Campus Times

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Salimi reflects on teaching career

Cassidy Diaz
Assistant Editor



Marina Bravo

Professor of Accounting Anwar Salimi gives his final lecture, titled "Final Exam: Reflections from a Retiring Professor," Wednesday in the La Fetra Lecture Hall for the University of La Verne's Last Lecture series. Salimi took his peers through his long career and described the changes not only he went through but also students and the curriculum.

Anwar Salimi's "Last Lecture" on campus this week was titled "Final Exam: Reflections from a Retiring Professor."

Salimi, a professor of accounting who has been teaching for more than 40 years, spoke on Tuesday in the La Fetra Auditorium before a small group of La Verne community members.

Before coming to the University 12 years ago, Salimi taught for 33 years at Cal Poly Pomona.

Salimi's talk reflected on his experience as a professor, highlighting his accomplishments and challenges. He also talked about his plans for retirement.

"There's something about being in a class explaining and teaching students," Salimi said. "You see that gotcha moment when they find out something that they wanted the answer to, and (that) makes it really worthwhile."

When Salimi first started teaching, he said he was nervous because knowing the subject and being able to teach it are different. He learned to see the work and the learning from his students' perspective, and understand what they wanted to get out of his classes.

"You're impacting their life in some way, big or small, and it's always a great pleasure and honor to meet former students," Salimi said. "Especially when they tell me that their life changed in some way because of what they learned in class.

"Another thing I really enjoyed about teaching is that I found that I get energy from being in class and interacting and being in front of the audience," Salimi said.

Research was also a highlight of his career. He's produced over 30 publications, over 12 during his time at La Verne.

Salimi also touched on this least favorite part of the job – grading his students' work.

"You have to discriminate among people based on whatever you think is best, and students always want to argue for a higher grade," Salimi said. He talked about how accounting has changed over the years and how AI is impacting education.

"While it's not replacing us completely, some of the more routine aspects may be replaced by AI," Salimi said. "It's going to affect everything, and technology has impacted us quite a bit, and it will continue to affect us."

He said that technology has quickly been adopted by accounting firms which are embracing the use of AI.

"All kinds of auditing and so on are being replaced by AI and I'm sure that will come to the classroom as well," Salimi said.

In retirement Salimi plans to travel and to get back into reading for fun. "I've been planning to read for years," Salimi said. "I would like to read … detective novels, horror stories or classics."

Salimi's colleagues appreciate his contributions both within and outside of the classroom.

"(Salimi) has always been a very gracious individual and I appreciated … his character and his decency," said Yehia Mortagy, professor of information technology and decision science, who attended the lecture.

"He's going to be sorely missed," added Claudio Muñoz, professor of accounting, who was also Salimi's student at Cal Poly.

Salimi and Muñoz, along with Professor of Accounting Renee Miller, created the master of science in accounting program at the University.

"It was always so much fun to be here and so I kept putting (retirement) off and enjoying myself, and I still am," Salimi said. "But I knew at some point I wanted to make a new beginning."

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Community honors Armenian Genocide

Kalayah Frazier
Staff Writer

About 30 community members gathered at 2:30 p.m. on April 24 at the Rock for the 11th Annual Armenian Genocide Remembrance Ceremony.

Many who attended shared Armenian heritage, and each guest had the opportunity to paint the Rock as a way to show support and solidarity for the victims. The Armenian Genocide, 1915 to 1916, targeted Armenians who lived in the Ottoman Empire. The mass killing of approximately 1.2 million people was carried out by the Ottoman government to strengthen Muslim Turkish control.

Senior communications major Rebecca Keeler played the cello for the opening of the ceremony to honor the Armenian people who died during the genocide.

Seta Whitby, professor of computer science, talked about how it's important to shine light on past horrible actions.

"We're commemorating the Armenian Genocide," Whitby said. "And in 1915, the Turks massacred a million and a half Armenians."

Silva Katchiguian, a member of the Armenian International Women's Association, reminded the guests that the same thing that happened in the Armenian Genocide is happening today.

"The ongoing strife in Ukraine and the current Gaza genocide and deaths in Lebanon illustrate the chilling reality that when hatred and intolerance fester, they lead to unimaginable atrocities that escalate into widespread violence," Katchiguian said.

Continued on page 3

On the Cover

Bob Baker Marionettes puppeteers Alex Evans and Ginger Duncan explain how marionettes work during their performance Saturday at the Family Learning Conference in Morgan Auditorium. They answered questions from children in the audience and also talked about the history of the Bob Baker Marionette Theater. / photo by Amore Mason

Governor's race hits close to home

Donya Rouzbehi
Staff Writer

The University of La Verne partnered with the Andrew Goodman Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on civic engagement, to host the CBS California Gubernatorial Debate watch party Tuesday at Ludwick Skybridge.

About 12 students attended the event, which took place at Pomona College.

Candidates focused largely on affordability – across housing, groceries, gas, rent and daily expenses. The state's high cost of living was present in almost every answer from the eight candidates.

Participants were the top candidates among a 60-candidate field. They qualified for the event after meeting ballot and polling criteria, with measurable support from the public.

The Democratic candidates included Xavier Becerra, Katie Porter, Tom Steyer, Antonio Villaraigosa, Tony Thurmond and Matt Mahan. The Republicans were Chad Bianco and Steve Hilton. The debate was moderated by CBS News California reporter Julie Watts and Pomona College's Professor of Politics Sara Sadhwani.

All eight candidates for governor took the stage as they reflected on the financial pressures California faces today. Held at Bridges Auditorium, the candidates gathered to answer the same question in their own different ways: Why is California so expensive and what would they do about it as the new governor?

At the debate watch here, Matthew Markey, junior political science major and \Andrew Goodman student ambassador for the University, was host.

"I think it's a great opportunity for fellow Leos to learn more about the candidates," Markey said. "Especially for the governor's race, which is maybe not as well known as the presidential race. It's a great opportunity for people who don't know a lot about the candidates to learn more."

Each of the candidates addressed the elephant in the room in their own words, causing urgency and tension. The Democratic candidates argued that the state hasn't built enough homes for years which increases rent and home prices beyond what many families can afford.

Mahan, a Democrat, dove into development reform and said that the solution is very simple: build more housing and speed up approvals. Villaraigosa focused more on middle-class development, warning that California has become a place where working families can't afford.

The candidates split the blame for the crises between high taxes, policy failures and population growth. The Democratic candidates proposed more solutions by building more housing and increasing the state's involvement in expanding supply to protect renters. The Republican candidates pointed to cut regulations and taxes, lower government spending and encourage private-sector housing development.

The proposed solutions ranged from expanding housing development to strengthening tenant protections while increasing state investment in an affordable way. The Republican candidates took a different approach by arguing that high taxes and government spending have made California less affordable, in general.

Magnolia Brown, a junior political science major, said it's important to tune in to politics.

"It is so important in the Leo community, especially with everything that has been going on with ICE agents," Brown said. "People need to hear this debate and lead by example. What happens in this (election) will determine California's future, which will determine our school's future."

Candidates' priorities varied. Becerra focused on housing and solutions for the systemic problems. He argued the affordability crisis in housing connected to supply, that the state has not built enough housing for the demand.

The eight candidates had limited speaking time so many of their answers were short and condensed. Instead of deep analysis into the affordability crisis, debate watchers got quick hits on the problems and abbreviated solutions.

Jorden Pfeiffer, a junior political science major, said these affordability issues are pertinent for current college students.

"Affordability is one of the main challenges that we are going to face once we leave college," Pfeiffer said. "We're going into the workforce to be able to provide for ourselves and be able to own our own homes. So this governor's debate is really important in order to address those issues."

Some gubernatorial candidates leaned into their own personal experiences, highlighting their years in public offices and efforts to address the housing crises and the unstable economy. Others seemed to separate themselves by arguing that California needs a break from business as usual politicians.

Emma Calderon, a junior biology major, said she appreciated the opportunity to engage with the important issues.

"I'm here because I want to learn more about politics and be more aware of what's happening in my state," Calderon said.

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Protesters object to admins' lack of transparency



Mia Byington

Students participate in a walkout protest Wednesday in Sneaky Park. The protest, organized by Lordsburg Liberation, called for the University to provide better financial transparency and a better procedure if ICE were to come on campus.

Genocide...

Continued from page 2

Guests discussed the horror of genocide, defined as the deliberate and systematic extermination of a particular group of people.

"We remember history not just to learn it, but to honor humanity and make sure genocide and mass murder are things that are never forgotten or ignored," Katchiguian said.

Part of the ceremony was set aside for people to pray with candlesticks for those who died during the Armenian Genocide and other genocides.

Madison McKinney, baker and owner of Dough Daughters, emphasized how important it is to have the memorial on campus, not just for the Armenian Genocide but for other cultural genocides.

"I would like to see more ceremonies like this around campus for other wars that have happened around the world," McKinney said. "From historical to present wars that continue to sadly happen…because I feel like multiple cultures have been through a lot of things historically. And I feel like it's right to bring it to light and to educate people."

Katherine Demirchyan of the University's Armenian Law Students Association talked about Armenian culture and the importance of remembering the devastating event.

"The 24th is remembered as the day that all politicians, doctors, lawyers, students, anyone of important stature was killed," Demirchyn said. "So the fact that we're standing here in front of the University with … Armenian faculty speaks volumes. They tried their very best to erase us, but we came back 10 million times stronger, and we will continue to be here."

The event concluded with a moment of silence for the Armenian people who died during the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian ancestors.

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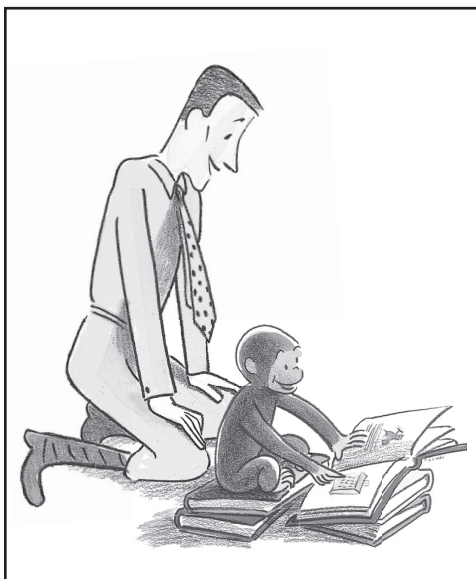

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Conference taps into joy of learning

Asha Longsworth
Staff Writer

On Saturday the LaFetra College of Education hosted its 19th Annual Family Learning Conference. This year's theme was "Tapestry of Arts."

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Sneaky Park, the college put on interactive workshops, resource-sharing demonstrations, and other activities designed to enhance learning in the home and community.

"What does it mean to share knowledge, the experience of learning?" asked conference co-chair Assistant Professor of Educational Counseling Esmeralda Rodriguez. "That's what this conference is about."

Amy Jiang, head of emerging technology and interim library dean, also participated in the event.

"My kids grew up with the family learning conference," Jiang said. "They saw one of the junior authors years back and wanted to write just like her. So they started to write. Now, I have a deep passion for this event, and my role is to help out: to connect with the community and show that (the University) has a devotion and commitment to learning."

This year's conference opened up with a marionette show courtesy of the Bob Baker Marionette Theatre.

A series of lectures and workshops followed the show.

Workshops were geared toward kids from pre-kindergarten to eight grade, where families met with authors, learned about emotional intelligence, folklorico dancing and more.



Amore Mason

John Archambault, co-author of the best-selling children's book "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom," talks to children and gives advice Saturday at Family Learning Conference on campus. He read parts of some of the books he's written and talked about his childhood.

Kathy Bakhit, a La Verne alumna and higher education professional of over 30 years, taught a workshop titled "What Should I be When I Grow Up: Family Affair" for fifth to eight-grade kids.

Her aim, she said, was to connect the aspirations of children with their perception of themselves.

"Who is your superhero?" Bakhit asked the kids.

Answers from the kids varied from their parents, to God, to various super heroes.

"Today, we're starting the conversation," Bakhit said. "We won't have all the answers, but our goal is to figure out our superpowers so that you can be your own superhero."

Other workshops included conversations about children's books, such as "Chika Chika Boom Boom" by John Archambault and "Mommy why is that man homeless?" by Rose Sommers-Webb

During a later session, Assistant Professor of Education Amy Heilman and El Monte teacher Gloria Delfin focused on elementary school kids' emotional intelligence for a session titled "Big Feelings, Strong Families: Helping Kids Handle Emotions at Home and School."

"Our calm equals their calm," Heilman said. "When they're having a big meltdown, it's easy to say 'Go to your room'. We're going to do the opposite and say I'm here with you – connecting before correcting."

"I went to school at La Verne and participated in this event as a student," said Michael Vallejo, assistant professor of education here.

"The highlight of this event was being able to bring my own family (and) show them the La Verne love," he said.

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Amore Mason

Kathy Bakhit, LaFetra School of Education leadership faculty fellow, talks to children about their favorite superheroes Saturday at the Family Learning Conference. The kids and their parents also participated in a written exercise about who they look up to the most.



Amore Mason

Three clown marionettes, operated by Bob Baker Marionettes puppeteer Ginger Duncan, perform on stage for a crowd of children and their parents Saturday at the Family Learning Conference in Morgan Auditorium.



Amore Mason

Emie Fell, sophomore elementary education major, checks in kids and parents at the registration table at the Family Learning Conference on Saturday in Sneaky Park. The conference included educational workshops, presentations by children's authors and a marionette show.

CAB creates its own music festival

by Aniyha Williams
photography by
Stephanie Amaya

The Campus Activities Board hosted its very own Leochella on Wednesday at Citrus Lawn for roughly 40 students.

This event is named after the annual music festival Coachella.

Leochella gave students the opportunity to listen to live bands including David Spitzfaden Trio and the University of La Verne's Student Cover Band.

"I decided to come to Leochella because it was an opportunity to hangout, listen to music and enjoy the fried Oreos," Cindy Bui, sophomore kinesiology major, said.

The event has a photobooth and a limited giveaway of fanny packs, mini fans and hand sanitizer.

Students also were able to enter a raffle to win a Nintendo Switch Lite with an Animal Crossing video game and a Lavernepalooza Pit Ticket.

CAB's Leochella offered food and treats such as Tostilocos, loaded ramen noodles and fried Oreos.

Sophomore criminology major and CAB Music Chair Justin Castañeda shared the vision of this event and how important it was for an event like Leochella to take place after not having one in so long.

"This was my last CAB event of the year and I feel very satisfied and filled with emotion on how this event turned out," Castaneda said. "It's really amazing to see ULV students enjoying the night vibe with wonderful live music, free food, and creating long lasting memories with others."

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Above: Brooklyn Malvesux, freshman biology major, gets creative at the digital photobooth at the Leochella event Wednesday at Citrus Lawn. The event was hosted by the Campus Activities Board and raffle prizes included pit tickets for Lavernapalooza and a Nintendo Switch Lite with the Animal Crossing video game.

Left: The ULV Cover Band rock out to music at the Leochella event Wednesday at Citrus Lawn. The David Spitzfaden Trio also performed.

People, pooches fund raise for animal rescue

Anisa Salazar
Senior Editor

The Inland Valley Humane Society and SPCA hosted their 26th annual Paws 4 Pets fundraising walk on Saturday at Bonelli Park in San Dimas.

The well-attended event raised over $80,000, money that will support pet rescues, shelter care, medical treatment, spay and neuter services, adoptions and community outreach programs.

At check-in, participants were given T-shirts and goodie bags.

A variety of prizes were also given to those who raised a certain amount of money.

Nikole Bresciani, president and CEO of the Inland Valley Humane Society, said that their goal is not only to fundraise money but also to raise awareness about what they do.

"The local community is really who we're representing," Bresciani said. "We have partnerships with city contracts. So we do local animal care (and) control, but also the community is really where it starts. These aren't the Humane Society's animals. These are the community's animals."

There were about 380 walkers, with dogs in tow, a great turnout for the animals and also vendors, who sold dog toys and outfits, offered a photo shoot booth and drew caricatures of dogs participating in the walk.

A few shelter dogs looking for their forever home were also on hand and available for adoption.

One vendor, retired firefighter Lisa Holloway of Tiller Tugs, was at the event for the fifth time with her business.

Tiller Tugs sells dog toys made of recycled fire hoses. On Saturday, Holloway was selling tug-of-war toys in various sizes.

Holloway, who donates a portion of her Tiller Tugs proceeds to animal rescues, said she was inspired by a search-and-rescue dog that used to come by the fire station and would be given a Tiller Tug as an incentive during its training.

"It's important for all of us to support (the Humane Society) now more than ever," Holloway said. "Sometimes you can't give money, but maybe you can give time… or just talk to people about it. It takes an army."

California Estrada, a walker at the event, met her goal of fundraising $500. She said she has a personal connection to the Humane Society because she has adopted a shelter dog.

"This is the only place I would put my money in," Estrada said. "Dogs and animal welfare, it's what really matters most to me."

The event was heavily supported by volunteers.

Teri Vieth's role at the event was to walk one of the shelter dogs that was available for adoption that day.

Vieth's interest in volunteering was sparked by the kindness of IVHS when they helped her following the death of her cat, and by seeing so many other animals who needed support.

"I travel a lot and sometimes in foreign countries you see a lot of feral, stray cats and dogs, you want to take all of them, but you can't do anything there," Vieth said. "I decided I couldn't do anything there, but I could do what I can back home on a regular basis."

For those who are interested in helping IVHS beyond their events, Bresciani encourages people to volunteer at the shelter and sign up for "daycations," which allow people to take a shelter dog out for the day. This helps relieve stress for the animals and makes them more adoptable.

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‘Chili con Carnage’ offers tasty break

Kalayah Frazier
Staff Writer



Baljot Rathor

Visitors line up to taste the chili entries at the Chili con Carnage competition April 23 in the Campus Center Ballroom. The winner for best overall chili was Jali Kitching, facilities trades worker. The winner for best meat chili was Debbie Deacy, executive director of purchasing and procurement services, and the winner for best vegetarian chili was Tejshree Trivedi, director of institutional research.

La Verne community members gathered April 23 in the Campus Center Ballroom for the first “Chili con Carnage” competition hosted by the School of Professional and Continuing Education.

The event included country music, photo booths, drinks, different types of chilis and desserts.

About 30 people attended the event, eager to taste the various chili concoctions including vegan chili, turkey chili, ranch-style beef, and chili verde.

“So this is our (first) Chili con Carnage chili cook-off,” said Vice President of Enrollment Management Alaina Dunn. “We started this tradition after a successful bake-off last semester that brought people together, and we wanted to continue that because events like this let people enjoy food and show their creativity.”

The turkey chili made by Debbie Deacy, director of purchasing, went quickly.

Guests were also interested in the vegan varieties.

Tejshree Trivedi, director of institutional research, enjoyed the social aspect of this event.

“I didn’t think so many people wanted to share their food the way they did that today…so it was really nice,” Trivedi said.

While University President Risa Dickson didn’t participate in this bake-off, she came to the event to cheer on the competitors and chat with guests.

Malissa Hernandez, the executive assistant in the office of the provost and the office manager, was another person who thought this event was interesting.

“It was nice to see (colleagues) outside of their working environment and bring their culinary skills,” Hernandez said. “Allowing there to be food competitions on campus … allows people to bring another part of themselves on campus that they usually don’t get to show.”

The event ended with people turning in their votes.

Associate Provost Suzanne Beaumaster announced the winners: Trivedi won for best vegetarian, Deacy won for best meaty chili, and the best overall nod went to Jali Kitching, facilities trades worker.

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Baljot Rathor

Graduation dresses cause debate with students

Olivia Russo
Editor-in-Chief

As the spring 2026 semester draws to a close, seniors have to think about the incoming graduation to celebrate their accomplishment at the University of La Verne.

However one of the questions they ask themselves in preparation for the ceremony is what do they wear under their gown.

For some students, finding the perfect dress can feel like a Herculean task. Trying to work with the constraints of the dress code, the color of regalia and however the weather is set to be that day.

ULV does not have an official dress code, students are required to wear the regalia they have purchased, but everything else except the shoes are up for the graduate to decide.

There is a strict no stiletto or pointed heels policy. In fact, if a graduate shows up with these shoes, they will be denied access to the field. Wedges, block heels and flats are recommended instead.

In terms of the color of regalia, ULV chooses black caps and gowns, so it leaves the color for students up to interpretation, the only true obstacle they have in their way is that of the weather. However, if students search up graduation dresses online or on various social media platforms, they’re met with many photos and videos of girls wearing short white dresses of various styles. Even just searching different online stores, white is the only color that comes up when looking for graduation dresses.

> “I just don’t really care about (tradition). To me, this event is more about what I want to wear rather than traditions. I think traditions are sometimes outdated.”
> *–Janira Hernandez, senior creative writing major*

The color white for graduation dresses is a widely accepted rule that is not actually a rule. It has its origins in the 19th century, according to National Geographic, when female suffragists would wear white because of its symbolism of youth, purity and moral virtue; as well as its timelessness.

Additionally, wearing a white dress has more specific roots within colleges and universities.

In the latter half of the 19th century, it was traditional for women to wear white for their graduations along with initiation ceremonies into sororities and honor societies. Spelman College established a policy for wearing white in 1900, stating that the “...tradition established a uniformed appearance among those present and denoted the significance of the occasion or event.”

For some graduating students, this white may not be an obligation, but it does feel like one.

“I’m kind of expecting everyone else to wear a white dress,” Kat Bloomer, senior business administration major, said. “I would not feel as compelled to wear a white dress if I didn’t think that everyone else was wearing a white dress.”

However, some of the students planning to wear white for their graduation tradition is not a part of their reasons for picking their dress.

“The jackets tend to be a darker color so white or cream just seemed the best that would look good with it,” Nyla Barzaga, junior psychology major, said. “Also if it’s a form fitting dress, then it looks good against the gown, so that’s a big reason why I want to white and I think a lot of people do white.”

On the other hand, some students do not feel that they need to fit inside the box of a white graduation dress.

Including that of Janira Hernandez, senior creative writing major, who shared that a tradition has nothing to do with her.

“I just don’t really care about it,” Hernandez said. “To me, this event is more about what I want to wear rather than traditions. I think traditions are sometimes outdated.”

Some other students also are choosing to focus more on their culture than a tradition that is really only talked about.

“I am a colorful girl who wants to wear color,” Wintana Tsegaye, junior legal studies major, said. “I also want to wear my traditional culture wear under my gown.”

Tsegaye also shared that the white tradition seemed outdated and compared the color to a wedding.

“It’s kind of weird that women have to wear that color but men just get to wear a suit and be boring,” Tsegaye said.

“I already feel like graduation is a special event for everyone so I want to stand out,” Amyah Smith, junior political science major, said.

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Softball takes on Sagehens in series

Leopards move into third place

Daniel Franklin
Staff Writer



Jasmine Lyn

Freshman second baseman Angelina Ratzlaff takes a swing against Pomona-Pitzer sophomore pitcher Audrey Reimers on April 24 at Campus West. The Leopards won, 2-1, and split Saturday's doubleheader in Claremont.

The Leopards defeated the Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens, 2-1, on April 24 at Campus West for a late season conference clash. The team then lost the opener of Saturday's doubleheader in Claremont, 10-2, but took the deciding game, 9-5.

The Leopards were dominant on the pitching and defensive side of the plate.

"A win like this proved to the team that we can take any game if we want it enough," Allie Colenzo, junior center fielder, said. "We know that we can not only compete, but beat the better teams in our conference."

All three runs in Friday's game were scored in the first inning. After the Sagehens scored one in the top half, the Leopards responded with two of their own.

Colenzo led off the inning with a single up the middle and promptly stole second. Kylee Knight, junior left fielder, then doubled the right field line to drive in a run.

After she advanced on a ground out by freshman catcher Allison Gutierrez, sophomore designated player Aries Alonso, powered a single between short and third, giving the Leopards the lead.

"Our team has done a really good job practicing positive mindsets in everything we do," Gutierrez said. "Whether that's in between pitches when we're up to bat or even in between plays on defense. This really helps to ease the pressure especially as we get into the final stretch of the season."

Leopards sophomore pitcher Briana Vasquez showed out once again in her ninth win of the season. Vasquez went seven innings for her 12th complete game this year and allowed only one run on just four hits.

The Leopards' defense was on fire the whole afternoon. They committed no errors and helped Vasquez escape a possible run the Sagehens could've gone on with having two on base in the sixth inning.

"In close game situations we stay composed by trusting in our pass the bat mentality and just coming together as one," Alonso said. "We focus on picking each other up, hyping each other up and staying confident no matter the situation. That energy helps us stay calm under pressure and keep competing pitch by pitch."

The Sagehens wouldn't do much in the seventh inning as they only got a hit and had two on base. But thanks to the dominant defense and pitching from the Leopards they would close out the Sagehens to get a chance to try and comeback.

"Our team just has to want it," Kileah Lologo, junior first baseman, said. "To win our second game against Pomona, energy was low and we lost. We had our team talk after we decided to flip a switch and remember why we work so hard and what it'll take for us to win. We ended up winning our series with a strong burn to make it to the post season."

The Leopards now have an overall record of 16-21 and 10-8 in the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. The Leopards are currently tied for third with Pomona-Pitzer, with Chapman sitting at second and Redlands at the top.

With the two wins over the weekend, the Leopards are getting closer to making the SCIAC softball tournament to contend for a championship. The Leopards will have to dominate their next three to solidify their seat to the tournament.

The Leopards will have another conference clash series against Claremont-Mudd-Scripps with the first game being at 3 p.m. on Friday at Claremont.

La Verne will then have a doubleheader on Saturday with the first game being at noon and the next game at 2 p.m. on Saturday at Campus West.

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New volleyball coach ready to carry on legacy

Anisa Salazar
Senior Editor

Randi Taylor-Toomay, formerly assistant volleyball coach, was recently named head coach.

Since joining the coaching staff in 2019, she has contributed to the legacy of success the team has upheld these last few seasons.

Taylor-Toomay is also an assistant professor of elementary education.

She played on the La Verne volleyball team for four years from 2009 to 2012 while earning her bachelor's degree in liberal studies, then also received her master of education with a special emphasis in physical education and her doctorate of education in organizational leadership, all from the University of La Verne.

Before returning to the University as a coach, Taylor-Toomay was the head coach for the girls' and boys' volleyball teams at Diamond Ranch High School in Pomona.

As Taylor-Toomay has grown as a coach and teacher, she said she is now driven by the process of success instead of the product.

"I found as a coach that if I can teach individuals to do things really well – do them the right way, be fundamentally sound and work really hard – we get those results that we want without having to say it," Taylor-Toomay said.

Taylor-Toomay's most recent notable moment with La Verne was as the team's assistant coach, ending the season as the 2025 NCAA Division III National Runner-Up.

She has seen firsthand what the team has done to meet its goals of being nationally ranked.

Her love for sports also plays a role in her life outside of La Verne.

With two of her three sons playing baseball, her favorite thing to do is spend time with her family at the baseball field.

Lauren Gott, junior outside hitter, explained that Taylor-Toomay can relate to what the team is going through.

"She knows what has worked for this program and what hasn't," Gott said.

"She obviously is going to take some new coaching philosophies in and change things that she thinks need to change, but she also knows what has been working."

When the process of looking for a new head coach began, it was clear to the women on the team how determined Taylor-Toomay was to keep things running smoothly.

Malia Capistrano, junior setter, says she finds it easy to trust Taylor-Toomay because of her familiarity with the team and seeing how she has managed to balance everything in her life.

"She even still recruited for us when she wasn't named head coach yet," Capistrano said.

"She did that knowing there was a chance she wouldn't be hired, which shows how passionate she is about the school and program."

Taylor-Toomay explained her appreciation for La Verne volleyball, how the program has led her to where she is today, and why this led her to decide to take the next step of becoming the head coach.

"I had this deep burning feeling that it has to be me because I owe that to myself as an alumni of this program," Taylor-Toomay said.

"I owe that to the women who are still on the team. I owe that to the other alumni of this program and to myself to really push and try to be the best I can be, because I am a product of La Verne volleyball. I have to set that example."

Going into this new season, the program is undergoing many changes.

There are big shoes to fill with the seniors who are leaving, recruits are being brought in and a new head coach is taking charge.

Zacky Coaston, junior middle blocker, said Taylor-Toomay taking over gave her peace of mind, knowing that not much would be changed with how the team was run.

"There was such a calming effect that she gave us when she came in," Coaston said.

Taylor-Toomay said she is ready to embrace these new challenges that this position may hold for her, and loves to see the growth that each of her players makes.

She said her goal is for the players to leave La Verne being the best versions of themselves in whatever they decide to do in life because that is what La Verne volleyball taught them to do.

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Leopards earn win over Chapman

Walk-off error gives victory

Lila Gongora
Staff Writer



Joseph Nocero

Chapman junior third baseman Blake Jacobs and La Verne senior first baseman Aaron Whobrey wait for the pitch April 24 at Ben Hines Field. The Leopards won, 8-7, on a walk-off fielding error by Jacobs.

A walk-off error gave the Leopards the win over the Chapman Panthers, 8-7, in their series opener April 24 at Ben Hines Field.

The Leopards had to battle on offense throughout the game, but battling and grit are two of the most identifiable factors of the La Verne baseball team.

"To be in a series opener and have a game go back and forth like that is a fun game to be in," head coach Scott Winterburn said.

"We felt like grit kept us in the game today, but we felt that we could've had a lot more of it during the course of the game."

The Panthers scored two runs in the first inning, but the Leopards came back, scoring four runs in the bottom of the third.

Senior shortstop Ryan Vosika walked, and sophomore third baseman RJ Libby and senior second baseman Aidan Salcedo scored off a triple from senior catcher Nate Perry, who also scored in the inning.

"Keeping tough by having good at-bats, pitching the ball in the zone and being competitive in whatever we're doing is important," Perry said.

Even with La Verne leading, Chapman came back, ending the fifth inning up 7-4.

With uncertainty on the mound for the Leopards, pitching changes were necessary.

Three relievers followed junior starter Justin Ries before Winterburn handed the ball to sophomore left-handed pitcher Lucas Quintana.

Quintana pitched a perfect last two innings to close out the game, which seemingly helped shake the Panthers' confidence in the last portion of the game.

> 'Throughout a baseball game you're going to have your ups and downs, but we were on our home turn, and I think we did a great job at staying composed.'
> *—Christian Takahasi, junior infielder*

Being able to capitalize on errors by the opposing team also proved to make a difference in the score for La Verne.

In the eighth inning, freshman outfielder Lucas Zayac scored on a throwing error by Chapman junior third baseman Blake Jacobs, tying the score at 7-7 for the Leopards.

"Adrenaline was pumping throughout the entire game, especially when we started coming back," Zayac said.

"Our team did a good job fighting throughout the game, and then we had the walk-off."

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Zayac hit a ball over to third base, and junior pinch runner Christian Takahashi scored on a fielding error by Jacobs.

"The theme of today's game was grit and toughness," Takahashi said.

"The energy in the dugout was pretty calm. Throughout a baseball game you're going to have your ups and downs, but we were on our home turf, and I think we did a great job at staying composed."

The Leopards seemed confident that they would obtain another series sweep this season.

However, on Saturday at W.O. Hart Park in Orange, La Verne lost both games in the series doubleheader.

La Verne baseball will take on Redlands on Friday at the Yard Baseball Field, and then will return home to Ben Hines Field for the doubleheader on Saturday.

Competing against Redlands, the Leopards hope to claim the No. 3 spot in the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference before they head to the postseason tournament beginning Wednesday.

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LEOPARD SCOREBOARD

AT THE BUZZER

Softball, April 24
Pomona-Pitzer – 1
La Verne – 2

Baseball, April 25
La Verne – 4
Chapman – 9

Baseball, April 25
La Verne – 2
Chapman – 5

Softball, April 25
La Verne – 2
Pomona-Pitzer – 10

Softball, April 25
La Verne – 9
Pomona-Pitzer – 5

SCHEDULE

Friday
Softball @ Claremont-Mudd-Scripps, 3 p.m.
Baseball @ Redlands, 3 p.m.

Saturday
Baseball vs. Redlands, 11 a.m.
Softball vs. Claremont-Mudd-Scripps, noon
Baseball vs. Redlands, 2 p.m.
Softball vs. Claremont-Mudd-Scripps, 2 p.m.

SOFTBALL STANDINGS

	SCIAC	Overall
Redlands	17-1	32-4
Chapman	11-7	26-11
Pomona-Pitzer	10-8	17-20
La Verne	**10-8**	**16-21**
Whittier	9-9	21-16
Claremont-Mudd-Scripps	8-10	17-16-1
Cal Lutheran	6-12	14-20
Occidental	1-17	4-29