. “They also give descriptions of each one, and how much money it offers, it’s nice to have the information all in one place.”

Many scholarships offer financial aid to students of minority groups or students in challenging living situations. Some of these scholarships that are popular and worth looking into for those who qualify include: Out to Innovate Scholarships for LGBTQ Students in STEM, The Ron Brown scholarship (for students of African heritage), the Jackie Robinson scholarship (for all racial/ethnic minority students), and the Haz La U program (for students of Hispanic origin). Other scholarships are based on students’ interests and merit in different subjects such as STEM, engineering, or law. The UHS website provides a range of opportunities like these to take advantage of. Additionally, there are many other resources with large databases of scholarships that



COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Scholarship Money UHS offers many scholarship opportunities based on merit, extracurriculars, or volunteer work.

that can help students find financial aid programs that are a good fit for them.

“Some of the sites that I have found helpful are Unigo and Peterson’s,” junior **Jana Salehi** said. “There are loads of websites, but I feel like these ones were the most simple to work with.”

Peterson’s and Unigo are both websites that offer general help for high school students, such as information on colleges, student loans, test preparation, and scholarships.

“The best advice I could give would be to get some background knowledge on the place giving the scholarship”

They have search engines that narrow down scholarship opportunities based on location, area of interest, or the type of financial aid, and they provide students with the tools they need to successfully acquire these scholarships. These sites also have surveys that help customize students’ search results or homepage feed to best match their qualifications and interests.

Another site that has extensive information about college scholarships is Chegg. This site provides similar tools to Peterson’s and Unigo, but it sets itself apart by providing a weekly feature that discloses the “Top scholarship picks this week,” spotlighting new opportunities students may be interested in before it is too late to apply. These websites offer all scholarship information for free.

“The process of finding and applying for scholarships can often feel overwhelming, but the tools available to students from both UHS and other online resources can make the process less daunting and more attainable to all students.”

Because a college education can be incredibly expensive, the application process for these scholarships can be competitive. Nonetheless, there are several ways students can increase their chances of being awarded financial aid. One way is to find a unique take on the given prompts, since most scholarships require some sort of essay or written statement as part of the application. Students should consider that these institutions are reading thousands of applications, and emphasizing what makes them different can make them more memorable to the readers.

“The best advice I could give would be to get some background knowledge on the place giving the scholarship,” junior **Nadia Jahanbin** said. “It helps you see what kind of students they’re looking for, so you can tailor your application to fit that.”

Jahanbin first learned about how accessible scholarships can be from creators on social media during the lockdown last March and has applied to several general scholarships since then.

The process of finding and applying for scholarships can often feel overwhelming, but the tools available to students from both UHS and other online resources can make the process less daunting and more attainable to all students.



COURTESY OF PIXABAY

College Tuition Rising college tuition costs have led to increased financial obstacles for students.

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Marching Band Returns to Socially Distanced Practices and Performances

Members of the regiment prepare for the upcoming marching band season

By SYDNEY GAW
Staff Writer

With the spring sports season underway, the UHS Marching Trojan Regiment has also resumed socially distanced practices. Although adjustments have been made to ensure the safety and health of band members, many musicians are still excited to return to playing.

"I enjoy having something to wake up for, even if it's at 6:00am in the freezing cold," sophomore band member **Hannah Park** said. "I'm really excited about being able to see friends, especially people who I haven't seen in months, and bond over the thing that got us closer to one another in the first place."

Sophomore band member **Paul Vu** also shared his excitement for the upcoming marching band season.

"I honestly love every second of it. I get to hang out with the coolest of people and play good music," Vu said. "Even through COVID-19, marching band has been super enjoyable, and I can't wait for others to see the product of all our hard work."

While marching band practices would, under normal circumstances, take place indoors, practice has been moved outdoors to accommodate for COVID-19 health protocols.

"I've actually felt safer [marching] on the field than in a regular classroom," Park said. "We've been play-



The UHS Marching Trojan Regiment play their instruments with health safety precautions during performances and sports games.

ing outside and extremely far away from one another, as well as wearing masks and filters that are specifically designed for our instruments...You can really tell a lot of effort has gone into making this work."

According to UHS Instrumental Music Director **Mr. Corey Heddon**, the band department has been taking COVID-19 health and safety protocols very seriously, despite the obvious challenges.

"Rehearsals are structured very precisely, especially since there are very strict guidelines that have been set forth by the local health agencies," Heddon said. "To play a wind instrument, you have to be twelve feet apart, have a bell cover, a face mask, and all be facing the same direction. When we're spaced apart, every individual sounds very alone

on the field. Sound is also a kind of density, so if you imagine spreading out all the sound sources, the sound doesn't sound as strong, which is a big challenge."

Regardless of the obstacles, the marching band is still working hard to prepare for upcoming events.

"Our primary performances are the home football games," Heddon said. "We're preparing pep tunes; we'll play the Star-Spangled Banner, the Fight Song, the Alma Mater; we have a small halftime show that's primarily school spirit oriented. There's a lot of band traditions that have to be passed down from one class to another, and we're hoping to keep that continuity going."

However, COVID-19 has also put a strain on the team setting that many

band members enjoy. While many are excited for upcoming performances, there is still a disconnect between musicians.

"My personal experience with marching band is that it's really the time you spend with people that makes marching band special," sophomore **Erik Zarskus** said. "Because of COVID-19, [it's] been pretty much impossible to experience the same level of companionship with fellow band members."

Additionally, marching band practices have been reduced to a fraction of the usual seven hours a week spent working on pieces and formations.

"We can't waste minutes teaching things that would otherwise have taken days to learn before," Park said. "For people who aren't as familiar with the usual standard, it can be re-

ally tough. I just try to take as much personal responsibility as I can."

Despite these unprecedented obstacles, marching band members are still finding ways to maintain a positive attitude. Not only are many excited to continue in-person practices, but students are also anticipating live performances.

"This year I've been looking forward to the football games because that's the time that we get to really be who we are and perform for people," Zarskus said. "After all the work you put into a show, the reward for me is really being able to bring it to an audience."

The UHS Marching Trojan Regiment will be performing this coming Friday, March 26 as the UHS football team faces off against Northwood High School.

COURTESY OF TARA NGUYEN AND ERIK ZARSKUS



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ARTIST SPOTLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

Choir Spotlight: Meghana Krishnan

By **ANABEL HOWERY**
Staff Writer

Senior **Meghana Krishnan** is an 18 year-old singer who has spent eight years since fourth grade as a vocalist. However, she became immersed in the world of music at a younger age, starting from the moment she had set her fingers on the keys of a piano.

Currently in the UHS Madrigals, the advanced choir, and the Undertones, the UHS acapella group, Krishnan is known to be an outstanding singer among her peers as well as her friends. She is also vice president of UHS Choir Club and has dedicated a large amount of time to music outside of school by joining choirs at Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House.

"There are so many things that I love about choir, but if I had to pick one, I would say it's the experience of being part of the group. You get to be a member of a team, where everyone works together to produce a really cool outcome," Krishnan said. "I especially love the moment when the harmonies of a song finally lock in, because it's a really great feeling hearing everything come together."

Undertone members sophomore

Caitlyn Liao and senior **Annika Thiim** both have had positive experiences to share about the times they have spent with her.

"As a fellow alto, we always sang the same parts, and I always admired her sight reading skills and her singing skills in general. I could always rely on her to learn the music well and sing our part," Liao said. "She was also one of the first people who welcomed me to the choir when I was a freshman. Even though she was a junior at the time, she was super nice to me and gave me advice, both about choir and about school."

"Meghana is easily one of the most determined people I know, and this can be observed in everything that she applies herself to: school, choir, and tennis to name a few," Thiim said. "I have noticed that she has a way of making people around her feel welcome and appreciated."

Krishnan has been continuously optimistic despite the lack of normalcy during the past year.

"I find what helps me stay motivated is keeping the mindset that there's always something to improve. There's no such thing as a perfect singer, so I just keep looking forward to improving and working on whatever I can, and that makes me want to become a better musician," Krishnan

said.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Krishnan and fellow choir students have not been able to work on any major projects. Instead, they have been recording and digitally assembling songs through an online platform. However, the choir program has slowly returned to performing as usual.

"One recent thing I've been a part of in Undertones is rehearsing to perform at Irvine Talks, which is really exciting as it'll be my first performance this year," Krishnan said.

As vice president of the choir club, Meghana has also been working with her peers to plan a virtual Cabaret Night similar to their annual in-person Cabaret Night.

"The theme is musical theatre, and it's going to be a compilation of solos and small group performances from students in the choir department," Krishnan said. "We are also working on initial plans for a Senior Showcase in May, so I'm looking forward to that as well!"

Throughout her time at UHS as a singer, Krishnan has been a mentor and a friend to many of her peers. Singing has been a part of Krishnan's life for many years, and Krishnan plans to continue her involvement with music after high school.



COURTESY OF CLAIRE KE

Meghana Krishnan has received leadership roles in the UHS choir program and extracurricular singing opportunities abroad.

Visual Arts Spotlight: Marta Meinardi

By **KRISTOPHER ZULUETA**
Staff Writer

Photography is a part of all our lives, whether it be taking photos of your friends and family, looking at pictures in a book, or someone taking a photo of yourself. Nominated for her excellence in photography by visual arts and photography instructor **Ms. Hali Kessler**, senior **Marta Meinardi** has been a photographer since she was 14 years old. She has since furthered her interest in photography during her junior and senior years of high school and was nominated as a semi-finalist for the 2021 OC Artist of the Year: Computer-assisted Visual Arts Award.

This interest came naturally when she was young, as she would watch nature documentaries and loved the idea of being able to capture fleeting moments. Her mom was also in-

involved in photography, providing an environment for Meinardi to expand her interest in photography. Through photography, Meinardi has found a way to show people her real experiences and to create a personal connection that goes beyond a view of something on paper.

"A good photograph should be able to capture a moment in a way that also conveys emotion in who ends up seeing it," Meinardi said. "Just because a photo is technically perfect, doesn't mean it's a 'good' one."

Meinardi has worked well with taking photos of nature, sports, and other motion-related subjects. She has also found her strengths in finding the right angles and good timing. However, she acknowledges that she still has more photography techniques to perfect.

"[My weaknesses] definitely lie in still life and portraits. I have a lot to learn about posing and composition

which is where Mrs. Kessler has been amazing in helping me out with this year," Meinardi said.

Outside of photography, Meinardi has pursued other interests such as graphic design and athletics. Meinardi is involved with UHS cross country and track teams. She has committed to the University of Denver to compete on their Division 1 triathlon team and plans to continue her artistic interests by pursuing a minor in film and photography.

Meinardi continues to take photos, working on photos for the UHS yearbook this year. To see some of Meinardi's photography skills put to work, feel free to visit her own website dedicated to her photos and services in the link down below.

<https://meinardimarta.wixsite.com/mysite>

*Disclaimer: Marta M. was nominated by Ms. Hali Kessler. The Sword and Shield was not involved in the recognition process.



COURTESY OF MARTA MEINARDI

Marta Meinardi has worked with nature, sports, and motion photography in the past and plans to pursue photography in the future.

Band Spotlight: Hina Tamaki

By **SIARA GUNAWARDHANA**
Staff Writer

Senior **Hina Tamaki**, first chair clarinet of the UHS Wind Symphony, began her exploration of music at a young age. When Tamaki was younger, her passion for music was inspired by her mother's love for piano. Tamaki heard her play and aspired to one day play like her mom.

After piano, she tried other extracurricular activities such as tennis, ice skating, and horseback riding. But during middle school, Tamaki's school band program offered her the opportunity to play any instrument she wanted. At first, she wanted to play the flute or obo rather than the clarinet. However, after trying out the instrument, Tamaki found a lasting interest in the clarinet.

Throughout her clarinet career, Tamaki has performed in various ensembles. She played in the Cleveland Youth Wind Symphony in middle school and is currently in the Pacific

Symphony Youth Wind Ensemble.

She has also played in the High School All Southern Honors Band and All State Honors Band which select top musicians from Southern California and the whole state, respectively. She is currently competing in the "Spotlight Music Festival" and is a semi-finalist along with another UHS student.

As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, Tamaki's last high school performances in her senior year have been more limited. The UHS Band Program has held all practices outside this year, dividing Tamaki's bandmates into different cohorts.

"Band, in general, just doesn't sound like a full band because there are parts missing. Half of the ensemble is missing, [so] we can't really rehearse the best that we could," Tamaki said.

Due to the mandatory use of bell covers, which keep bacteria from spreading in the air, band practices have become more difficult, as the covers limit the instruments' sounds. The band sits in front of traffic when

they rehearse, which poses a large distraction. Tamaki greatly misses recitals, rehearsals, concerts and more. However, she is still grateful to be playing her instrument with her peers because it is hard to keep the marching band active with the guidelines put in place.

Though Tamaki is known for her musical talent, she has a secret hobby that she loves to indulge in, which is baking. She has been able to combine her love for baking with her passion for band, always baking treats for the receptions after band concerts.

Tamaki is a talented musician who bakes delicious treats and has many aspiring goals. As Tamaki's senior year is coming to an end, she plans for the future, as she wants to major in clarinet performance but is also passionate about medicine. She wants to study a combination of the two, exploring the ways music affects the brain. Though her final year in high school is different than she expected, she has managed to push herself to succeed and make the most of this challenging year.



COURTESY OF HINA TAMAKI

As music has been a large part of Tamaki's life, she plans to continue her interests by combining medicine and music in her future studies.

Boys Water Polo Dominates Irvine



Baran Ashiani

UHS Boys Water polo GOW vs. Irvine High School Varsity player Matt Wallin scores a critical goal against Irvine.

By **MICHAEL CHEN**
Staff Writer

The Boys Water Polo team achieved a 31-5 victory against Irvine on March 10. The team has started off the season with three straight victories, and the win helped them retain the top seed in the Pacific Coast League.

“We are senior-heavy, and we have experience on our side. We have the ability to make middle-of-the-game adjustments,” coach **Jesse Briggs** said.

The team dominated the game with a balanced effort and strong team chemistry.

“Our team played better together on defense and offense than Irvine

did. Honestly, it is hard to win by that amount in a water polo game, and we were just a lot stronger in all aspects of the game,” Briggs said.

Seniors **Matt Wallin** and **Stewart Campbell** led the team with 13 and eight goals, respectively, but the entire team performed well in the win.

“Our top two left-handers carried the most goals with Stewart Campbell and Matt Wallin, but the contribution of our shut down two-meter defense by [senior] **Liam Horan**, and frontline attack from [junior] **Victor Martin**, [junior] **Jaden Chen**, and freshman stand-out **Oleg Shatskikh** completed the offense. We had a great game from our goalie [senior] **Eli Wirth** only allowing a small handful of goals past him. Then coming off the bench, we were strong with [soph-

omores] **Josh Chen**, **Artem Zimin**, and **Joey Park**,” Briggs said.

Wirth spearheaded the team’s defensive effort as the goalie with nine saves, crediting the entire team for the defensive performance.

“The key to winning the game was knowing how to swim. Irvine really struggled with this aspect when we played them.”

“My ability to prevent goals from being scored is highly reliant on the defensive ability of our field players. I am thankful that my teammates are working their hardest on the defensive end,” Wirth said.

Wallin believed that executing the fundamentals was the most important reason they won the game.

“The key to winning the game was knowing how to swim. Irvine really struggled with this aspect when we played them,” Wallin said.

The team also had some extra motivation because of their tough 8-6 loss to Irvine last year.

“Our team had something to prove due to a last-minute upset last year to Irvine High, and the boys wanted retribution that they have had in the back of their mind all year long,” Briggs said.

Martin credited the team’s rigorous preparation for the season as the key to their strong start.

“We have been training very hard, which has given us an advantage over our opponents,” Martin said.

Wirth claimed that the uncertainty of whether there would be a season caused the team to be more grateful and to take advantage of the situation.

“We have been put into a position this year where a season did not look likely, so when we heard that we were going to have an amended season, we have been very motivated to win,” Wirth said.

While the team is off to a strong start, they can still make improvements to continue their success. “There are new rules to the game that we are having to learn and adapt to, so we are back at practice working on the new stuff and reviewing the old,” Briggs said.

The team’s next game is March 17 versus Woodbridge.

Hitting the Courts: Girls Tennis Practices in Preparation for a New Season

By **AMITIS TAJALLAEI**
Staff Writer

Even with the uncertainty surrounding the upcoming season, the Girls Tennis team has utilized off-season practices to keep their players in shape. Since tennis is a contact free sport, practices have not been significantly impacted by the coronavirus restrictions. “The good thing about tennis is that there is a lot of distance between players, and there are no physical interactions,” junior **Kayla Rezazadeh** said. “Even with COVID, we continue to do what we usually do, except we play with masks on and don’t use old balls that may not be clean.”

As the restrictions do not pose a significant obstacle to their practices, the girls have been able to use their time this year to focus on many independent techniques and drills to become well-rounded players. However, wearing masks still poses a challenge for communication on the courts, which has become one of the focal points for this year’s practices.

“We have been hitting against each other as practice and working on volleys, groundstrokes, and serves,” junior **Jasmine Nourisamie** said. “We also have been working on how to strategize on the court and how to communicate with your partner during doubles play.” Volleying is a technique used in tennis in which players attempt to strike a ball before it bounces off the ground. A groundstroke is a shot executed after the ball has bounced. These two methods focus on increasing the chances of scoring by making it more difficult for the opponent to return the ball. Serves are shots that mark the starting point of the game.

“We haven’t had a lot of time to get to know everybody’s style of playing thoroughly”

Although the virus hasn’t played a significant role in restricting practices, it has dramatically decreased the amount of practice time available for the players, as well as

made communication more difficult. Many of the girls expressed concern about these obstacles. “The toughest setback is just the restriction of time,” senior team captain **Emily Markus** said. “We haven’t had a lot of time to get to know everybody’s style of playing thoroughly, and we haven’t had a lot of time to work on things we usually would in previous years like doubles strategies and testing out different pairings.”

“Dealing with match nerves has been harder than usual as well after not competing for so long, but in my opinion, that gets better over time with more matches.”

Other players have been struggling with motivation. Lack of competition opportunities combined with the lack of skill-conditioning have served as sources of discouragement for many players. “A challenge for me personally was probably getting back into playing

matches and getting into the competitive mindset after being in quarantine and not competing for such a long time,” said senior **Kamyia Nair**. “Dealing with match nerves has been harder than usual as well after not competing for so long, but in my opinion, that gets better over time with more matches.”

As a result of the shortened practice times, many players have reported that practices have been more busy and productive, but less flexible. However, the players feel that Coach **John Kessler** has done an excellent job adapting to this year’s challenges and leading the team. “I think Kessler has done a great job preparing us,” junior **Sara Maghami** said. “We had about four weeks to get ready, and he was very good about easing us back into practice while also making sure we are ready for the upcoming matches.”

After long months of preparation and inconsistent district guidelines, the players are looking forward to kicking off the season. Many have not competed in a formal match since March 2019.

“I am super excited to be out there with my team and having some good singles competition in that encouraging atmosphere,” said Nair.

“I think we have an amazing team, and we’re definitely ready for the competition ahead.”

With team morale high and consistent support from their coaches, the team is confident going into the season. UHS Tennis is well known for its rigorous program and undefeated seasons, placing a lot of pressure on players this year. “Tennis is arguably UNI’s strongest sport, and every year I have been on the team we were the CIF Finalists in the top division of Tennis. I look forward to seeing what we can achieve as a team this year despite everything,” Nourisamie said. “I think we have an amazing team, and we’re definitely ready for the competition ahead.”

SPRING SEASON OVERVIEW

Football



After losing their first game 22-40 against Laguna Hills, the team hopes to turn things around early on despite numerous injuries to key players, especially on the offensive line. "The team has done a good job in holding our heads high throughout the season despite facing many inconveniences and having multiple injuries early on," senior Julio Baron said. With upcoming league games against Northwood, Beckman, and Wood-

bridge, the team continues to stay dedicated to improving on the field. "We have improved on our coordination from last year. Last year we were lost in our purpose and what our goals were. This year, the clear goal is to win," junior Noah Scherson said. "For a team that has so little depth in so many positions, I feel like we have a real chance to win some games this year. Our next step is to be more physical and understand our game plan better."

Baseball

After starting the season with a win against Irvine, the team followed up with subsequent losses against Beckman and Laguna Hills. "The goal for this season is to enjoy the time we get to play together. We didn't know if we were going to have a season so it's nice to be able to play on the field together," senior Ryan Shaw said. Within the dugout, the team continues to support each other even though they are not as united as in a regu-

lar season. "Everyone is pulling for each other, and every at bat is a team at bat," senior Alex Qu said. As the season continues to progress, the team looks to improve to achieve future success. "I think our team could really improve upon our defense. We could refine upon our fundamentals and communication. We also need to improve the team atmosphere in the dugout, get our players more energized," senior Beckett Kreter said.

Boys Volleyball

Following a 3-0 victory over Sunny Hills, the team is satisfied with aspects of their game heading into league, with a 2-0 record. "I think the team is doing well on serving and passing. We're staying aggressive on serving and forcing the other team to make errors. We're also hustling and getting the ball up whenever we can," senior Jozef Lingenfelter said. The team still looks

to improve in order to achieve their goals, with upcoming games against Beckman and Northwood. "One thing we can improve on is making fewer errors and keeping the ball in the court when we need to. Our goals as a team are to finish third in our league and end 8-4. My outlook on the season is good right now. We're playing strong and being aggressive," Lingenfelter said.

Boys Swim

Following a victory in their first meet, the team looks to continue to improve heading into league. "All of the boys are eager to improve from the bottom up. I'm really encouraged by even some of the newer swimmers giving it their all during dryland and swimming practice," senior James Koga

said. As the team continues to prepare for the season, gaining an edge is vital to the team's continuing UNI's success. "This year, we're working on our stroke technique as a team. I think we all are trying to develop efficient stroke techniques that lead to more powerful swims," Koga said.

Boys Cross Country

One of the first sports to be approved, some held concerns about how the experience would be. "I thought our team was going to be deprived of this season so obviously, I am pleased about that but at the same time, the team is still restricted in many ways," se-

nior John Melcher said. However, the team was grateful for the opportunity to partake in the sport they love. "The season did not go as I expected but I was happy we were able to have a season at all," senior Luca Flick-Kaiser said.

Girls Waterpolo



After defeating Portola 18-1 in the season's finale, Girls Water Polo clinched second place in league with a 5-1 record. "Going into the season, I was nervous about our league placement because we had lost many seniors last year and had many newer players, and our practices were not as intense because of COVID. We did great overall though, beating last year's champions and taking second overall

in league," sophomore Caitlyn Liao said. With only one senior graduating this year, the team looks to come back even stronger next season. "We have a lot of ground to cover, but definitely we have the spirit, personnel, and the drive to do it. [This season] shows us what we need to train for and gave our team experience to carry into the upcoming months of the off season," head coach Jesse Briggs said.

Boys Soccer

Following two draws to begin league, the team looks to rebound in crucial upcoming league matches. "Our team has adapted well to the situation at hand and embraced many setbacks that were bound to happen. All of the players demonstrated a great show of resolve and patience throughout the season thus far. Despite not having played with each other for a year every one of the players has shown commitment to our main goal of winning the league title,"

senior Eric Sun said. The team hopes to improve in crucial areas, and with these improvements, achieve their goal. "We still have a little to improve on in terms of coalition and communication throughout the team but with each game we are getting better and better. Our goal is of course to win league and hopefully make a strong CIF run, and I am confident that our team is talented enough and motivated enough to achieve our goals," senior Jonathan Kfir said.

Girls Soccer

Undefeated thus far in league and 3-1 overall, the team is looking to continue their success and take first place in league. "The team is really trying to focus on winning our league this year, and having fun together despite the circumstances," senior Ria Shrivastava said. Despite the shortened pre-season, the team has made strides in building chemistry on and

off the field. "Coach Cole has done a great job with the short preseason we had, and he's really pushing us to reach that goal of league champs. It was tough to jump right into season with only two preseason games, but all the girls on the team have been so excited to get the chance to play and we are all meshing really well," senior Gabi Souza said.

Girls Lacrosse

With a 2-3 overall record, the team heads into league maintaining its goal of repeating as champions. "Our goal is to definitely win the league title again, but more so to enjoy having the opportunity to compete this season despite the hardships this past year," senior Mya Wang said. Despite the circumstances, the team's energy and support for each other allows them to overcome this season's chal-

lenges. "Yes, we're definitely rusty. Yeah, we may have made many unforced errors. But at the end of the day, girls lacrosse is out on the field playing for each other. Our team has a wonderful energy, and I'm so thankful for every practice and game where I can step onto the field, forget my problems, and feel the love and support of my teammates," senior Sydney Field said.

Boys Waterpolo



After defeating Portola on the final night of the season, the team finished with a 7-1 overall record, and clinched second place in league with a 5-1 record. "I'm super stoked with how we all played, but I definitely wish that we just had more than a two week season because I know that we would have done really well in CIF," senior Liam Horan

said. With six seniors graduating, teammates reflect on their best memories as part of the team. "Some of the highlights for me are beating Irvine 32-5, shutting down Costa Mesa, and having an awesome last season with the team. I am really grateful that we at least got to play any games, and I'm definitely gonna miss it next year," Horan said.

Girls Tennis

Undefeated through five league games, the team continues to work hard and build off their early success. "We have been hitting against each other as practice and working on volleys, groundstrokes, and serves," junior Jasmine Nourisamie said. "We also have been working on how to strategize on the court and how to communicate with your partner during doubles play."

Despite the successful start, the team still finds difficulties playing given the safety protocols. "It's interesting just to play with the COVID restrictions such as not being able to

shake your opponent's hand. It's challenging when we don't get to see everyone's faces on the court because of masks. It's been difficult to connect," senior Emily Markus said. Even with the shortage in preparation time, the team's investment has paid off in significant ways. "Both JV and Varsity teams have won every single match we have played so far. I'm super proud of our progress and I look forward to continuing this down the road," Nourisamie said. "I think we have an amazing team, and we're definitely ready for the competition ahead."

Boys Tennis

With an undefeated start to the season sitting in first place in the league, the team has been able to adapt to this year's circumstances. "The season has started off great. Despite having no preseason games and very little practice time we've been able to come together and win our first 2 league games," senior Nic Conta said. As the season progresses, the team looks to continue to improve and re-

peat their past success, going undefeated in league in their last full season. "We've been successful in winning games and still being able to compete even if our shots aren't always perfect," Conta said. "We are still playing tight and nervous, so with more games we have to do a better job of comfortably playing the style of tennis that we practice as we build more confidence moving further into league."

Girls Swim

With a victory in their first league meet against Beckman, the team maintains their strong attitude heading into an unpredictable season. "The team has really done a good job working together and managing a season that is run so differently. The main goal for our team would be to work hard and thrive even when conditions are not ideal," senior Isabella Pagano said. Despite the circumstances, the team has been able to come together. "The girls have done amazing in the beginning of

this new season... the whole team has bonded very very well, especially considering how short the season has been so far. They have gone above and beyond expectations, working together as a team, training incredibly hard, and supporting each other," junior Jean Meyer said. "As for the rest of the season, we hope to keep on working hard & get even closer as a team and finish out the season strong together!" Their next meets will be against Irvine and Laguna Hills after Spring Break.