Taking a breather

Senior examines food insecurity

Study finds struggles on campus

Jacob Barriga
Staff Writer

More than half of the University of La Verne students who responded to a recent survey on food insecurity said they sometimes skip meals, and two-thirds said they couldn’t afford to buy enough groceries.

The survey, taken among 63 University of La Verne students – who regularly or occasionally used the Leo Food Pantry, the on-campus food bank – was conducted during spring semester 2020, by senior biology major Aleah Reaza for her senior project.

Reaza shared her findings with a virtual audience of 30 during a recent campus presentation via Zoom.

Food insecurity, which stems from a lack of financial stability, can affect mental health, academic performance, and the social lives of college students. Reaza told her audience last month.

Reaza’s survey was conducted through the Leo Food Pantry email list of 110 monthly users and 11 walk-up users. Among 63 student respondents, 39 reported skipping meals, and 44 said they couldn’t afford the groceries they needed monthly.

Reaza’s survey mirrors state and national trends. According to the California Student Aid Commission, in 2019 about one-in-three California college students experienced food insecurity.

According to the Hope Center for College, Community and Justice, the problem has only gotten worse since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reaza said he was inspired to do this research on campus after working for the non-profit XO Donations, an organization she started in early 2019 with other college students to bring essentials to needy families.

Through this work, Reaza said she came in contact with families who were either homeless or on the verge of homelessness struggling to get by every day. Reaza wanted to see how her fellow students may be affected the same way.

“I have seen some people really struggle with food insecurity, so my mentor and I thought it would be a good idea to see how food insecurity affects students at the University,” Reaza said.

Reaza’s study also found:
• More than 50% of participants are bound to their budget and cannot afford to buy food when their initial food supply runs out.
• More than 50% of the participants have to skip meals or reduce meal size to get through the month.
• More than 50% of the participants reported food insecurity as having a negative impact on their academic performance.

Reaza said she wants the University to do more to provide relief to those in need.

She suggested a comment box, which would allow students to get things off their chest without necessarily having to talk to anyone.

She believes this could help relieve some mental stress caused by financial stress and food insecurity.

As of right now, about 110 people use the on-campus food pantry each month.

Though there are probably many more ULV students who suffer from food insecurity, which research finds leads to a decline in academic performance.

Reaza offered additional suggestions for how the University can provide assistance to those in need.

“My first suggestion would be a grocery and recipe class that would take someone’s budget and help them create a grocery list, and can show them some meals they can make for the month,” said Reaza.

Reaza said that through class-

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Panelists discuss Armenian genocide

Jacob Barriga
Staff Writer

A panel of six, put together by third-year law student Raquel Parseghian, discussed the severity of the events in Azerbaijan and the current second genocide against the Armenian people last week during a virtual presentation. The conflicts stem from Turkey’s desire to expand their geographical area into the Armenian land.

“Armenia is now receiving weapons from Turkey to fight off the Armenian rebellions and it is becoming a one-sided fight and the repercussions of this could be devastating.” This is do or die for us. There is no what if we lose; we must win” Parseghian said.

Panelist Jason Niedelman, professor of political science, said the Armenian people are fighting the war of their life and it is starting to become unfair.

Azerbaijan is using their wealth to acquire weapons from Turkey to fight the Armenian people and it is becoming hard for Armenian people to resist their attacks, Niedelman said.

“Armenia is using their oil wealth to purchase drones from Turkey, and they are now fighting an unjust war. Turkey is changing from a democratic society to an authoritarian power” Niedelman said.

This act of genocide is the second in the last century with the first coming about 100 years ago when Russia and Stalin gave Armenian land to Azerbaijan.

A few years ago, the Armenians fought back by overthrowing the Azerbaijan government in the Velvet Revolution.

Azerbaijan from Armenia have been consistent since and there has been little to no help from the United Nations or any of the big players in the world.

Panelist Juli Minoves-Triguell, associate professor of political science, said he believes there is virtually no solution to the conflict at the moment.

“The United Nations has attempted to unite the two parties unsuccessfully,” Minoves-Triguell said. “And at this point, the situation may be too complicated for a diplomatic solution.”

Armenian people in the United States are pushing to bring awareness, educate and move people to support their family members who are fighting for their lives half-way across the world, said panelist Daron Kachaturian, a business professor at Glendale Community College. He explained the three areas in which the average person can show their support.

“We must avert a second genocide of the Armenian people; they have suffered once and cannot afford another” Kachaturian said. “Second, we can help by giving a tailwind to sustainable justice to these people; they want the right for independence and self-determination with their neighbors. Lastly, we can provide humanitarian aid.”

Kachaturian also explained how the American people must spread awareness to their peers because of the lack of coverage the U.S. media has on these Armenian conflicts through peaceful protest and social media.

The Armenian activists in America are hoping to get more coverage as they continue to demonstrate their concern for the war through these peaceful actions. Yet, without the proper incentives, people will not be willing to help.

“We have two motivators for the average American,” Minoves-Triguell said. “Your actions now will provide a tangible step towards a more just, humane and sane world. Also, we cannot afford a selective awareness. When people are silent in the face of injustice of others, we run the risk of facing injustice in solitude when it affects our own lives” Kachaturian said.

For more information, visit armeniafund.org.

Gabriella Cummings
Staff Writer

The Latino Student Forum held its annual Dia de los Muertos celebration for students over Zoom with 23 participants last week.

Dia de los Muertos, which means Day of the Dead, is a holiday that originated in Mexico for which families honor their loved ones who have died.

On the Nov. 2 holiday, the veil between the afterlife and the real world is down, and you can be connected with those loved ones.

People put up altars with their pictures and other symbols of the holiday. Students who reserved their space in advance of the Oct. 30 event received a giveaway box of items that represented the cultural celebration of Dia de los Muertos.

The box included a frame, papel picado, a sugar skull, candy, and a candle – so they could make their own altars for loved ones who died.

The presentation taught participants about each item in the box. And participants shared how they honor the holiday.

LSF Marketing Director Amanda Ondtivores, junior psychology major who worked on putting the event together, said such an in-person event was important to connect students and the community.

“Families welcome back the souls of their deceased loved ones with food, drinks, and celebration,” Ondtivores said. “Dia de los Muertos is more of a joyful and happy holiday filled with bright colors.”

LSF President Jessica Carillo, junior criminology major, also worked on the event.

“With the cultural and racial environment that we’re living in right now because of the current president and the racial tension that he’s caused … it’s important to emphasize how beautiful the Latinx culture really is, and just to try to turn something negative into a positive and get people together,” Carillo said.

After the discussion, participants watched “Coco,” the 2017 Academy Award-winning animated movie about Dia De Los Muertos.

Carina Baca, a junior psychology and political science major, said it is so important for students to keep in touch with their traditions, and allow Latinx students to learn about this particular celebration.

“Having events like these online still holds tremendous value as it allows students to still have that connection with others and celebrate the good throughout all this turmoil,” she said.

For more information on the Latino Student Forum, visit laverne.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/lsf.

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Food insecurity...

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es like this, students can learn how to budget their funds better and can get through the month easier.

Even with the resources available, such as the food bank, there is a stigma that prevents people from being comfortable with receiving the help they need. Parseghian said he added that students also might not reach out for help because they feel as if they are overreacting to their own struggles with food and finances.

Zandra Wagoner, university chaplain and assistant professor of philosophy and religion, works with student volunteers for the pantry, and they have taken some steps to counter the stigma and invite students to use the pantry as much as possible.

“We have worked on promoting the pantry and changing the stigma of its use,” Wagoner said. “We have done some events and other advertisements to try and get people to come and see the pantry in case some are in need.”

Sarah Rodman-Alvarez, di- rector of the Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research, said they are also trying to provide better and healthier options for students who use the Leo Pantry, teaming up with local gardens and applying for grants that can provide the students with the university with its own farmer’s market.

“The idea is to have community-supported agriculture in which we find a local farm that makes farm boxes in hopes that we can supplement the costs of these resources,” Rodman-Alvarez said. “And we want to provide availability and create a culture of good food on campus.”

Rodman-Alvarez said the University applied for a grant to execute this plan, however since the pandemic hit, the application was put on hold and the school must wait until it returns to normal business.

“We have to think a few years in advance and stay positive,” she said. “Creating that healthy environment and spirit of togetherness is something the university is striving for in the future.”

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Zhaoserenadeslectureaudience

Grace Xia Zhao performs “Summerland (Three Visions)” by William Grant Still during her faculty lecture Tuesday via Zoom. Her lecture, “Why Recreational Piano Matters on a College Campus: Lessons Learned While on Sabbatical,” included her research on the importance of recreational music for students’ academic performance and well-being. It was presented to an audience of 15 students, faculty and staff members.

Zhaoserenadeslectureaudience

Dia de los Muertos traditions continue in remote celebration

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The Campus Times is committed to accuracy. When we make mistakes, however, it is our policy to correct them as soon as they are brought to our attention. If you find a mistake in the Campus Times, please let us know at ctimes@laverne.edu.

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Supreme Court’s size should be increased

With the recent controversial and highly partisan confirmation of Justice Amy Coney Barrett, it is important now more than ever to increase the size of the Supreme Court.

The court is currently packed with six conservative justices, leaving only three liberal justices. This allows the court to make decisions that are counter to the will of the people. To prevent the court from making partisan decisions, increasing the size of the Supreme Court would promote fairness when life-changing decisions are being made.

This divide is the result of the hyper-partisan political maneuvering behind the last three appointments, led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in 2016, McConnell held the seat open for more than a year until new President Donald Trump nominated Neil Gorsuch in 2017.

This was followed by the contentious nomination of Brett Kavanaugh, who was confirmed with the lowest level of Senate support in history in 2018.

Barrett’s confirmation last week was rushed by McConnell and accompanied by public statements from Trump that her confirmation was essential to ensure his victory in lawsuits he intended to file following Tuesday’s presidential election.

These three joined a court that also included Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito, both appointed by President George W. Bush.

That means five of the current nine justices were appointed by presidents who had lost the popular vote in their elections. This, along with public opinion polls showing the unpopularity of many of the court’s recent decisions, shows that the make-up of the court does not reflect the will of the public.

The number of Supreme Court justices is not fixed by the Constitution. There is no reason for the Supreme Court to continue to consist of nine justices.

Historical precedent shows that the number of justices has fluctuated since the Supreme Court was first established in 1789. The court started with six justices, so should the highest court in the land.

With its docket steadily increasing, the Supreme Court is faced with deciding on an unprecedented number of cases. Do we really need nine justices to decide each case?

As reported by the New York Times, the number of cases the Supreme Court heard more than doubled from 1961 to 2018, with a 19 percent increase from 2016 to 2017.

In 1946, the court was appointed with eight justices for several extended periods during vacancies, most recently in 2016-2017 when McConnell played politics with Scalia’s empty seat.

A reasonable solution would be to tie the number of Supreme Court seats to the number of regional U.S. Courts of Appeals, with Supreme Court justices being selected from each regional court to ensure broad geographic representation. As the size of the country has grown, so have the number of regional courts, which currently stands at 13.

As the second-highest level of the federal judiciary has expanded to support the growth of the United States, so should the highest court in the land.

With its current size, the court has been unable to keep up with the increasing workload. The court is facing a backlog of cases and is unable to provide timely decisions.

Moreover, with increasing political polarization, the court has been unable to provide impartial decisions that reflect the will of the public. As the court has become more partisan, it has lost the trust of the American people.

It is time to increase the size of the Supreme Court and ensure that it reflects the will of the American people.

Deja Goode
Arts Editor

Hiking trail brings calm during pandemic chaos

Ernesto Rodela, a UC Riverside student who lives in Pomona, shared his progress since he started hiking the Claremont Loop regularly.

“I was worried about my endurance dying out when the Loop was closed but I was able to pick up right where I left off,” Rodela said.

Rodela mentioned that the first few times he hiked the Claremont Loop he struggled and wasn’t able to complete the five mile trail. Now, he said he knows the trail like the back of his hand.

“I feel like this is the best way to get started with getting active, especially if it’s something you aren’t used to,” Rodela said.

The return to my starting point was easy. I ran down the hills and reached my destination in half the time it took me to hike up.

As someone who has struggled to be active during the pandemic, this new hike has helped me to get started with getting active and been outside in a safe manner.

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Deja Goode can be reached at deja.goode@laverne.edu.

Letters to the Editor

The Campus Times encourages readers to submit letters to the editors regarding topics covered in the paper. Letters should be no more than 400 words in length and due by Tuesday at 3 p.m. The Campus Times reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, space and libel. Letters may be sent to ctimes@laverne.edu.
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