Campus Times

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Kechichian reflects on past 40 years

Miguel Navarro
Staff Writer

Avo Kechichian, vice president and chief financial officer for the University, gave his final lecture Tuesday in La Fetra Auditorium before an audience of roughly 40 community members.

Titled "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: A 40 Year Retrospective," the talk reflected on VP's long tenure here.

"I have invested in the people reporting to me," Kechichian said. "In their confidence and success, the University of La Verne in general and the finance office in particular have become more united."

Kechichian began his talk describing his challenging childhood growing up in Lebanon. Kechichian was born in 1958 in Bourdj Hamoud, Lebanon, where he lived with his parents and two sisters during a time of civil war in the area.

Around age 16 he served in the local neighborhood watch program from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

During the day, he still attended school, and his parents realized it was time for him to move on.

As he began to prepare for college, he chose to attend school in the United States and ended up at the University of La Verne, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees.

Throughout his college career, he worked a variety of jobs to help pay his tuition, including vacuuming the library, picking up trash, and gardening at the University.

After graduating in 1985, Kechichian was hired into the payroll office.

He served here for over four decades.

Despite the adversity he faced, he said his background and upbringing motivated him toward his career success.

"I am a descendant of genocide survivors," Kechichian said. "My grandfather was born in a village called Hassan Bay, which is in southeastern Turkey, and my father was born in Syria."

Throughout the lecture, Kechichian discussed the positive and challenging aspects of his job working to keep the University of La Verne financially stable.

He broke down these experiences over the four decades into three categories: "the ugly," "the bad," and "the good," which he presented in that order.

The ugly part of the lecture focused on the past scandals the University has faced, which led to lower enrollment and put the University in financial difficulties.

He talked about a period in 2019, when an apparent racially motivated incident led to classes being canceled and the eventual arrest of a student.

Then came the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We experienced a big drop in enrollments and tuition revenue, creating another budget crisis," Kechichian said.

He covered the bad he experienced, which centered around a period where the University struggled financially.

He attributed management not showing accountability as a reason the University has seen a dip in enrollment over the years.

"We, the management, have to own these failures," Kechichian said.

Kechichian closed by presenting the good. He talked about how proud he was to help implement programs at the University that saw financial gain.

He helped foster both English learning services and professional development courses.

"I'm proud of two areas that I created. One was the English language services," Kechichian said. "We were generating up to $1 million in revenue."

Throughout his four decades of managing the budget for the University, the University has persevered, he said.

"We have always survived and will continue to do so."

Now as he enters retirement Kechichian is excited for the future.

"I am leaving the University in a strong financial position," Kechichian said.

For the audience, the lecture served as a way to learn about the finances at the University, and they appreciated his transparency.

"I like the fact that he was very transparent about all the ugly, the good, and the bad aspects that he saw at the University of La Verne," said Danny Zeng, chemistry research instrument manager.

"He has done a number of things during his time here in community service and finances," said Al Clark emeritus professor of humanities, who introduced Kechichian at the start of the event.

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Antonio Ceniceros

Avo Kechichian, University of La Verne's chief financial officer and vice president of administration and finance, presents his final lecture Tuesday in La Fetra Auditorium. He reminisced on the moments that brightened the experience managing the financial struggles of the University.

On the Cover

The volleyball team erupts in celebration on the court Nov. 22 after securing the NCAA Regional Championship with a victory over Johns Hopkins, marking a historic milestone for the program. / photo by Lexi Giacobbe

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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 are 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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LV welcomes holiday



Kyla Stubbs

Benjamin Baird, 5, asks Santa for a train set for Christmas at the city of La Verne tree lighting ceremony Monday at City Hall. The event also included milk and cookies for visitors.

Law to protect gender-affirming care

Alexander Hernandez
Staff Writer

California Gov. Gavin Newsom recently signed into law a bill protecting gender-affirming care. The new law, signed in October, went into effect immediately.

It also prohibits health care providers from releasing medical information related to anyone seeking or obtaining gender-affirming health care or mental health care.

This provision is in response to other states that have passed laws making gender affirming care illegal.

To date at least 27 states have passed laws banning or restricting gender affirming care.

The California law, authored by California Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco, who said in a press release that the new law is designed to protect those in the transgender community, as they face attacks by the Trump administration.

"President Trump has made it clear he is willing to violate laws and norms to target transgender people, and that he will not stop until their existence has been erased from public life," Weiner said in the release.

"California must do everything in our power to protect the transgender community.

"The Trump Administration is trying to make transgender people the scapegoats for their fascist takeover."

University of La Verne students and faculty – particularly those who are part of the LGBTQ+ community and allies – have felt the creeping threat of the Trump administration and so many states' anti-trans actions.

News of the new state law brought a glimmer of hope.

"These restrictions are really damaging to trans youth and trans people in general," said Helen Bravo, treasurer for the University's Pride Coalition and freshman biology major.

"Having those rights protected in California sets a precedent to help other states."

"For states that don't protect trans youth and are currently putting them in danger, I feel like that sets them in perspective on how terribly they're treating trans people as human beings.

"They're people as well and everyone deserves to have that important healthcare and protection," Bravo added.

Linda and John Bartelt, professors of education who advise the Pride Coalition, said the current administration is diminishing those within the community.

They hope the state law will make California a safe haven for trans people.

"I know people that won't leave California now because they're not safe to do so," Linda Bartelt said.

"I'm proud to live in a state that looks after its people and not just one aspect of a certain social economic group of people, meaning rich people."

"We're not going to allow the right wing evangelical MAGA idiots to encroach on freedoms," John Bartelt added.

"Everything that is not straight, white, male supremacist. The (new law) sends a message of 'we're gonna be reasonable and we care about human rights and social justice in this state.' It's all tied together."

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Math senior projects



Joseph Nocero

Senior math major Kaelem Walker presents his senior project presentation Tuesday in the Ludwick Center Sacred Space. His project was an analysis of the statistics of Covid-19 cases in California.

Green Friday



Ronald Banks

Native plant expert Krista Von Stetten leads a workshop at the Green Friday event at the California Botanical Garden in Claremont on Monday.

She showed how simple plant pairings like California buckwheat and sage can turn home gardens into "resource islands" that support butterflies and boost other local wildlife.

Fairplex holiday lights



Baljot Rathor

Glowing sunflowers light the pathway to the Imaginarium Land of Oz at the Fairplex in Pomona on Sunday. The Imaginarium displays Christmas trees, illuminated stars and holiday characters.

SoCal embraces hot winter fashion

Students use clothes to connect

Olivia Russo
LV Life Editor

While most of the country is ready to bring out their chunky knit sweaters and long coats, the people of Southern California do not make the same clothes transition when it comes to the winter months.

Recently the Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shared that Southern California will have slightly above-average temperatures. This means it may be harder for fashion lovers to fully embrace the furs and knits of winter, but the true divas know their way around.

Even though Southern California has a good climate year round, which is wonderful, fashionistas could still struggle using everything they have in their closet.

The need for coats and thick tops, or even long johns, is lost on those in Southern California. Many want to bring out their chunky wool sweater but do not want to end up sweating by the afternoon.

Instead, people have been able to use those staple winter pieces like boots, but they will pair them with articles of clothing that make the outfit comfortable to wear for the winter months.

"I try to dress more warm on the top and then cooler on the bottom, because I run hot on the bottom," Kira Annis, senior biology major, said. "So I wear coats and then scarves and long sleeves, but I'll still be wearing a mini skirt. I feel like for me, because I can't dress cute when I go back home, I feel a little more free here."

Annis is originally from Maryland, so she was able to compare an East Coast winter that features a lot of snow and freezing temperatures to a West Coast winter where the snow mainly stays on the mountaintops.

"I can utilize my closet more most of the time," Annis said. "When I first came here I put away all my summer clothes and had my winter clothes out and then I was doomed and dying from the heat."

Like Annis, most people living in the area will use their closet year round, which is an advantage that most others in the country do not have.

For others, the California heat is all they know, and they have grown accustomed to dressing for the weather.

"I could wear a crewneck and baggy pants and go about my day because that's my style," Ahsha Jones, senior psychology major, said.

"I feel like I get free range to not only explore my own style, but also go outside of the box… and I think that's so inherent to California."

"We have an interesting climate that not only allows us to wear winter clothes but I think our winter is an imitation of everybody else's."

Jones also credits her love of baggy clothes to her family upbringing.

She grew up with two older brothers, so most of her clothes were handed down from them, and she did not get to grow her personal style until she started college.

"I'm used to covering my body, so wintertime is my time to shine; literally my favorite season," Jones said. "I'll start layering…You get to touch elements that I feel like you don't really get to during the summer or spring."

Jones and Annis, both shared that their styles come from wanting to start conversations with others. Their clothes are also a result of their home life, breaking the boundaries their family backgrounds has placed on them.

Other students have similar beliefs, understanding that their clothes and accessories can be inherently political by just who is wearing it, regardless of the season.

> 'I feel like I get free range to not only explore my own style but also go outside the box...You get to touch elements that I feel like you don't really get to during the summer or spring.'
> *—Ahsha Jones, senior pyschology major*

"The way I'm dressing right now, some people who are outsiders will probably assume the stereotype of gangster or cholo…," Jesus Velazquez, junior English major, said. "So I do that for importance, especially in the cold weather. You'll still see me covered up but still dressing like that to make a statement of how people who look like me can be here at a private university."

Velazquez uses the importance of clothing to challenge the norm and expectations of how Latino men dress.

"I try my best to not encourage the stereotype but rewrite it," Velazquez said.

With the wintertime, the temperature may not reach a typical winter that everyone knows, so locals need to find their way around that. When it does reach that California cold – in everything but the actual temperature – many of them turn to layering.

They will pair their mini skirt with a hoodie or put a vest over their shirt to insulate themselves in a small way.

With these temperatures also reaching a high in the afternoon, having a layer makes it easier to adjust. When they start to get uncomfortable, they can easily take a layer off. Other locals are committed to the clothes they are wearing over what the weather forecast prepares them for.

"In general, for winter, I don't try to accommodate," Janira Hernandez, senior creative major said. "When I do, I like to layer my tights, wear long boots and some really warm socks…I make everything work for the weather, if I don't have long sleeves, I'll layer a tank top with a sheer long sleeve because that's all I have."

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Mia Byington

Kira Annis, senior biology major, and Ahsha Jones, senior psychology major, gossip in the Quad Monday. Annis and Jones expressed a love for second hand stores, having thrifted most of their outfits and also their closet, finding joy in looking in racks of clothes for the perfect item.



Mia Byington

Kira Annis, senior biology major, and Ahsha Jones, senior psychology major, incorporate similar clothing items while having their individual styles shine in the Quad Monday. Both love to express themselves when it comes to clothes having lived in more strict family homes, so coming to college gave them the opportunity to finally find their personal style.

Claremont shop carries trinkets

The Grove has hip clothing

Margaret Contreras
Editor-in-Chief

The Grove is a small business with two store fronts on Indian Hill Boulevard in the Claremont Village.

There is the home and gifts store for those who like to find merchandise from their favorite era or fandom.

And a few doors down is The Grove's clothing store, filled with unique sweaters, boots, shirts and jackets.

On Nov. 29, Small Business Saturday, both stores were filled with customers with a small lull in the afternoon while shoppers ate lunch.

The Grove home and gifts store is filled with iconic items from franchises including Hello Kitty and Friends, Disney's Mickey's and Friends, Snoopy and Strawberry Shortcake, with most popular items – Jellycat selections and the various blind boxes – constantly flying off the shelves.

"I used to work in Urban Outfitters, " sales associate Nathaniel January, said. "I like the vibe in this store. Every time I come in I see something new. "

One of the store's secrets to success is its willingness to change things up.

"They like to change with the trend, " said Jacob Cross, another sales associate. "I would say for people to keep up with our social media page, particularly instagram, they put the latest updated things. "

Both stores have new merchandise coming in every month, with total turnover in products every six months or so.

"I … tell people if they see it buy it… It won't be here long, " Cross said.

The Grove Clothing store includes unique items.

This season' earth tones seem to rule, with fun and funky boots, belts, scarves, purses and more.

Unlike the open floor with white walls in the home and gift store, the clothing store has wooden floors and brown walls giving it a rustic look and feel.

"This used to be another clothing store before they bought it five to six years ago, " sales associate Lexi Sandoval, said.

Next to the cashier counter is a hold rack for special order items.

With the holidays around the corner, the unique items offered from The Grove may be worth checking out.

For more information visit the store's Instagram **@thegrovehomeclaremont.**

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Rylee Fournier

The Grove in Claremont is a go-to spot for unique gifts, trendy finds and all things fun. From pop-culture favorites to adorable Jellycats, there's something for everyone inside.



Rylee Fournier

Maria Adriano, a longtime employee, tidies up displays inside The Grove in the Claremont Village. Her passion for the store and dedication to her work make her a familiar and friendly face to shoppers. The Grove has all kinds of fun trinkets and accessories for any kind of special occasion.

LVPD, Fire collab on holiday toy drive

The La Verne Fire Department is partnering with the La Verne Police Department to host their first annual Lights and Sirens Toy Drive, on through Dec. 12.

They are accepting donations of all types of toys – especially those suitable for older kids.

"That's a big request of ours, " Jennifer Brown of the La Verne Fire Department said. "The tween age, from 10- to 14-years-olds, tend to get overlooked. "

From 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday, the Fire Department and its partners will be hosting the "Stuff the Sirens " event at the Target in the La Verne Town Center strip mall.

The department will stuff a fire engine and an ambulance with as many toys as they can.

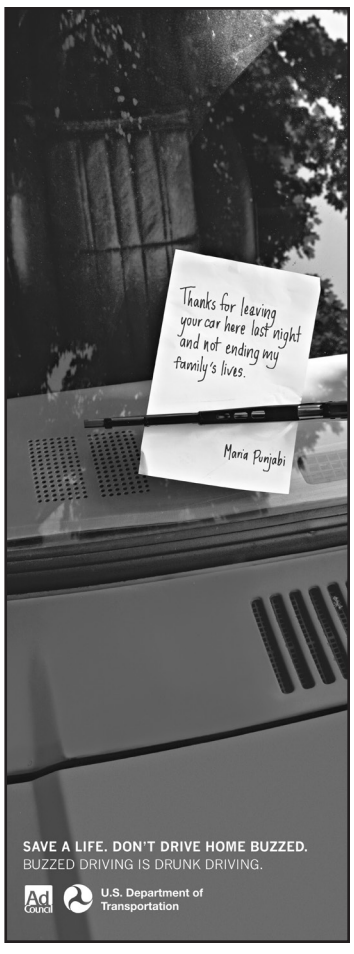
"Our community is amazing, " Brown said. "We generally average between 600 to 1,000 toys per year … We're expecting even more this year by partnering with our police department. "

Donated toys will be stored at Hillcrest Senior Living Center, then donated to kids in need just before Christmas.

"I think seeing that the police department and the fire department are joining forces on something like this … make people want to give, " Brown said.

For information on how to make or receive a donation, visit **lavernefire.org/toydrive.**

—Donya Rouzbehi



First Person Experience

All of our work pays off with regional championship

story and photography by
Lexi Giacobbe

Editor's Note: The Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference champion women's volleyball team traveled to Baltimore to compete in the NCAA Regional Championships in November. Staff photographer Lexi Giacobbe, a member of the team, shares her experience.

BALTIMORE—The La Verne women's volleyball team became NCAA Regional Champions on Nov. 22, after an intense reverse sweep against Johns Hopkins. The Leopards closed off the game, 15-13, in the five sets.

I don't think I'll ever forget the feeling when my teammate Lauren Gott, junior outside hitter, tipped the ball and it hit the floor.

"I really wanted to hit the ball but I knew a tip was going to score," Gott said.

For a second, everything went quiet. I was in shock then our whole team rushed the court with hugs. We collapsed to the floor cheering and crying. A wave of gratitude and joy rushed my heart.

"I felt incredibly grateful that I got to experience this with such an unforgettable and talented team," senior outside hitter Mya Ray said. "It's a memory I'll cherish for the rest of my life."

All I could think about were the early mornings, the countless reps, the laughs and every moment we pushed each other to be better. I was lucky enough to live that moment from the inside.

This win was not just a trophy. It felt like the reward for months of trusting each other, believing in ourselves and refusing to quit. Looking around at my teammates, I could see the same joy and relief on their faces. We did this together.

On Nov. 18, we landed in Baltimore, Maryland. We enjoyed team dinners and group meals, spent our days practicing and scouting and made the most of our time together as a team on the trip.

"I really enjoyed spending quality time with my team at the pizza restaurant," junior outside hitter Emma Yogan said about Kechy Pizza Company in Baltimore. "The banana pudding was the best thing I've ever tasted."

Keeping up with academics hasn't always been easy, but thanks to our amazing academic support staff, we have everything we need to stay on track.

Most of our professors are incredibly accommodating, yet the responsibility still falls on us to keep up with our work while on the road.

Throughout the trip, our team has spent hours in study halls with our coaches to make sure nothing slips. And when exams need to be taken on the road, assistant coach Randi Taylor-Toomay is able to step in and proctor our tests.

Less than 48 hours before our opening round game, we had no idea where we were going to play or who our opponent would be. Suddenly, we were on a flight to Maryland, three time zones away, forced to adjust quickly. But adapting is something our team excels at.

We've been trained for moments like this: high-pressure situations, emotional games and long, unexpected trips.

We opened our weekend against Penn State–Behrend. After dropping the first set, 25-22 – a "fluke," as our team likes to call it – we regrouped quickly. We don't take lost sets lightly.

We fired back with dominant scores of 25–5 and 25–5, and closed out the match with a commanding 25–3 win.

The next day, we swept St. John Fisher, 3-0, to move up to the championship match against Johns Hopkins. It was an emotional match after being down in the first two sets, and being down in almost every set, we managed to bring ourselves back and beat Hopkins in five.

I won't lie, I was scared that my four years of playing at La Verne were coming to an end. Nerves rushed through my body, but I had to push them aside. I prayed to God and leaned on Him in that moment. Next thing I knew, I was sprinting onto the court for game point in the fourth set. We were down, 24–23.

I passed the ball to freshman setter America Reynaga and she set Mya Ray, and suddenly the match was tied. With a chance to fight back and push it to a fifth set, we did just that. In that moment, every fear disappeared, and I was fully confident we were turning the game around.

"I was super confident in our ability to pull off the reverse sweep, and trusted God's plan for us," Ray said.

As we held that trophy surrounded by the noise of the gym and the warmth of our team and families, it finally hit me that we weren't just celebrating a win. We were celebrating a journey that brought us all the way here, to a moment we'll carry with us forever.

I've spent the last four years on this team, and I can't say it's been easy. Being a student-athlete and competing at such a high level has been challenging, exhausting and at times overwhelming.

But it's also something I'm incredibly grateful and blessed to have experienced. These years shaped me, pushed me, and gave me a second family.

Gritty, relentless, and passionate – three words head coach Jeff Hendershot uses to describe this team. And he is right.

We showed that every day, every practice, every road trip and every moment we chose each other over doubt.

In the end, this championship isn't just a trophy. It's proof of everything we've overcome and a reminder that when we play with heart, nothing is out of reach.

As we head out to the National Championships to play against Wisconsin Eau-Claire we remind ourselves that the job is not finished.

Lexi Giacobbe can be reached at ***alexa.giocobbe@laverne.edu****.*

Editor's Note: The Leopards are playing for the National Championship this week in Bloomington, Illinois. They beat Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 3-1, Wednesday to advance to the Final Four against Berry College of Georgia on Thursday. Results of that match were not available at press time. The National Championship match will be at 2 p.m. Saturday on ESPN+.



photo courtesy of Bella Hargrave

The volleyball team gathers for a celebratory selfie with their NCAA Regional Championship trophy Nov. 22 at the Newton H. White Center in Baltimore. The Leopards won the final with a reverse sweep of the host team, Johns Hopkins, 3-2. The team advanced to the Elite Eight, where they beat Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 3-1, on Wednesday.













Clockwise from Above: Members of the team lock in during study hall Nov. 19 at the NCAA Regionals in Baltimore. The University reserved a conference room in the hotel so that players could keep current on their school work in a group setting.

The Leopards hype up together in the locker room ahead of its NCAA Regional Final showdown against Johns Hopkins on Nov. 22, building energy and unity before taking the court. The Leopards came from behind to beat the Blue Jays, 3-2, and win the Regional championship.

The team takes in the sights of Baltimore after a practice day Nov. 19, as they head to a nearby Qdoba for lunch.

Head coach Jeff Hendershot shares a lighthearted moment after the team's NCAA Regional Championship victory, posing to be asleep with the regional champion trophy following the historic win.

Junior outside hitter Lauren Gott and senior setter Vanessa Marquez make their way through Los Angeles International Airport at 5 a.m. Nov. 18, heading to Baltimore, Maryland, for the NCAA Regional Championships.

The players scout the match that determined their next opponent Nov. 20 at the Newton H. White Center at Johns Hopkins University. The winner of this match, St. John Fisher, advanced to face the Leopards and got swept, 3-0.

Arts, *etc...*

Happenings

'Vivaldi Gloria'

The University of La Verne Chamber Singers and the San Dimas High School Chamber Choir will be performing a holiday concert at 7 p.m. on Dec. 7 at the Morgan Auditorium.

The concert will be conducted by Clarissa Shan and Jared Pugh, featuring classic holiday songs and the chance for audience participation.

Tickets are $20, to purchase **visit bit.ly/ulvmusicshows.**

Guitar Concert

The University of La Verne music department's Guitar Ensemble is performing their Winter Concert at 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 7 in the Morgan Auditorium.

The ensemble will perform many pieces from the 17th century to the present.

Admission is free.

For more information email **music@laverne.edu.**

'Light, Shadow, and Legacy'

The Irene Carlson Gallery of Photography in Miller Hall is showing the exhibition "Light, Shadow and Legacy" featuring La Verne photo department alumni.

It runs through Dec. 12. The gallery is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

For more information, visit **artsci.laverne.edu/photography/exhibition/light-shadow-and-legacy**.

'Nutcracker'

The Inland Pacific Ballet will be performing their annual production of the "The Nutcracker," featuring popular guest principal dancers Lori Hernández, Brien Hall, Mira Nadon and Peter Walker.

The first four performances will take place at noon and 4 p.m. on Dec. 13 and 14 at the Bridges Auditorium at Pomona College.

The next three performances will be at 2 p.m. on Dec. 20 and Dec. 21, and at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 20, at the Fox Performing Arts Center in Riverside.

Tickets start at $41.

For more information visit **ipballet.org.**

—Olivia Russo

Senior photo exhibit honors diversity

by Cassidy Diaz

photograph by Baljot Rathor



Junior photography major Joseph Nocero talks about his photograph with junior communications major Raquel Campos at the "Alike in Our Differences" student photo exhibition at the Ground Floor Gallery in Miller Hall on Nov. 25. The exhibit features the work of 11 photography majors and runs through Jan. 4. The Ground Floor Gallery is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Ground Floor Gallery is showing "Alike in Our Differences," highlighting various genres of photography in the work of 11 photography students.

The photographers held an opening reception on Nov. 25 in the Gallery.

Artists featured are photography majors Aaliyah Alamillo, Ronald Banks, Mia Byington, Emily Casillas, Antonio Ceniceros, Liberty Belle Garcia, Jesse Juarez, Amore Mason, Joseph Nocero, Vincente Rodriguez and Kyla Stubbs.

Visiting Professor of Photography Fred Brashear said such gallery exhibitions prepare students for their future work and build their confidence and professional skills. He enjoyed seeing the students' grow in the process.

"Being able to see this exhibition to see how things turned out. It's amazing," he said.

Nocero, a junior photography major, showcased two of his photographs that both pictures the natural world and scenery.

One titled "Water in Nature" showed a water stream from a low angle leading to scenery of trees that surround the photo.

"The calmness of the natural world compared to city life with people – there's a big difference," Nocero said.

"There's a lot of streams of water and a lot of trees to take away creativity in nature."

"I have a passion about being able to travel to different places in the future, photograph different things, let it be landscape, nature, animals, even cities and architecture," Nocero added

> 'My main purpose is just to capture emotion through the photo.'
> *—Liberty Belle Garcia, senior photography major*

"I really got into self portraits," Garcia said of her self portrait for which she explored lighting and the vibrant oranges.

"I just started taking photos of myself and I realized that I loved putting a character in front of the camera," Garcia said. "This piece is also different because I didn't have a character … It has shown my journey of getting out of my comfort zone."

Earlier in her photo journey, Garcia focused on sports photography, then moved to portraits and finally self portraits, she said.

"My main purpose is just to capture emotion through the photo," Garcia said. "I think that humans are really emotional, but we shouldn't be scared of it, it's a powerful tool that we have. We get to feel for each other, be empathetic to one another. We can also be angry together, I just love capturing that whether in sports or street photography."

Yesenia Rodriguez, who came to support her daughter, Garcia, appreciated the photos' emotional honesty.

"It's interesting…They're all different in being bold and peaceful," Rodriguez said. "She's grown a lot just from her work and has become a mature grown woman, it's beautiful to see."

The exhibition is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday until Jan. 4. The Ground Floor Gallery is in Miller Hall on campus.

*Cassidy Diaz can be reached at **cassidy.diazgomez@laverne.edu.***

Paleshifter rocks dba256 Pomona

Alternative band shreds the stage

Marina Bravo
Arts Editor



Vicente Rodriguez

Lead vocalist and guitarist Justin Cardoze, drummer Joshua Tirtasamudra and bassist Oscar Chilapa of Paleshifter open up their performance Nov. 21 at the dba256 Bar and Gallery in downtown Pomona. They performed their two newest songs, "Another Escape" and "The Fog," along with some older songs like "Gold Days." They played a total of six songs in their set of original songs.

Downtown Pomona's dba256 bar and gallery was dominated by alternative band Paleshifter's shredding performance. Paleshifter had an audience of around 50 people when they took the stage at 9 p.m. Nov. 21.

The dba was hosting a night of music that started at 8 p.m. and featured various acts including "Tempest Cleanse," "The Highwaybyrds," "Spanish Magazine" and "American Diet." Each act brings their own unique sound and genre.

Paleshifter, from Upland, led by guitarist Justin Cardoze and newest members drummer Joshua Tirtasamudra and bassist Oscar Chilapa, was far from quiet.

Whether it be the blaring sound of Cardoze's guitar and vocals, Tirtasamudra's crash of a symbol or Chilapa's soulful bass; the band had the audience headbanging.

Newest member Chilapa spoke about how as a music major at The University of California, Riverside, he is constantly making music. He surrounds himself with various genres as a bass player and is always open to jam.

"I do a variety of musical styles like Jazz, Funk and then even some Pop" Chilapa said. "I love music and surrounding myself with this type of alternative style. Paleshifter being my newest joined group where I am now."

Paleshifter rocked the brick walls of the bar with their first song, luring the audience to come closer and figure out what all the noise was about. The band played a set of six original songs all written and produced by Cardoze.

"The Fog," "Stay Inside," "Fell On Your Knife" and "Red Light." They debuted their newest song, "Another Escape," which was released on Halloween.

The song features the signature Paleshifter heavy alternative sound and haunting grungy screams. Each member of the band shared where their musical and creative inspirations came from. How their authentic sounds come from their deep love for the diverse alternative rock genre.

"Growing up surrounded by this music and culture, it has always influenced me," Cardoze said. "I grew up with Guitar Hero, I always thought playing in front of people would be an exciting experience."

Cardoze goes on to share that Paleshifter doesn't quite conform to a specific sub-genre but they always enjoy finding something new to create.

"Growing up, it was more punk and hardcore that I was into," Tirtasamudra said. "In high school was definitely when I got into that grungy alternative sound."

Paleshifter's set definitely reflected their diverse sound as they played through each song. The weight of the lyrics and musical note resonated with the audience. The crowd was officially won over when the band began covering alternative metal band Deftones' song "My Own Summer (Shove It)," to introduce their song "Stay Inside."

The menacing riff set the tone not just for the song but for the rest of the night.

The band ended on their song "Gold Days," which was one of their oldest songs on the setlist that was released back in 2020.

Cardoze ended with a wild guitar shred and Chilapa powered through with a riveting bass riff. Drummer Tirtasamudra brought it home. The audience was stunned by the performance, Paleshifter set the stage for the bands that followed the rest of the night.

"I enjoy the band's unique alternative sound," Lee Diaz, fine arts student at UCR said. "The band's dedication really comes through when they perform. They always have a new show to look forward to and a new song to follow it."

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Early Music Ensemble celebrates patron saint of music



Kyla Stubbs

The Con Gioia Early Music Ensemble – including Andrew McIntosh and Alfred Cramer, playing the baroque violins; Marc Schachman and Lot Demeyer, playing baroque oboes; Malachai Komanoff Bandy, playing the contrabass; Andrea Zomorodian, singing soprano; Patrick Rogers, playing harpsichord; and Eva Lymenstull and William Skeen, playing baroque violoncellos – performs Nov. 21 at Pomona College's Lyman Hall. This was an event was part of their fall noon concert series which celebrates the Patron Saint of Music. The ensemble specializes music from the 17th and 18th centuries performed on instruments from those century period.

Rumsey breaks 2 records in 1 game

Karina Rodriguez
Sports Editor



Baljot Rathor

University of La Verne junior wide receiver Jimmy Rumsey broke the school's all-time records for receptions and receiving yards this season. Rumsey says his dad always pushed him hard when it came to sports, and he is grateful for what he did.

On Nov. 1 the La Verne Leopards lost to the Redlands Bulldogs, but junior wide receiver Jimmy Rumsey found himself with a personal victory. He broke two records during the game against the Bulldogs.

Rumsey broke La Verne's all-time receptions records with 146 receptions and the all-time receiving yards record with 2,095 yards.

Rumsey credits his quarterbacks and coaches for helping him achieve these two personal records.

"I would say, really my quarterback, put the ball in the right spots for me to go and catch it, " Rumsey said. "My coaches definitely helped me and trusted me, knowing they can trust me and I can make the play. "

Rumsey highlighted how everyone on the team contributed to his success.

"All pieces come together perfectly with how my team plays, " Rumsey said. "How my other receivers run their routes to distract the other players for me to get open and the o-line protecting me. "

Head football coach Richard Sanchez believes that Rumsey is a leader as he notices the dynamic he has with other players.

"The guys look up to him and when he speaks, people listen, " Sanchez said.

Sanchez also acknowledges that Rumsey supported the changes Sanchez brought when he took on the head coaching position at La Verne.

"He really bought into the differences in the change, how to behave, how to react, how to give effort every single day and the preparation matters, " Sanchez said. "It's a huge accomplishment and I'm very proud of that. "

Rumsey has been playing football for 16 years, ever since the age of four he has been involved in the sport.

He previously played for the Corona Dolphins flag football team as a kid. He also played with the Corona Panthers with his cousins and the Corona Panthers was Rumsey's first tackle football team.

In high school he played for the Santiago High School Sharks football team for four years before deciding to make the University of La Verne his home.

Not only did he play football but he also played baseball during his childhood with the Corona Chargers little league team.

Rumsey credits his biggest inspiration, his dad and he also has fond memories of watching football with his dad.

"He's always been there with me, " Rumsey said.

"He's always been in my ear about what to do and I think he is the reason why I don't ever fumble. "

He shared that football has been a part of his life before he ever stepped on the field.

"When I was two years old I would sit up in my little chair and watch football when it came on and I was always watching football, " Rumsey said.

Rumsey also said his faith is what kept him strong in the sport of football.

"Everytime I have a problem with something, I can talk to God and he'll open up the light for me, " Rumsey said.

Freshman offensive line player Jordan Garcia said Rumsey made him feel welcomed.

"When I came to lift during the summer, he immediately made me feel like I was a part of the team for years, " Garcia said. "Jimmy is a really run person to be around and is very welcoming to everyone. "

Senior tight end Julian Martinez, who has played all four years with the Leopards, has great respect for Rumsey.

"What I admire and respect the most about Jimmy is his ability to be a leader without saying a word, " Martinez said. "Guys look up to him. "

Martinez considers Rumsey to have both a serious hard-working attitude but also a fun attitude.

"He puts his head down and works hard when he needs to but also has a fun side to be around, " Martinez said.

"Jimmy has high morals and expects more from himself than most people do and that's what I respect about him. "

When Rumsey is not on the field he likes to play piano, basketball and talk to his little sister about flag football as she has now picked up the sport.

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La Verne powers ahead at Winter Invitational

Rubbie Chavez
Staff Writer

The La Verne swimming and diving teams hosted the Winter Collegiate Swim Invitational for a three day event from Nov. 21-23 at East Los Angeles College.

The Leopards went on a tear, breaking records, posting personal bests and showing early season promise.

Freshman standout Jordan Clarke delivered one of the meet's biggest highlights, setting a new program record in the 100-yard individual medley and securing her place in the record books just months into her collegiate career.

"Today I set the record in the individual medley. I went a 1:01 and the previous record was a 1:02, " Clarke said.

"I'm only a freshman, so I'm really happy that I got it already. The past two meets I've been really close, and today I got it. So I'm really happy with this meet. "

Clarke's confidence reflected the team's overall momentum. She said the Leopards fed off each other's energy all weekend.

"A lot of people have been making finals, and our relays have been really fun, " Clarke said.

"As a team, we've been very positive about this meet. "

Another swimmer making an early-season impact was freshman William Roby Unkovich, who competed in his first meet of the season after transitioning from the water polo team. Despite the shift, he posted strong times and said the weekend gave him optimism for the months ahead.

"I think I did pretty good. It's my first meet of the season. I just came out of water polo, and I'm doing pretty good, " he said. "Hopefully I drop some seconds on my 100 and my 50, and I think I'll do that. "

He said the team's depth and training have positioned the Leopards to be competitive throughout the winter.

"My team, I think we're going to hopefully do really well in SCIAC. We're pretty solid, and I'm excited to see where the season goes, " Unkovich said.

Freshman swimmer Augustine Ramon-Gutierrez also had a standout meet, posting personal records on all three days in multiple events. He said the improvement felt rewarding after months of preparation.

"I feel like I did good. PR'd the first day in two events. Next day, PR'd in a different event, and today PR'd in the event I did on the first day, " Ramon-Gutierrez said.

Head coach Pat Skehan said the team's progress at the meet was even more impressive given its timing early in the season.

She emphasized that the Winter Invitational serves as a benchmark for what swimmers can achieve in longer championship style meets compared to regular dual meets.

"I thought they really stepped up and improved, " Skehan said. "We had a ton of lifetime bests. We had almost 100% season bests. We set some new varsity records. "

She highlighted Clarke's individual medley record as one of several major steps forward.

"This is a good learning meet for us, " Skehan said.

"Now it shows us what we know, what we can do and what we need to work on as we get ready for the SCIAC Championships in February. "

Fatigue was inevitable throughout the three-day event, but he said the Leopards stayed focused and energized.

"Even though we've been doing this for three days straight and we're all exhausted, we're still keeping up and doing good, " Ramon-Gutierrez said.

"We're not falling off as the days go by. We're just getting progressively better. "

Looking ahead, he said the optimism shared throughout the squad.

"I feel like I will do good with more practice and drop even more time, " Ramon-Gutierrez said.

"My team, I also feel like they will do really good, especially with our teamwork and relays. "

The Leopards will go against Chapman for the first meet of the new year at 11 a.m. Jan. 3 at the La Verne Aquatic Center.

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Goalkeeper earns multiple awards

Alexander Hernandez
Rubbie Chavez
Staff Writers

In November, Hector Duenas-Peña, senior goalkeeper for the men's soccer team, was named to the men's soccer All-SCIAC team.

Duenas-Peña has earned three Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference defensive athlete of the week awards, has had eight shutouts, 82 saves and is ranked second in the conference with 4.82 saves per game.

"It's hard enough to get one," said his coach Drew Rea said. "To get three says a lot. And then to get first team there's one spot in the entire league. He's done an amazing job."

"My dad really wanted me to play baseball when I was younger," Duenas-Peña said. "I never really fell in love with that. (Then) one day, one of my aunts brought a soccer ball to the baseball field and just started playing with it. Since then I've always been playing soccer."

Duenas-Peña played for American Youth Soccer Organization, or AYSO, in Moreno Valley, then through club programs before landing with Legends Futbol Club in Norco, where he first met Rea at16.

Rea recognized his talent and recommended he come to the University of La Verne.

"He knows he's a good player, but I don't think he realizes how good he is," Rea said. "One thing I could say is believe in yourself and you can go further."

But things were not always totally smooth sailing for Duenas-Peña. In fact his first college match nearly ended everything.

"My first game, I came out for a ball on the ground and one of the other players came in and kneed me on the head," Duenas-Peña said. "I ended up in the hospital for a week. I couldn't do anything and was out for the whole semester my freshman year."

The injury was a skull fracture that required surgery to ensure there was no internal bleeding.

Duenas-Peña remembers little from that time except the frustration and the fear.

The injury kept off the field for more than a year, but it never shook coach Rea's belief in him.

For the 2025 season, Duenas-Peña came on the field with a mission to prove himself and make a statement as a goalie.

"To understand what he's gone through to get the opportunity this year and just take it by storm," Rea said. "For us, he's been one of the most consistent guys on the team."

As he wraps up his college career, Duenas-Peña looks back with gratitude at his parents, specifically for supporting and encouraging him from a young age, despite their own challenges.

"My parents are Mexican, so I had to translate for them and be there for them (while) growing up," Duenas-Peña said. "They brought me (to) school and to all my club practices and fortunately I was able to come here to La Verne and continue my studying and continue playing."

Duenas-Peña's teammates recognize the hard work and dedication he has put forth on and off the field. "On the field, he's easily one of the best goalies I've ever played with," senior midfielder Nathan Garcia said. "Although he's not the most vocal, he's a leader by example."

"Not every day or year do you get to play with the best goalkeeper in the league, so I was definitely lucky to say the least," senior midfielder Johnny Kuwano said.

As graduation nears, Duenas-Peña has already set his sights on helping the next generation on the field.

"I'm currently a goalkeeper coach at Bonita High School," Duenas-Peña said.

"Last year we made a very deep run to the CIF playoffs and hopefully do the same this year as well."

In terms of the La Verne team, he hopes the legacy of success continues.

"Hopefully the team just keeps growing and growing and then they get a SCIAC championship," Duenas-Peña said. "Keep the results coming in.

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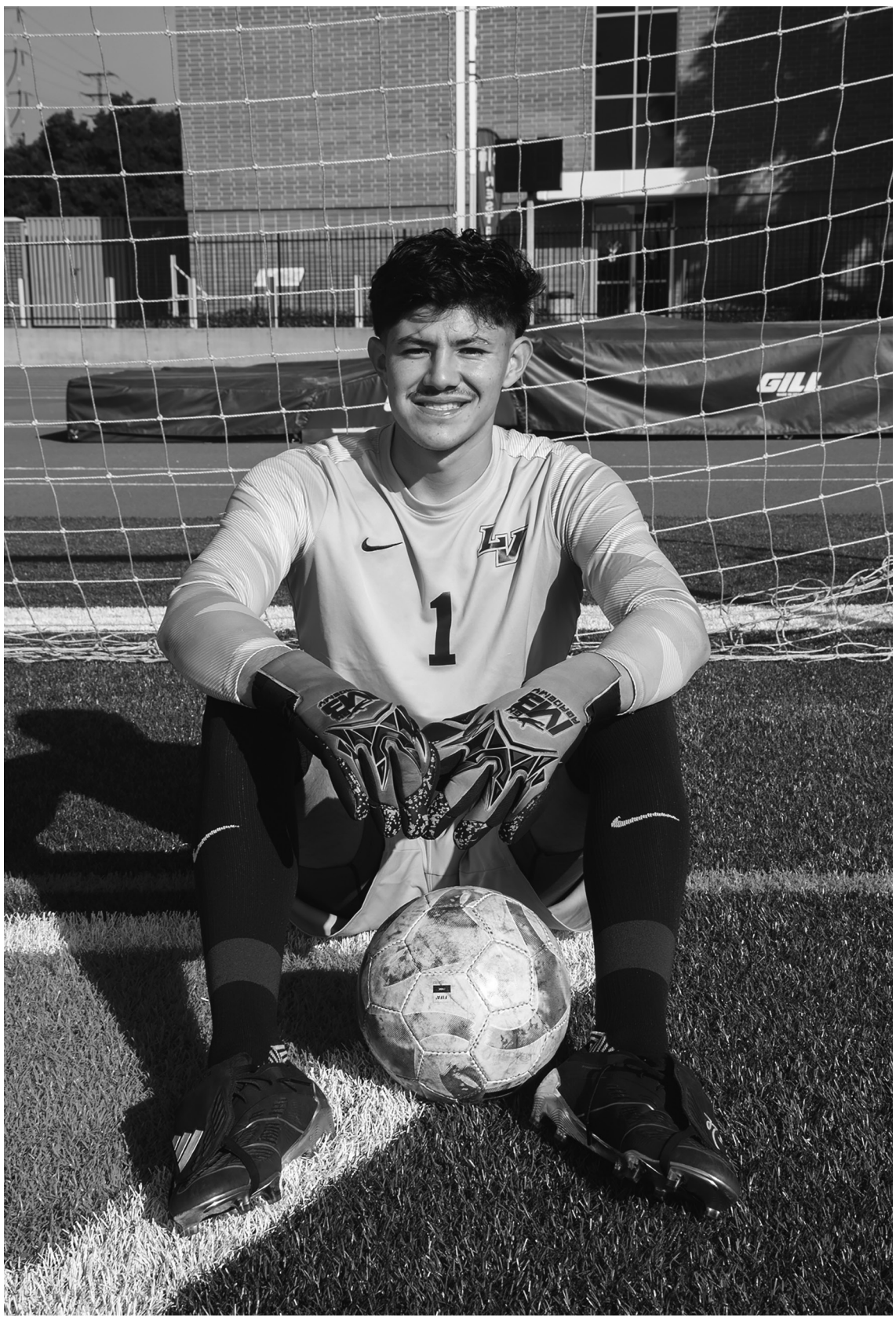

Liberty Belle Garcia

Senior goalkeeper Hector Duenas-Peña capped off a successful season by earning the First Team All-Time Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference honor. Along with this recognition, Duenas-Pe´na was also previously named SCIAC Athlete of the Week three times.

Women's basketball slams the Warriors



CC Flaherty

La Verne junior guard Isabella Gray-Musolff goes up for a shot against Nelson freshman defender Gabrielle Haskie on Nov. 22 at Frantz Athletic Court. Gray-Musolff played a consistent game, scored 10 points, forced turnovers and battled on defense.

Leopards fall to River Otters, 79-75

La Verne fails to gain advantage

Rubbie Chavez
Staff Writer

The men's basketball team fell short to Lewis and Clark, 79-75, Nov. 21 at Frantz Athletic Court in the Sports Sciences and Athletics Pavillion.

In the first half of the game, the Leopards opened with energy, pushing tempo and attacking the rim early.

The Leopards built a slim lead until about half way through the first half where the energy began to shift.

Lewis and Clark College answered back with offense attacking the Leopards defense closing the gap.

La Verne junior guard James Christian said he felt confident about how the team competed, even in the loss.

"I think I did pretty well on both ends," Christian said. "I could've been a little more aggressive on defense, but overall I think I did pretty good."

He added that the team gained something valuable despite the outcome.

"I think this was a game that helped us get closer, helped us figure out how to play with each other. We just have to figure out how to finish games and put them away." Christian said.

Christian put up 16 points against the River Otters.

The Leopards scored 10 fast break points in the game.

The first half ended, 39-35, in favor of the Leopards. In the second half, they fought to keep the winning pace.

The River Otters began to pull away with consecutive three-pointers midway through the half, but La Verne kept battling. The Leopards tied the game at 62 before the River Otters responded again with a decisive run.

Senior guard Carlos Bedolla said the team didn't lack effort.

"I feel that we played hard. We played pretty good," Bedolla said. "In the second half, we've got to stick together and learn how to close it out. We just gotta work on that every day at practice."

Bedolla said he expects the Leopards to establish their identity as they clean up details.

"We have a solid team, we can score the ball," Bedolla said. "We just gotta do more defensively…more effort."

Bedolla had eight points, three rebounds and two assists.

The Leopards continued to attack the Lewis and Clark defense with their offense in the second half.

That quickly changed when the Lewis and Clark offense started to attack the Leopards' defense.

Lewis and Clark had a 14-1 run in the last minutes of the game that led them to victory, 79-75.

Junior forward Julian Daaboul echoed the theme of inconsistency, saying his own performance reflected the team's night.

"I had a slow first half," he said. "In the second half I came out strong, then I didn't keep that going toward the end. We always have a strong start. We just have problems finishing games."

Still, Daaboul said he's optimistic about where the Leopards are headed.

"I have really high hopes for the team. We have a deep squad," Daaboul said. "Once we bring it all together, I think we'll be a great team."

Senior guard Cody Aquino said the group needs to tighten up small but costly habits.

"We did good," Aquino said.



CC Flaherty

Junior guard Erik Weeks takes a step back shot against Lewis and Clark on Nov. 21 at Frantz Athletic Court. It was a strong battle as it was back and forth, with Lewis and Clark winning, 79-75.

"We just have to clean up certain things preventing us from being great."

Despite the loss, Aquino said the Leopards' potential remains clear.

"Once we clean up certain things like rebounding and playing defense, we could be a great team," Aquino said. "We have all the pieces,"

On Nov. 25 the La Verne Leopards beat the Linfield Wildcats, 80-67, at home

The Leopards traveled to Claremont-Mudd-Scripps on Wednesday and fell to the Stags, 77-68.

Next up, La Verne will hit the road again to take on Occidental at 2 p.m. Dec. 13.

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LEOPARD SCOREBOARD

AT THE BUZZER

Women's Basketball, November 22
Nelson - 44
La Verne - 77

Volleyball, November 22
La Verne - 3
John Hopkins - 2

Men's Basketball, November 25
Linfield - 67
La Verne - 80

Volleyball, November 26
La Verne - 3
UW Eau-Claire - 1

Women's Basketball, November 26
Claremont-Mudd-Scripps - 68
La Verne - 82

SCHEDULE

December 12
Women's basketball vs. Hope, 7 p.m.

December 13
Men's basketball @ Occidental, 2 p.m.

December 15
Women's basketball vs. Westminster, 2 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL STANDINGS

	SCIAC	Overall
Claremont-Mudd-Scripps	1-0	8-0
Whittier	1-0	4-1
Pomona-Pitzer	1-0	4-2
Chapman	1-0	3-2
Occidental	0-0	4-0
Redlands	0-1	5-1
Cal Lutheran	0-1	4-3
Caltech	0-1	2-4
La Verne	**0-1**	**2-5**