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Concordia holds first Presenting night at Anaheim Ducks game

LUKA BRANCATO
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 16, Concordia held its first Presenting Night with the Anaheim Ducks, where the Ducks fell to the Carolina Hurricanes 4-1.

However, this night was seen as a win for Concordia. The night included a student section, a section for CONCORDIAserves community partners and advertising for the university throughout the game.

Senior Ariana Rosales, who was in attendance, said, “The atmosphere was very fun and different from other sporting events I have been to. It was cool to see all the Concordia advertisements and see a lot of people I know from Concordia there.”

On Oct. 7, Concordia was officially announced as the official education partner of the Anaheim Ducks, under contract through the 2036-2037 NHL season. This deal is an extension of Concordia becoming a founding partner of OCVIBE, an up-and-coming district in Orange County. The perks of the partnership include advertisements around Honda Center, two Presenting Nights every season and opportunities for Concordia students.

George Allen, Vice President of Marketing & Strategic Communications, and Taylor Detviler, Director of University Events and Partnership Programs, were huge contributors to making the partnership and the Presenting Night possible with the Anaheim Ducks.

Detviler said, “I think it went really well. I loved having the students there.”

She added, “It’s a great opportunity for us. For marketing exposure and having this partnership with the Ducks and OCVIBE, but ultimately all of it is to serve the students, so it was really cool to have our first Presenting Night be so centered on our students.”

Allen said, “Somebody commented to me during the game that it would be hard for anybody in attendance tonight to come away not knowing about Concordia. That was very much a sign of success.”

Allen added, “Concordia was everywhere. And not just in the graphics and the marquee signs and the LEDs and the videos, but in the seats. Not only did we have our 50 students in the plaza section, but I saw at least a few different sports teams that were all there together in Concordia gear, and we had groups of other faculty, staff and alumni who bought tickets all throughout Honda Center. Many of them were wearing Concordia gear and hyped to see Concordia so prominently represented.”

One of the biggest driving factors for this partnership was how both sides take pride in growing the community. Detviler said, “I hear a

lot about deep investment in the community from them [OCVIBE]. I think there are a lot of ways this is going to be very profitable in the future. That sense of commitment to community comes through so strongly from the Ducks, OCVIBE and the Samuelli family. I feel like there’s a deeper sense of purpose to it, and Concordia obviously operates with a deeper sense of purpose.”

The partnership has an opportunity to help Concordia become more of a household name. Allen said, “When people think about a faith-based option for education, I want them to think about Concordia.”

“If 17,000 people left Honda Center last night having a positive impression of Concordia, that’s what’s in it for me,” added Allen.

The next Concordia Presenting Night for the Anaheim Ducks will be on March 18, 2026. Look out for details next semester for ticket opportunities.



PICTURED ABOVE: Picture of the LED screens with Concordia messaging during presenting night at Honda Center.

Photo courtesy of: Luka Brancato



PICTURED ABOVE: Students taking in the Ducks game from the Concordia student section.

Photo courtesy of: Luka Brancato

Celebrating Día de los Muertos in the community

KIARA AZUMA
LOCAL/GLOBAL EDITOR

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is celebrated on Nov. 1 and Nov. 2. This Mexican holiday commemorates loved ones who have passed away, and it is believed that their spirits return during these two days. Families prepare ofrendas, or altars, in their homes, decorated with candles, pictures of the deceased, their favorite items, decorated skulls and marigold flowers.

During the holiday, families leave offerings of the deceased’s favorite foods, and many visit their gravesites. The holiday is a time of remembering those who have passed through dancing, celebrating and eating traditional food.

Many celebrations are being held around Southern California, which allow people to engage in activities tied to Día de los Muertos. Bowers Museum in Santa Ana is hosting a free family festival on Nov. 2 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. They will have live music, traditional food, arts and crafts, and dancing. Their website states, “Guests are invited to bring a photo for our community ofrenda. Enjoy vibrant performances by Mariachi Anacatlán, Relámpago del Cielo, Los Cuates, Xipe Totec and Joel Aceves.”

In Downtown Santa Monica, a celebration will take place on Oct. 26 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., featuring a public art exhibit of papier-mâché sculptures, live performances by various dancers and musicians, arts and crafts, a market featuring Latinx vendors, and a display of community altars. For more information about the event and photos from previous years, please visit <https://downtownsm.com/events-calendar/8911/da-de-los-muertos-celebration>.

(Continues on p. 7)

Keep harm away this Halloween

REBEKAH MICHEL
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As the season of spookiness, costumes, and candy approaches, Halloween plans are being made to attend theme parks, restaurants, and other social spots around campus. Whether you are staying in or going out, there are essential factors to consider to ensure a safe, enjoyable and responsible weekend. In recent years, the phenomenon and term “Halloween” has been used to refer to the Halloween festivities that often last all weekend, specifically for college students and young adults.

General concern for the safety of college students during Halloween has increased in recent years. As popular spots become more crowded, drinks become mysterious, and costumes are put on, sexual violence and driving under the influence can all become greater risks around this holiday. However, there are steps that can be taken to have a safe Halloween experience and encourage others to do the same.

In a conversation with Raul Morales, the Director

of Campus Safety, he shared the following insights into the holiday. “I believe the greatest risk to young people is driving when impaired from alcohol or any other affecting drug or substance,” said Morales. He continued, “Motor vehicles are a leading cause of unintentional death for people in the 15-24 age group, disproportionately involved in both fatal and non-fatal crashes compared to their share of the population.” With a greater number of cars in high traffic areas around the holidays, driving responsibly is of utmost importance.

“This Halloween, I urge all of our students to be cautious about traveling in a vehicle when the driver is impaired or could be impaired,” said Morales.

Morales reiterated that driving under the influence is not permissible, and others should always be aware of their surroundings and other drivers. “Drivers need to be people who have not participated in the use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, which include marijuana... also obey all traffic rules of the road, including not using cell phones while driving,” said Morales.

Especially during holiday weekends, planning ahead and having a sober drive can be the decision that keeps you and your friends alive and safe. “Designate a sober driver and be ready to call for a ride from a friend or an

Uber ride,” added Morales. As Lyft and Uber rideshare services are popular and available in Orange County, they can be convenient when individuals in your group are impaired.

Besides rideshare services, phones can also be used to ensure a safe holiday with the Find My feature on Apple Products and similar apps such as Life360. With location technology, it is more convenient than ever to share your plans and location with others. “Tell a family member or friend your celebration itinerary and utilize cellular location sharing,” said Morales. If the plans include using services such as Uber or Lyft, the apps offer additional safety features, including sharing ride details with a contact and setting preferences for a female driver. No matter what your Halloween plans include, remember to plan and share pivotal information with others.

The Department of Campus Safety is also here for all Concordia students and faculty. Morales reminds everyone, “If you think a friend might be in danger or overdue from returning from an off-campus event, call the police or reach out to Campus Safety for guidance in reporting at 949-214-3000.”

Flag football intramurals end at the Pepperoni Bowl

JORDAN VANDER VEEN
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 14 at 7 p.m., two flag football teams faced off in the intramural championship Pepperoni Bowl. Students came out to the field to cheer on their classmates while enjoying free pizza provided by Sgt. Pepperoni’s Pizza.

The championship game featured the dominant Rodney Grimmers versus the underdog Talking Tua. After a competitive and exciting game, the Rodney Grimmers came out on top with a 24-14 win, securing the Flag Football championship trophy.

The Rodney Grimmers started off the season strong, mercilessly beating their first opponents 42-6. The championship team only lost one game all season, losing only by one score.

Aaron Duport, a junior from the winning team said, “I really appreciate the whole season because we really had no idea how good we were going to be, and we just came

out and just had fun in that first game and blew everybody out.” Using the momentum they had from a successful season, the Rodney Grimmers were confident going into the championship game.

Jonathan Dose, senior, wide receiver from the Rodney Grimmers, said, “I was so excited. It felt like we were going into a real high school football game.” The positive energy was high for the Rodney Grimmers as they prepped for the championship game.

In contrast, their opponents Talking Tua started off with a 0-2 season. Talking Tua being the underdogs went into the championship game with a nothing to lose mentality.

While talking about their pre-game huddle speech, Victor Juarez, sophomore, from Talking Tua said, “Being 0-2 then making it to the Championship game, the mantra was why not us?” Juarez continued, “We didn’t win. But I mean we made some friends along the way and good memories.”

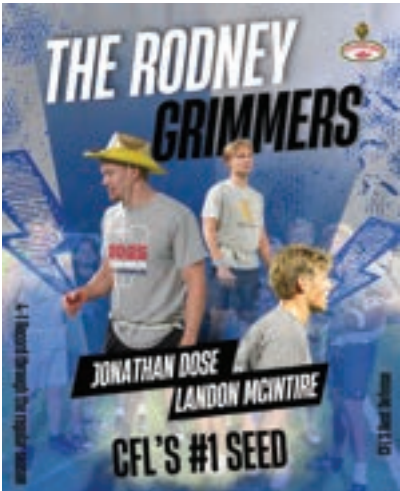
Nadeem Fahd, a sophomore and quarterback of Talk Tua, said, “We were all friends, so I think it was a good experience, a good team, and I enjoyed it.”

At the end of the season, both teams reflected more on the memories than on the final scoreboard. The Pepperoni Bowl showcased the community and competition involved with intramurals.

Dose said, “Intramurals are good when they are not taken too seriously, and you just have fun.”

Duport reiterated that, “Just do it. The more the merrier, especially with volleyball coming up, just go and get your buddies on a team. Get everyone to come play because it makes it more fun for everyone.”

From first-time players to seasoned veterans, intramurals are a great way to have fun with friends and stay active. Sign-up for indoor volleyball intramurals is still open and in the MY CUI app. Grab some friends and make a team to get involved in the intramural fun.



PICTURED ABOVE: The champion, Rodney Grimmers.

Photo courtesy of: CU REC



PICTURED ABOVE: The runner-ups, Talking Tua.

Photo courtesy of: CU REC

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CU Surf Club kicks off the new year with two events

TYNA RAMOFF
STAFF WRITER

The CU Surf Club started the semester strong with back-to-back events. It brought students closer together on land and in the water. Between catching waves at Doheny Beach and grabbing coffee before surfing sessions, the club created space for community and fun.

The first event at Doheny on Sept. 5 drew in a large crowd. “The first event had a lot more people, but the second event was more personal,” said Mikel Villarreal, an Engineering student. “The first event had more energy...about 70 people came out.”

Board and staff members, along with Kryssa Mattson, the club advisor, arrived early to set up tents and surfboards. “We met up and Doheny set up, had everyone gather around, and explained the fundamentals of surfing,” said Kaulana Lana’i, an Engineering student. “Then we did a head count... we had people playing pickleball, and we sent out a group of people [about 15 at a time] in the water for 30 minutes. Over time, we could feel out the people who wanted to surf and let them go.”

For many, this was their first time on a surfboard, and the CU Surf club presidents stepped up to help. “I was happy to see people learn how to surf and find a new passion for something, and just seeing the community we were creating ... it felt like peace,” Lana’i said.

The second event, held on Sept. 20, had a calmer vibe. The club

first met at Bear Coast Coffee at 7:30 a.m., where the first 20 people received free coffee, before heading out to the beach. “We were there for half an hour [Bear Coast Coffee], then went down to the beach, and had people go in groups of 15 again. There were two groups of about 15,” Villarreal said.

Kaulana added, “The second event was a little calmer. There were less people, but we still had a good time. We got a chance to get deeper with the people who came to the first event.”

While the smaller group made the event more personable, both presidents agreed it was still a success. “Yeah, we met tons of new people at both events,” Villarreal said.

“I feel like it was organized enough that we knew what we were doing, and it was well organized enough that people could enjoy it,” Villarreal commented about the second event.

Both students felt that Doheny was the ideal location for beginner surfers. “I would say it’s a good spot for beginners – it’s a reef break, so the waves are super consistent,” Villarreal said. Lana’i added, “It’s a reef break, so the waves are a lot calmer and predictable, unlike a beach with a beach break, which can be much more unpredictable. It’s also a good beginner spot.”

Lana’i summarized the experiences simply, “I was happy to see people learn how to surf and find a new passion for something I love.”



PICTURED ABOVE: Mikel Teaching New Surfers
Photo courtesy of: CU_REC Instagram



PICTURED ABOVE: Surfers Coming Back to Shore
Photo courtesy of: CU_REC Instagram

Pickleball club invites students and families to the court this Saturday

GABRIEL LUCERO
STAFF WRITER

Coming off the heels of the Fall Family Festival and the Breast Cancer Awareness 5K, the Pickleball club is looking forward to getting families more involved with campus life and keeping the weekend active.

On Sat., Oct. 25, Concordia’s Pickleball club invites students to grab their family and friends to cap Concordia’s 2025 Parent and Family Weekend with an Open Play Pickleball session. From 3 p.m. - 6 p.m., those game to play can head to the tennis courts and jump into a match of pickleball with their families or other students. Not in the mood to play? Come grab a seat on the bleachers and enjoy a series of family fun!

When asked about what students could look forward to the most Michael “Mac” Clow, a junior and the President of the Pickleball club, said “It’s free, it’s open to the public, and it’s low stress which means I am just looking forward to welcoming as many families to the court as possible.”

Logan Hughto, a junior and the Vice President of the Pickleball club added, “I am looking forward to playing games with those new to the sport and also potentially having some challenging games. You never know what to expect from the parents at these events.”

The Pickleball club has shown incredible growth since its inception in November 2024 and has proven to be a source of community and hospitality time and time again. Both Hughto and Clow encourage everyone to not only have fun this weekend

but to also continue playing every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. on the tennis courts. At this time, members of the club can be found cracking jokes while working with students of all levels to hone their skills. When describing the atmosphere on the courts, Clow said, “We try our best to keep the energy up. Our priority is creating a welcoming, fun, yet still competitive environment.”

In the past, the club has held multiple events where students could participate in tournaments, holiday themed freeplay, and has also collaborated with other departments of campus life to spice up their events. When asked to recall their favorite moment with the club, Hughto said, “I remember we once held a collaboration with CU Rec where I barbecued for all the people that attended the event. It was a joy to cook, and play with everyone.”

As the club looks to continue to grow, the co-founders are seeking to expand their weekly practices so that more people can participate on a consistent basis. Hughto said, “I like to find days where the most people can come out, we have been attempting to find better days and times for everyone to come and are now looking to play at night with the recent acquisition of lights for the club.”

Interested in joining? Email michael.clow@eagles.cui.edu or logan.hughto@eagles.cui.edu to get more information about the Pickleball club or stay updated about upcoming events on Instagram @cu_recreation.

Exploring the Hidden Life of Spices: National Chemistry Week Comes to the Santa Ana Zoo

MAKAMAE DU PONT
CAMPUS EDITOR

The Santa Ana Zoo hosted the American Chemical Society's National Chemistry Week event on Sun., Oct. 21. The main theme for this year's National Chemistry Week event in Orange County was "The Hidden Life of Spices."

Professor Montana Mellody explained that, "This theme inspired how chemistry can play a crucial role in how spices can create various spices and flavors." The event featured participation from about 12 colleges in Orange County. This was the first time Concordia's chemistry club attended this event, and members were excited for the opportunity.

The ACS presented a unique hands-on experiment that attendees walking by could try. The spice used was cinnamon, and the setup involved a large bowl of water. Participants would sprinkle the cinnamon on top of the water and were first asked to stir it using a plain Q-tip. The cinnamon would mostly stay afloat, not mixing well with the water. Then, when a Q-tip dipped in soap was used to stir,

the cinnamon sank and mixed into the water much more effectively. The experiment visually demonstrated how soap reduces surface tension, a fun and educational experience for guests.

Throughout the day, Concordia students interacted with kids of all ages. The chemistry club was represented by three students helping out at their booth on Sunday.

Senior Michael Lourenco said, "It was fantastic to know there are many more chemistry majors who have as much passion as [he does] for this subject."

Lourenco had a goal in mind during this event: He wanted to "open kids' minds and encourage them to pursue a STEM career."

Madison Lafon, a sophomore, shared her enthusiasm about the event. Lafon said she was "looking forward to teaching the kids about chemistry." She added that she is "passionate about chemistry" and enjoys "spreading my knowledge and sharing something that means so much to me."

Micah McGranahan, a

freshman, also reflected on his experience being in the club. McGranahan has had a lot of fun through the ACS as a first-year Concordia student. McGranahan said he likes the "chemist nature" within his group and likes hanging out with people who have the same major as him. He added how he is excited to do more experiments at the school, like the one they had at their booth. McGranahan values how the ACS club allows him to "network with people in his area of study."

The ACS here at Concordia invites people who love chemistry to check out the club. With this being their first year, the club looks to grow and strengthen its presence. They have weekly meetings on Thursdays, and the group is looking to participate in more outreach events throughout the year.

This is a great opportunity for students who enjoy hands-on chemistry and want to be part of a passionate, like-minded community. For more information on the club email micah.mcgranahan@eagles.cui.edu or Montana.mellody@cui.edu.



PICTURED ABOVE: ACS Members Left to right in pictures: Michael Lourenco, Madison Lafon, Micah McGranahan, Professor Montana Mellody
Photo courtesy of: Makamae Du Pont



PICTURED ABOVE: The experiment the ACS was using.
Photo courtesy of: Makamae Du Pont

Men's water polo turns Biola loss into motivation for conference comeback

KAYLA CIMARUSTI
STAFF WRITER

After a tough 9-10 loss to Biola, the Concordia men's water polo team has turned its frustration into motivation, using their setback as fuel for a strong conference comeback. With a mix of returning players and new additions, the team is finding its chemistry at the right time.

Junior Cade Peterson, a Sports Business major with a minor in Coaching, said this year's group feels different from last season. "This year's team is a little different compared to last year's team as we have nine new freshmen who all contribute to the team in many different ways, along with three other transfers."

Peterson said the combination of returners' experience and fresh talent has created a strong team dynamic. "With our 11 returners from last year's team, it has been a good balance between the returners' strength and experience and the new raw talent from the newcomers of having a successful season so far."

The team has two practices a day on Mondays and Fridays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, they only have

one pool practice in the afternoons; however, there are weights at 6:30 a.m. On Wednesdays, they get a bit of a break from the double practices, but still have morning practice, and instead watch film in the afternoon.

"Having two practices a day, especially in the early mornings, gets challenging at some points, but all 23 of us try to keep each other accountable by motivating ourselves to keep pushing through practice and always giving it our all," said Peterson.

After the loss to Biola, Peterson said he's focused on learning and improving. "After a tough loss against Biola, I bounce back by working harder in practice and watching more film to learn from not only my mistakes but also from my teammates."

He sees the game as more of a lesson than a loss. "I see it as a learning experience, and I know that the rest of my teammates will be ready the next time we play them."

Junior Kanoa Stoddard, an Engineering major, is also motivated for the weeks ahead. He's especially excited for a matchup against Salem, the team that ended their season last year. "I'm most excited to play against Salem because I have some buddies on the team, and it was also the team we lost to in the conference finals last year."

Stoddard said the team's chemistry has continued to grow throughout the season. "I think overall we have grown in our chemistry by having struggles at practice together and training, and also going on our most recent team trip to Fresno."

After two straight years of falling just short [second place in conference finals], Stoddard said the team is more motivated than ever to take the next step. "What motivates me the most right now is our opportunity to win the conference this year. These last two years of losing in the finals have motivated the team the most to win this year."

He also believes the Biola game served as a good reminder to stay focused. "Biola was definitely not one of the tougher teams we have faced. I think it was just an off day and a hiccup and something to get our minds right going into this final stretch of conference and finals."

As the season continues, the team's mindset is clear. Always stay strong, stick together, and keep pushing. The Biola loss may have been a loss, but it lit a fire that could carry them through the rest of the season. The team is ready for its comeback game on Oct. 31 at home against Biola, a chance for redemption.



PICTURED ABOVE: Men's water polo is ready to bounce back after a loss to Biola
Photo courtesy of: Seth Diamond



PICTURED ABOVE: The team is ready for their home comeback game on Oct. 31.
Photo courtesy of: Seth Diamond

Goal-oriented Concordia soccer seniors pursue playoffs

LAURYN SCOON
STAFF WRITER

Concordia’s senior men’s and women’s soccer players reflected on the 2025 season and their final games, including Saturday’s Senior Night matchup against Azusa Pacific University, which could shape their collegiate careers and playoff prospects.

Men’s senior Ryan Smith, a Business Management major and center-back position, shared that with these being some of his final games with Concordia, he is not going to take any game or opportunity to play for granted. He said, “With these being my final months on the team, I take it more game-by-game and day-by-day.”

Smith, the top scorer for the team with four goals this season, scored the goal that allowed Concordia to claim victory over Azusa Pacific University. He is also currently leading the team with 10 points based on combined goals and assists.

With Smith’s experience and expertise on the team, he feels

that he and his fellow seniors use this to help model leadership for the team. “All of the seniors have been leaders for the team, so that has a big impact. We’ve been in these situations [working towards the playoffs] multiple times before, so kind of just getting the younger players ready for these games coming up,” he said.

Smith added that the competitiveness between Concordia and the other teams within the league has helped push the team to work hard together on the field. He said, “Every team is beatable, but they can also beat us, so it’s just how we are and how we show up on the day. Ultimately, it’s in our hands how good we play, so it’s all up to us and how we show up on the deck.”

Fellow center-back player, senior Madison Hall, a Communications major, added her outlook on the final games for the women’s team. She said, “I am always making the most of every moment I have, whether it’s at training or in games. My mindset is to give my all and

make sure I don’t have any regrets before I hang up my cleats at the end of the season.”

Hall is a consistent starter who helped lead and contribute to their victorious eight wins in their 13 games played so far. She shared that reaching and winning the PacWest Conference is what she would consider to be a successful and memorable senior year. “It would mean everything to win the PacWest Conference. We have such a big senior class, and winning the PacWest Championship would be a great way to end my soccer career,” she said.

Hall elaborated that, “I think we just always stick to our system and who we are, when we are operating in our principles. When we stick to our system, there isn’t a team that we can’t beat or compete against.”

Just as Hall stressed the importance of maintaining their strategies to win games, Smith echoed that same idea of urgency following the men’s 1-0 win against Azusa Pacific. “Our win against APU will give us good

momentum going to Hawaii, and if we come back from Hawaii with two wins, we will have six points. Then, we have a good final two-game stretch. So I feel like from here on out everything is a must-win,” he said.

For the women’s team, Hall feels that maintaining the camaraderie of the team and sticking to their strategies is key to reaching the playoffs. She said, “I think we have an amazing, talented group of girls, and we just need to keep being us and sticking to our system. We need to stay focused, keep motivating and trusting one another.”

For more information about the men’s soccer upcoming games visit, <https://cuigoldeneagles.com/sports/mens-soccer/schedule> or visit their Instagram @cuimsoccer

For more information about the women’s soccer upcoming games visit, <https://cuigoldeneagles.com/sports/womens-soccer/schedule> or visit their Instagram @cuiwsoccer



PICTURED ABOVE: Concordia Men's Soccer Team ahead of their game versus Azusa Pacific University
Photo courtesy of: Lauryn Scoon



PICTURED ABOVE: Concordia Women's Soccer Team lined up as Seniors are introduced prior to their game versus Azusa Pacific University
Photo courtesy of: Lauryn Scoon

The eyes of America's young adults are on Gaza through social media

COLIN WHEELER
STAFF WRITER

Recently, on Oct.10, a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas was struck. Both sides were told to adhere to the rules of the agreement, exchange hostages, and ensure safe travels. Although the ceasefire deal is not the end of the Gaza conflict, social media can see the ceasefire happening in real time. In the region over 70,000 (68,172 Palestinians and 1,983 Israelis) have died, and many others have had their lives destroyed due to the conflict between Israel and Hamas. This conflict has received increased attention online from many people across the world.

Social media apps like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube have had posts not only about what is happening in Gaza but from Palestinians themselves, showing the dire situation and begging for humanitarian assistance. Hope Yonehara and Josiah Schade from the Speech and Debate team have been aware of the Gaza conflict through social media posts. Yonehara said, “The issue is very polarized. People have very strong opinions, for Israel or for Gaza...there’s no real middle ground.”

The ceasefire remains elusive amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. Both Yonehara and Schade mentioned the social pressure that online attention

has placed on the conflict in Gaza. The younger generation of Gen Z has seen the impact that the conflict has had in real time. Schade said, “Social media has definitely changed how a younger generation and adults see the conflict, because I think a lot of young adults are not watching traditional news anymore. They are getting their news from social media.”

Since social media is a place where a variety of videos can be watched about any opinion or topic, the question stands if social media could adversely affect the sharing of information about the conflict. Creators on social media platforms can influence the audience's opinions. Schade said that, “Creators with large fan

bases definitely use that to their advantage.. not in a negative way, but it’s just using the tools that are available to you.”

Not only are social media creators influencing talks about the Gaza conflict, but so are the algorithms that are in social media apps like Instagram. We see how creators use analogies or other words to talk about certain suppressed ideas. Yonehara shared light that the language used to describe the conflict matters, saying how “Language constructs reality. We have to make sure we are using it in ways that help people, because if we don’t, the people that it’s affecting, our talks, and language will affect their reality.”

Symphony Orchestra Tour to Arizona

SYDNEY WEAVER
STAFF WRITER

During the weekend of Oct. 18, the Concordia Symphony Orchestra took on a tour to Arizona, where they featured works by Haydn, Hindemith, Manz and Bach in their fourth Cathedral concert.

Orchestra member Olivia Thaelke and Angel Canal gave their background in music and insight into this weekend.

Thaelke, a senior and principal cellist in the orchestra, said, “From the time that I was little, I knew I wanted to be a cellist.” She loves not only playing the cello, but also playing with the orchestra as a whole. Thaelke has held the position of section leader since she was a freshman and views it as a huge gift.

Canal, first oboist and lead alto in the jazz band, shared, “The Music Department here is such a special community. It is a great place to grow as a musician with the support of your peers.” Canal studies woodwinds and doubles with oboe as a major, so music means a lot to him, and being able to share it with an

audience is a blessing.

Thaelke described the preparation that went into this performance. “Sectionals were a place where we were able to learn what it means to be part of our section and find one voice,” she said.

The orchestra played Bach/Manz: In Dulci Jubilo: Speer: Die Bänkelsängerlieder; Haydn: Symphony No. 22, “The Philosopher;” and Hindemith: Mathis der Maler Symphony (“Mathias the Painter”).

Both musicians explained that Hindemith took a lot of practice and hard work to get down. Thaelke said that while Hindemith specifically had a lot of rehearsal due to “its difficulty and sound world,” it was her favorite to play. This piece challenged the orchestra, and she said, “We grew a lot from playing that symphony.” Canal said, “The first movement of the Hindemith is really fun once you get it under your fingers.”

Thaelke was very happy with both her personal performance and the performance of the orchestra

as a whole. She said, “This performance I grew as the cello section leader,” and as a whole, “we sang with one voice.” She said that the audience was compelled by their music, and to her, that is satisfactory work. Thaelke said that being a senior made this tour extra special because she loves performing, and she “got to savor it in a whole new way.”

The Cathedral Concert series is unique to Concordia, and Dr. Jeff Held puts a lot of thought behind each piece played by the orchestra. Thaelke explained that each piece of the performance was tied to a vocation. She said, “I love that we can combine both secular and sacred works in one concert in order to understand the Christian life better... I think that is the main point of the Cathedral concerts.” Canal added, “The opportunity to play in a church with amazing acoustics is always a wonderful one... nice people, beautiful churches and a wonderful community.”

Thaelke said the most meaningful part of playing

with Concordia is “getting to know people through the shared experience of learning and making music.” This is a beautiful thing that the orchestra gets to be a part of and take to the stage. She said, “When we get to share the blood, sweat and tears, it's a really special thing.”

Touring is not only a fun aspect of the gig but a formative experience. Canal said traveling with the orchestra “just brings excitement to life and lets the music breathe to be taken out of our usual element.” Thaelke shared, “There's a special bond with the musicians and the music itself that is formed on a tour.”

The orchestra will perform in December for the Concordia Christmas concert at Segerstrom Hall and at Carnegie Hall in the spring, both of which Thaelke is looking forward to. Canal is most excited for Carnegie Hall and said, “It will be my third time returning to Carnegie and it's always a special memory and a jolly time being in New York.”

Is Taylor Swift's new album her next hit or biggest flop?

TYNA ROMOFF
STAFF WRITER

As Taylor Swift's new album continues to spark online discourse, many students are debating whether it will go up against other big artists. While some listeners are embracing this new direction, others are feeling extremely disappointed. From enthusiastic excitement to very harsh critiques, here's what students had to say.

“I was very underwhelmed,” said Bethany Wagner, 21. “When you listen to the lyrics, you ask, ‘What is she even saying?’” Wagner, like several others, felt that the album was missing the depth that Swift's past albums had.

“This one was so surface-level,” she said. “In the past, she's had some really good ones, and I can see why people call Tyna Romoff, Staff Writer her a lyric genius.”

Others shared the sentiment, including Aubrie Austin-Elliott, 20, who described it as “very Kids Bop coded.” She said, “It felt very childish... like if ChatGPT wrote her lyrics.”

Some criticism came from listeners who compared the new album to Swift's previous releases. “In her earlier albums, Taylor took more creative risks,” said Colin Wheeler, 20. “This one feels like she's just going through the motions. It's very on-brand, but not especially intriguing.”

However, not all students were disappointed. Lauryn Scoon, 21, appreciated the return to a more pop sound. “I thought it was really cool that she worked with Max Martin again, her producer from ‘1989,’” she said. “It brought back the vibe of fun pop songs, which in comparison to her last album, was more emotional.”

Scoon also pointed to Swift's use of metaphor and narrative. “Her storytelling was well done,” she said. “Songs like ‘Elizabeth Taylor’ really stood out to me. I think it helped me understand Taylor Swift's experience with life recently.”

Sarah Wagner, 20, said it was one of the few songs she enjoyed. “It included a bunch of easter eggs like her White Diamonds perfume and the fact

that she had a million and a half husbands.” Still, Sarah Wagner admitted, “Most of the songs were not amazing. I'd maybe recommend just two.”

How does this represent where Taylor Swift is in her career? Responses ranged from supportive to skeptical. “She's in a good relationship now, and usually she profits from being broken up with,” said Bethany Wagner. “Now she's just trying to flip the script because she's getting married. I think she's run out of material since she's in a healthy relationship.”

Wheeler offered a more critical take. “She's at a crossroads. People are learning to criticize her more thoughtfully. The music feels basic, and her social messaging can seem shallow. She either needs to evolve creatively or risk burning out.”

As for whether the album represents a bold creative move, the students were once again split. “I think she took a creative risk,” said Sarah Wagner. “It didn't pay off right now, but it might in the future.”

Scoon agreed, “Working with

Max Martin again was a risk, but it paid off well.”

Others weren't convinced. “No, I think she took a risk ... but not a creative one,” said Austin-Elliott.

Wheeler added, “The only possible ‘risk’ is ‘Canceled,’ but even that feels like a defensive response to criticism rather than genuine innovation.”

Did students have a song they replayed the most? Most students answered no. “‘Canceled’ caught my attention,” said Wheeler. “But mostly because it was weird, not because it was good.”

Scoon said, “I like ‘Opalite.’ It feels like a very dance-y song, and I take dance classes, so it's easy to move to.”

In the end, whether students loved it, hated it or felt unsure, one thing is certain: Swift still knows how to get people talking. As Sarah Wagner put it: “Maybe this album just needs time. People didn't like ‘Dead Poets Society’ at first either, and now it has some of her most iconic songs.”

Día de los Muertos

(Continued from p. 1)

Located in Downtown Los Angeles, the Gloria Molina Grand Park is hosting celebrations for nine days, from Oct. 25 to Nov. 2. “The park’s free, week-long exhibition of community ofrendas invites reflection, connection, and celebration of loved ones who have passed,” states their website. The park will showcase 19 altars created by artists and local organizations, presenting the theme of “Let Freedom Ring: Honoring our Immigrant Ancestors.” The park will also host live mariachi bands and ballet folklórico dancers. Families can participate in arts activities like card making, face painting, and lantern making. They are also able to leave photos, letters, or mementos in honor of a loved one.

Lupita Infante, a Latin-GRAMMY-nominated artist, will also headline the last day’s closing celebration. Official details about times and location can be found on <https://grandparkla.org/diadelosmuertos>.

Also located in Los Angeles is a perfect event for runners. A 5K marathon will be held on Nov. 1, offering participants a music-filled experience and a post-race celebration tied to Día de los Muertos. Participants can also get their faces painted before the race. If interested, visit <https://losmuertos5k.com/#Race-Day-Info> to register for the marathon.

These community celebrations tied to Día de los Muertos not only allow individuals to celebrate their cultural heritage and honor their ancestors, but also enable others to engage with and learn about Mexican culture.



PICTURED ABOVE: An example of an ofrenda which honors the loved ones that have passed away. Photo courtesy of: Kiara Azuma

Concordia at the Irvine Global Village Festival

REBEKAH MICHEL
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Oct. 11, the city of Irvine came together at Great Park for a lively festival celebrating the cultures, food, and music that make our city so unique. With activities for kids to live

musical performances, the festival was very well attended and featured our own Golden Eagles. Amongst the tents and vendors, the admissions team from Concordia was present and ready to talk to potential Golden Eagles and to gift them green and gold swag.

In the art hall, Concordia

was greatly featured. With many families coming to the festivals with young children, Art students from Concordia ran a craft and coloring table for small children. Additionally, student art from the recent Constellation art show was displayed, bringing Concordia art to an even bigger audience.

Concordia’s footprint at the Irvine Global Village Festival was very noticeable and another spectacular example of our involvement in Orange County, our contributions to the city of Irvine and the diversity of cultures represented in our area.

Fall Choral Concert Preview

GISELLE PARRA
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 25 at 7 p.m., Concordia’s Donne Di Canto and Men’s Chorus will have their annual Fall Choral Concert. This performance will take place at Immanuel Lutheran Church, located in Orange. This year, the choir is under new leadership with the arrival of Director Dr. Dan Wessler. As the performance gets closer, the choir is busy preparing to grace Immanuel Lutheran with their songs.

Senior in Donne Di Canto, Grace Wheeler, feels ready for the concert, stating, “We’ve been rehearsing since August, and we’ve just used every rehearsal to get better and better.” The music will not only be wonderful to listen to but also very meaningful as the “new director decided to choose songs about overcoming challenges in life and enjoying the little things, knowing that God is walking alongside us,” said Wheeler.

Adding on to this, Matthias Bruggerman, a junior, shared more about the songs that the Men’s Chorus will be performing. “For the fall concert, we are singing mostly religious music. We have one tune that’s set to just a drum

beat. We have another that’s completely a cappella, but very Marcie, not quite gospel, but like gospel adjacent. We have another tune that’s this beautiful sweeping melody accompanied by a piano. And then we also have another piece, ‘I want Jesus to walk with me,’ which has this nice, low, warm base melody.”

Bruggerman has been in the men’s choir for two years and said that he is very excited for the fall concert. “We had a chapel visit a couple of months ago, and the boys did a really, really good job! We’ve gotten a whole lot better at blending and having a consistent, cohesive tone. We built out some chords and really worked on exercises that accomplish those things. We’re gonna tell a story and worship our Lord,” said Bruggerman.

Men’s Chorus and Donne Di Canto members are eager for this performance. “I love being able to perform, especially songs about Jesus and His protection and love He has for us. It allows me to honor God using the talents he gave me,” Wheeler said. Bruggerman echoes this excitement, saying, “I’m excited for a 45-minute concert! It’s always really awesome to be able to sing for a group of people who want to

hear us sing.”

Both choirs have been working very hard to make this event special for everyone, and it would not have been possible without the leadership of Dr. Dan Wessler. In addition to being a chorus director, he is a barbershop arranger and a singer. Under his leadership, the audience can expect another wonderful performance.

Tickets are available online for purchase at <https://www.simplivetix.com/e/fall-choral-concert-donne-di-canto-men-s-c-tickets-232297> Come and support your fellow Golden Eagles for a beautiful evening of worship and music!



PICTURED ABOVE: Donne Di Canto and Men's Chorus bring their joyful noises to churches all around California. Photo courtesy of: Shane Perry



PICTURED ABOVE: This year introduces a new choral director, Dr. Dan Wessler. Photo courtesy of: Shane Perry

Artificial intelligence in the classroom is changing the way we learn

ARIANA ROSALES
STAFF WRITER

Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept; it's now a presence in classrooms across the country. From writing assistance to research help, AI tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly and QuillBot are currently reshaping how students study and how professors teach. However, as the technology grows more powerful, so do the questions about its ethical use and its impact on the future of education.

For many students, AI has become an everyday study tool. "I usually use ChatGPT when I am trying to search up a topic I don't fully understand, or when I'm writing a paper and struggling to find reliable sources," said senior and Kinesiology major Owen Gott. "I also use Grammarly at the end of each paper that I write. Using it as a resource is not the same as using it to complete whole assignments or tests."

Other students, however, are more skeptical. "I would say I use AI for less than half of my assignments," said senior and Sports Business major Emmarie Gonzales. "I usually will use it for an outline for certain coursework. It helps me understand exactly what the prompt or my professor may be asking for. I do not always follow it, but it helps when I'm first

getting started on a project."

Professors are also feeling the shift, with opinions varying across departments. Some see AI as an opportunity to enhance education, while others view it as a threat to academic integrity and even creativity.

Dr. Konrad Hack, the Director of Forensics and Assistant Professor of Communication and Media Studies, said he's learned to adapt. "It will for sure influence how we do things, and it depends on the class and the assignment," he said. "In my intercultural communication class, we have an assignment about identity and how it impacts you; it would not be okay to use ChatGPT to write that paper, but it is a great tool to help find sources and understand concepts you don't know a lot about."

In technical fields like engineering, AI use is often encouraged. "For example, the Computer-Aided Design (CAD) course explores the use of AI to generate numerous options that satisfy design requirements that the engineer can further vet," said Engineering professor Dr. Gabriela Espinosa. "For me, the deciding factor is the impact on critical thinking. If AI is a tool that supports

higher and deeper levels of thinking, then its use in the classroom may even be encouraged. However, it's important that students demonstrate their ability to assess the quality of AI outputs and not simply use AI as a way to bypass thinking."

Still, the question of ethics dominates. Many universities across the country have implemented or are drafting policies about AI use, but enforcement varies. "The university's policies grant the faculty a lot of freedom in how they handle AI, however it is required that faculty communicate their individual policies," added Espinosa.

What counts as academic dishonesty heavily depends on the professor, the assignment, and the use of the tool itself. Rev. Dr. David Loy, the Dean of Christ College, said, "The professors in Christ College are free to integrate generative AI into their courses in ways that make sense for the curriculum. For cases where students abuse AI, our academic dishonesty policies are probably as effective now as they have always been."

Dr. Rebecca Duport, Assistant Professor and Director of the DCE Program, said, "Each professor decides how much they want to embrace AI. Our university is aware

and actively having discussions, which is good; we are not ignoring it."

Many students and professors question whether a lack of clarity could widen the gap between students who know how to use the technology responsibly and those who misuse it. At the same time, AI detection software can sometimes be unreliable, often flagging legitimate work as AI-generated.

Despite the uncertainty that a new technology can bring, most agree that AI is here to stay. The focus now is on learning how to coexist with it and how to teach with it in mind.

"I want to embrace AI as a time-saving aspect, but I am being cautious because I don't want it to become a dependency. AI is a tool that we need to learn how to use well. There is a place for it, and I'm excited to help my students navigate that," said Duport.

As classrooms continue to evolve, the debate around AI reflects a broader question about the role of technology in education. Is it a shortcut, an accessory or uncharted territory? For now, one thing is clear to students and faculty – the future of learning will be written with a little help from artificial intelligence.