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XOXO, Guardian Gurl: Seriously Stressed Out

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/xoxo-guardian-gurl-seriously-stressed-out/>) 👤 Guardian Staff (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/editorucsdguardian-org/>)



Dear Guardian Gurl,

I've got midterms this week and I'm already struggling to keep up with regular assignments in addition to work, participating in school organizations, and just living in the middle of a pandemic! Any advice when it comes to finding healthy coping skills to deal with this whole year and such?

Signed,

Seriously Stressed

Dear Seriously Stressed,

I am so happy to get this question! Fear not my friend, I've got loads of coping mechanisms to share with you. The best thing to do first is to start with the basics: are you drinking enough water (or any at all)? Are you getting good sleep? When was the last time you ate? It is so easy to forget to do these things throughout the day! Remember, a large iced coffee or a can of Yerba Mate cannot sustain you, especially not with only five hours of sleep the night before.

Once you've covered the basics, move on to making time to do the things that bring you joy. Get your water bottle, a good snack, and sit on the couch to catch up on your favorite show (or if you're like me, watch some reruns of your "comfort" movie or TV show). If you feel up to it, get outside for a walk if you're able to! If you feel called to, knock out some of those dishes in the sink, straighten up your room, or maybe vacuum. When you're stressed out, feeling like your mind is all over the place, it is not particularly helpful if your physical surroundings match that anxious energy. A tidy room with some open windows for fresh air will lighten your mood and help your focus.

If you find yourself so stressed out or anxious that you start to feel super overwhelmed and/or a panic attack starting, there are ways to help combat those emotions when they're running high! One thing to focus on is your breathing: try out a box breathing exercise, where you breathe in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breathe out for four seconds, and then hold again for four seconds before repeating the cycle. Focusing on the breath and counting out those seconds can help lower your heart rate. Another thing that seems silly, but is proven to be effective is putting an ice pack on your forehead. I don't know how to explain the science behind it, but essentially what happens is that the cold shocks your brain and forces it to focus on the cold temperature instead of whatever is making you anxious, allowing your body time to come back down.

Hopefully some of these strategies help you get through these next few weeks. Remember, midterm stress is temporary and you can navigate your way through it! You got this!

Xoxo,

Guardian Gurl

“xoxo guardian gurl” is the UCSD Guardian’s newest advice column. Fill out the form at tinyurl.com/ask-guardian-gurl (<https://tinyurl.com/ask-guardian-gurl>) to ask Guardian Gurl any questions.

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Interview with r/UCSD Moderator Team

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/interview-with-r-ucsd-moderator-team/>) 👤 Natalie Tran
(<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/natalie-tran/>)



With nearly 50,000 members and growing, r/UCSD has become a hub for everything UCSD-related: advice, memes, news, and more. Behind this success is a dedicated team of moderators, who gave The UCSD Guardian a peek into what goes on behind the scenes of UCSD's largest online community.

This was not your typical Zoom call. Upon joining, each participant edited their display names to include their Reddit usernames in parentheses. From then on, they referred to each other by their usernames: Kavhow, cryton, Aber2346, ImperialRedditer, absolutelycurtainss, and tornato7.

For the moderators (<https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/about/moderators/>) of UC San Diego's subreddit, r/UCSD (<https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/>), this interview was their "face reveal." They had previously only communicated through Discord messages. At a school with over 40,000 students, it turned out to be a small world. Aber2346 and cry-ton had attended the same high school, and absolutelycurtainss and Kavhow recognized each other from a Making of the Modern World (MMW) discussion class.

Making up this team of five active moderators and one former moderator are a third-year Computer Science major, a fourth-year Mechanical Engineering major, a third-year Electrical Engineering major, a third-year Cognitive Science major, a Mathematics-Computer Science graduate from 2018, and a Physics graduate from 2017.

Before becoming moderators, they actively answered questions and posted memes on the subreddit. Eventually, they joined through various ways: cry-ton and Kavhow asked to join the team, ImperialRedditer and Aber2346 were invited onboard, and absolutelycurtainss attracted attention with her memes. All of them wanted to improve the state of the subreddit.

r/UCSD began in September 2009, when a user named robotmermaid claimed the subreddit's URL. However, the team credits another user named spleeyah as the subreddit's founder — he became the subreddit's moderator and made its first posts (<https://web.archive.org/web/20101015055516/https://reddit.com/r/UCSD>) in October 2010. Today, spleeyah is still on the moderator team to address emergencies. Most of the other currently active moderators joined the team more recently in 2019.

As of January 2021, the subreddit boasts over 47k members — a huge leap from the 10k subscribers from January 2018. This gain in traction, which, coincidentally or not, coincided with the onboarding of moderators like Kavhow and cry-ton who revamped the subreddit in 2019. The largest contributor to the subreddit's growth was the transition of Reddit from a "nerdy platform" to one that everyone, not just gamers and memeable options traders (<https://reddit.com/r/wallstreetbets>), began to use, speculated Kavhow. The anonymity of having a Reddit account also boosted success.

"You're judged based off of the content of your character and the things that you post, rather than any preconceived notions of who you are," absolutelycurtainss said.

Additionally, the subreddit filled an information gap in the online UCSD community. According to cry-ton, the Facebook Group "UCSD Memes for Sleep Deprived Teens" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ucsdmeme/>) — UCSD's other major online community — was "a little too informal and decentralized," and official UCSD webpages didn't provide a personalized resource of students' perspectives and advice. Meanwhile, r/UCSD allowed students to ask questions about classes and the university. It eventually became a collective of different topics, ImperialRedditer explained, whether it was drama from one class or key issues at the university.

"I think there are a lot of people who check the subreddit more than they check their UCSD emails," Kavhow said. A visit to the subreddit's front page shows upvoted posts that have been "vetted by your peers for how important it is and how noteworthy," bypassing the "extra stuff that you get sent everyday." The subreddit also helps in spreading petitions, promoting club events, creating study groups, and connecting official organizations and departments at UCSD to the student base. UCSD groups like the Police Department, ITS, and Associated Students have made Reddit accounts and worked with the team to establish their presence.

Thanks to its unique and valuable services, the subreddit has evolved into a gathering place for UCSD community members — students, applicants, alumni, faculty, staff, and even a provost (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/doqqcm/ask_me_anything_about_seventh_college/) — to post memes, share grievances, and discuss news in an “unbiased setting.” In a way, r/UCSD has replaced Library Walk during quarantine.

“In March [2020], we had like 4 million page views,” Kavhow said. “We have more subscribers than there are students at UCSD now.”

To organize this activity and ensure the safety of the online community, the team described its approach to moderation. As a group, they strive to create clear rules for posting and apply objectivity to their moderation decisions. In cases of confusion and unclarity, they take to their Discord server to deliberate — “Do we remove this post? Does this user get a ban? A one-week ban, a permaban?” explained Kavhow. The team tries to “democratize it internally.”

This conscientious process helps the moderators in dealing with controversial posts. Two examples of such posts, both from the past month, come to mind. One is about a student’s comment on Piazza (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/kg3fsx/this_is_unacceptable_an_attack_of_free_speech/) in COGS 9, which spurred a flurry of “duplicate” posts that quickly swamped the subreddit. To keep the subreddit on-topic and organized, the team redirected all posts about the Piazza comment to a megathread (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/kh31m0/megathread_cogs9_piazza_post_megathread/). The other, Aber2346 described, is an image post (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/kly6l8/shout_out_to_the_piece_of_sh_that_came_to/) of “somebody who was at a Starbucks in the UTC area wearing some kind of motorcycle shirt, and it had the SS logo on it.”

“It was completely unacceptable to be wearing that in public,” he said. “So it was up to us to decide, like, okay, how do we want to monitor this? Do we want to keep the post up, or do we want to lock the comments? [We want to] allow students to share their outrage over this post, but also while not leading to a witch hunt.” In the end, the team’s official decision was to leave the post up and monitor it closely, banning comments that used slurs and went against subreddit rules.

Another moderation challenge has been handling the subreddit’s influx of negative posts over the past year.

“We don’t want to censor, and for a lot of people, our subreddit is one of the only places they can come on and vent,” absolutelycurtainss said. “But, like, in November [2020], it was really difficult because we would have a post that just said, like, ‘I’m depressed, bottom text,’ and then it’d get 300 upvotes. And it was just that over and over again.” This widespread negativity was difficult to deal with as a moderator. “I don’t want it to be a super negative place, but silencing people’s feelings won’t really help the situation either,” she said.

Other moderators agreed that this past November was a strenuous time for UCSD’s online community. “You had the election, you had quarantine,” explained Kavhow, along with finals and news that Winter Quarter 2021 was going remote for most classes.

“Normally people would go to their friends and vent about things directly to them,” cry-ton added. “But that obviously isn’t really much of an option right now.”

However, absolutelycurtainss highlighted a distinction. “Even the negativity we do have, for the most part it is directed in a very constructive way — less towards fellow students and more towards systemic problems. For example, the pass/no pass,” she said, alluding to the student body’s successful petitioning of the University to allow for P/NP petitions for Fall Quarter 2020 (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/k98suv/pnp_option_available_for_fall_quarter_2020_via/), which had garnered strong support through r/UCSD. “So I definitely see it as a very positive community [with] students looking out for other students.”

Posts by struggling, stressed-out students often meet an outpouring of support from the subreddit community. Commenters typically share similar stories, advice, and information for UCSD’s Counseling and Psychology Services and other mental health resources.

“College can get hard, and I think the communal aspect of the subreddit does tend to shine in certain situations,” observed cry-ton. “And it’s good to be reminded that, you know, despite how the reputation can get sometimes, this school really does have a lot of kind-hearted people who just try to look out for each other.”

Much of the positivity on the subreddit is the result of the moderation team’s staunch efforts to crack down on hate and trolls. One thing that surprised the moderators when joining the team was the amount of Nazism they encountered. While not common on the subreddit, the team sees instances of it every few months.

Some moderators also recalled the “worst” things they have experienced while moderating. tornato7 recounted an incident in which someone had “made probably like 100 different accounts,” left “nasty messages,” impersonated him, and “threatened to track [him] down,” which eventually ended by involving official Reddit administrators. Aber2346 shared the time when somebody posted information of where their ex worked and threatened to post “a revenge clip.” “That was really disgusting,” he recalled, mentioning that the incident prompted him to take a break from moderating.

Other moderators have also taken mental health breaks due to the overwhelming amount of work that accompanies running the subreddit. tornato7, who is also a moderator on the subreddit r/BuyItForLife (<https://www.reddit.com/r/BuyItForLife/>) which currently has 875k members, claimed that running r/BuyItForLife “takes one-tenth the moderating that r/UCSD does.” There were over 2,000 posts on r/UCSD in December 2019 alone. “A lot of times, I just want to just read the subreddit and not have to worry about it,” admitted Kavhow.

The team’s work is often left unappreciated, and even sometimes faces backlash. Some years ago, a parody subreddit called r/UCSDHate was created by a group of banned users. Luckily, the r/UCSD team took control of the subreddit and made it private. More recently in the summer of 2019, cry-ton becoming a moderator and making changes to the subreddit sparked an outcry from the online community. Several users made posts attacking him and his moderation decisions, with the common criticism being that he was “over-modding” (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/di44d5/meta_please_remove_crytone_from_the_mods/). Eventually, he stepped down (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/hu7t9w/an_update_on_moderation/).

“It’s weird to look back on just the 12 months that I spent basically connected directly into the collective subconscious of the University,” cry-ton confessed. “I will say it wasn’t all what I would describe as fun times. But, you know, I feel like I was able to maybe do my part as a member of the community, and I do hope that people who use it now sort of look back on the changes that were positive.”

Other moderators defended cry-ton’s impact on the subreddit. “You can divide it into two eras,” Kavhow argued, with the “pre-cry-ton” era being “a lot more toxic.” Aber2346 agreed: “He definitely had a really long, positive, lasting effect on our subreddit ... Looking back at things, I think the subreddit was just unfair to cry-ton, to a point where [the criticism] was boiling over to [the rest of the team]... The subreddit kinda can join together and form an army fighting this one guy... It’s not just cry-ton.” He referenced a 2018 incident with Susan Marx (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/8pyinp/regarding_the_cse_professor_who_disclosed_a/) on Piazza that circulated throughout the subreddit. The publicity captured the University’s attention and arguably contributed to Marx’s retirement.

This incident was among one of many other subreddit critiques about the school that range from campus parking to tuition changes and grading policies. Do the moderators think that the subreddit’s complaints and criticism directed toward the University were representative of the student body? The team believes so, thanks to Reddit’s upvote system, which makes popular posts and sentiments known. “It does accurately represent the UCSD community,” stated cry-ton, “but maybe also amplifies the extremes of people’s thoughts and emotions on certain topics.” tornato7 agreed, explaining, “The subreddit will definitely amplify the problems that happened. Like one class will have some drama, and then all of a sudden, everybody’s up in arms about it, [including those who have] never even heard of the class.”

But criticisms and questions like “Is this class schedule doable?” and “What college is the best?” are not the only kinds of posts on r/UCSD; memes of raccoons and Chancellor Pradeep Khosla, as well as picturesque photographs of Geisel Library and La Jolla Shores, make up a (much-appreciated) large portion of the subreddit’s posts.

Among the team’s favorite memes is the infamous 32% post (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/cgyuy6/thirty_fucking_two_percent_i_give_up_from_this/), where a student complained about UCSD’s acceptance rate. It quickly became one of the subreddit’s beloved copypastas (<https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/wiki/copypasta>). Another noteworthy meme is “UCB (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/hcqnpx/psa_to_ucsd_students_from_the_berkeley_community/),” which began when a presumed student from the University of California, Berkeley posted that “referring to Berkeley as UCB is disrespectful.” The team responded by creating a custom bot that automatically comments “Please refer to UCB as UCB on the UC San Diego subreddit.” whenever a post or comment on the subreddit mentions “Berkeley.” While not a meme, another favorite post is a photograph of someone’s 26-year-old chalk drawings (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/j6kl9x/i_just_visited_ucsd_and_found_out_that_the_chalk/) on the ceiling of a Muir College apartment balcony. The team also enjoys its own jokes: on April’s Fools 2020, it temporarily turned the subreddit into “Khosla Academy,” a nod to UCSD’s shift to virtual learning and “Khan Academy.” To the amazement of the moderators, these posts — as well as the subreddit’s top posts of all time — arose about a year ago or less. Last but not least, the team reminisces fondly upon a copypasta of a certain Piazza post on professionalism (https://www.reddit.com/r/UCSD/comments/6bmzn1/cse_frequently_asked_questions_mega_thread/).

With the subreddit's and the university's continued growth, the team declared their intention to do more AMAs ("Ask Me Anything," or Q&As) and social activities. More importantly, it plans to scale up its moderation team. The two main ways of becoming a moderator is either by the team reaching out to a user who is active on the subreddit or by a user reaching out to the team. Sometimes there is an open application for moderators. After this step, the team will run a 90-day "mod-in-training" process for its prospective moderators.

As for the current moderators, most plan on continuing in their roles throughout their time at UCSD until they graduate and become too busy. Aber2346, an alumni, sees "retiring" from the team as natural: "It's up to us passing the torch down to others because as new students come in, they have a different insight on what's happening at UCSD."

And if the moderators could tell one thing to everyone on the subreddit? Most have advice of goodwill.

"Consider the person behind the screen," Kavhow said. "Treat them how you want to be treated, and that will basically remove 90% of the workload that we have to do."

"Don't take things too seriously," absolutelycurtainss added. "Even all the serious stuff that's going on, it's nice to see that sometimes people just make memes."

"College is just the beginning of your life," Aber2346 said. "Focus on the future. Don't let the little things get you down."

And most importantly, declared ImperialRedditer, "Post more raccoon memes!"

Photo by Jason R. Woods, edited image courtesy of Hemmy Chun.

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Student Loans Freeze Under the Biden Administration

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/student-loans-freeze-under-the-biden-administration/>) 👤 Niloufar Shahbandi (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/n1shahba/>)



Part of a flurry of activity to begin his term, President Joe Biden signed an executive order extending (https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/politics/student-loan-payment-deferrals/index.html?utm_source=fbCNN&utm_medium=social&utm_term=link&utm_content=2021-01-21T16%3A47%3A07&fbclid=IwAR2_GVx2-opo1nFU6_otv36msNiwb6ZJ4Tqw6vowF3ccCri6vXSv8cSPreY) the suspension of federal student loan payments and interest until Oct. 1, 2021. This extension provides relief to millions who have struggled to make student loan payments during the COVID-19 pandemic. It may also be indicative of further student loan forgiveness programs promised by the Biden campaign during the 2020 presidential election.

This suspension originally started on March 27, 2020, when Congress and former President Donald Trump signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (<https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>), suspending student loan payments, stopping the collection of defaulted loans, and setting interest rates to zero percent.

The CARES Act is comprised of other assistance programs — including one-time payments of up to \$1200 dollars (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/leonlabrecque/2020/03/29/the-cares-act-has-passed-here-are-the-highlights/?sh=25b478068cd2>), an additional \$600 per week for unemployment insurance, and \$350 billion dollars for small business relief loans — to help the the U.S. from falling into another recession as a result of the pandemic which led to the loss of 22 million jobs in March and April.

Although set to expire Jan. 31, 2021, the loan suspension was renewed by President Biden for an additional eight months. The issue of student loans has been a consequential topic during political debates, especially during the 2020 presidential campaign, as federal student loan debt reached an all-time high last year, nearing \$1.6 trillion (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/student-loans-miguel-cardona-education-department-priority/>) among more than 40 million Americans.

Over the decades, college tuition has risen dramatically making it much more expensive for current students to obtain a degree than past generations. According to figures from the College Board, from the late 1980s to 2018, (<https://www.businessinsider.com/why-is-college-so-expensive-2018-4#:~:text=College%20tuition%20and%20student%20loan,them%2C%20and%20ballooning%20student%20services.>) the cost of obtaining a bachelor's degree rose by 213 percent at public schools and 129 percent at private schools, adjusting for inflation.

This rise in college tuitions has been a result of a spike in demand for higher education. In turn, this rise in demand creates a cycle where the more students who want to attend college, the more the cost of college increases, and the more students borrow money.

.@POTUS (HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/POTUS?REF_SRC=TWSRC%5ETFW) HAS A CLEAR PATH TO CANCEL SOME \$200 BILLION OF STUDENT DEBT 📌 #CANCELSTUDENTDEBT (HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/HASHTAG/CANCELSTUDENTDEBT?SRC=HASH&REF_SRC=TWSRC%5ETFW)<HTTPS://T.CO/OHRBMO3MM7> (<HTTPS://T.CO/OHRBMO3MM7>)

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During his campaign, Biden called for canceling \$10,000 per borrower. Since his inauguration, there has been lots of speculation (https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/politics/student-loan-payment-deferrals/index.html?utm_source=fbCNN&utm_medium=social&utm_term=link&utm_content=2021-01-21T16%3A47%3A07&fbclid=IwAR2_GVx2-opo1nFU6_otv36msNiwb6ZJ4Tqw6vowF3ccCri6vXSv8cSPreY) about how he will move forward in his plan to cancel student loans. One prediction is that the Biden administration may expand targeted loan forgiveness programs that already exist, like the one that offers relief to students who were defrauded by for-profit colleges.

Studies have shown that 90 percent (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/14/bidens-call-for-10000-in-student-loan-forgiveness-not-in-stimulus-plan.html>) of federal student loan borrowers have taken advantage of this suspension and have paused their payments since the start of the pandemic. Making payments has been hard for many, as in the U.S., starting salaries for college graduates has grown less than 1 percent (<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/07/less-than-11percent-of-people-with-federal-student-loans-are-paying-during-covid-19-.html>) over the past two years, remaining at around \$50,000, causing many to work multiple jobs in order to make ends meet.

Eleanor Roosevelt College sophomore Rosemina Bazeghi explained how student loan debt affects her mindset.

“I think that student debt is one of the first issues that should be addressed,” Bazeghi said. “Student loan debt affects how a lot of students plan out their life. It affected which university I went to and I believe my debt will affect even the smallest decisions I make in my future, as it could determine how much more interest will be added if I put it off any longer.”

Student loans are now the number one (<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/07/less-than-11percent-of-people-with-federal-student-loans-are-paying-during-covid-19-.html>) cause of debt for Americans, with 70 percent of college graduates starting off their lives in debt each year. In the 1990s, student debt averaged around \$10,000, but currently that amount is up to \$30,000 with many borrowers owing \$100,000 or more.

According to studies, cancelling student loans will generate positive outcomes for the U.S. economy. An assessment by Moody's (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/zackfriedman/2019/12/03/student-loans-debt-forgiven-impact/?sh=3a67b7974e94>), a financial analysis company, found that cancelling student loans will cause a modest increase in household consumption and investment, increase small business and household formation, and in the long-term increase home ownership.

Student loans put a large burden on many graduates. A survey (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/biden-student-loan-forgiveness_1_60135f47c5b622df90f1dfa8?gucounter=1&gucounter_referrer=aHRocHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&gucounter_referrer_sig=AQAAAL7Aiu5kQWdNInvuonaPVrU6h6UaZgqoK7iOgHnAQXfjFQgz_76_NvSnOqQbegb2mJ715a_AMa64TBsKgmIQ5gwa39ugQiyEzTciJwE9mPFUxP-R_prkx5XwlBjgKuGu_l6K5FVX) by Bankrate found that nearly three-quarters of millennials who have had student loan debt delayed at least one major life or financial milestone as a result including saving for emergencies, purchasing a home, paying off other debt, buying or leasing a car, saving for retirement, having children and getting married.

However, these benefits may be relatively minimal, as 90 percent of student loan debt is federal student loans which would cause the federal government to lose \$85 billion. This would mean that the federal government would have to find alternative ways to restore this loss in revenue such as by adjusting the budget, printing more money or raising taxes.

Biden did not include any student debt cancellation in his \$1.9 trillion relief bill, but the assurance from his administration has reassured many to remain hopeful that he will tackle this.

Photo courtesy of Alex Brandon for the Associated Press.

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TV Review: “Nightstalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer”

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/tv-review-nightstalker-the-hunt-for-a-serial-killer/>) 👤
Elias Roman (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/eliasroman/>)



“Nightstalker” is a well-constructed mini-series that will have you glued to your screen, despite its over-the-top depictions of the crime scenes.

Looking back at 20th century true crime, fans can hardly ignore the unprecedented amount of serial killers that plagued the country. Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, and the BTK Killer are noteworthy among other names, but none have inspired the same fear and anguish as one man: Richard Ramirez, the Los Angeles Nightstalker. Responsible for the deaths of 14 victims between the years 1984 and 1985, Ramirez was known for being particularly bloodthirsty and leaving horrifyingly graphic crime scenes in his wake. There was no method to his madness; he killed whomever he could, regardless of sex or race. It was this complete lack of victim preference and methodology that caused panic among residents of Los Angeles County and would eventually inspire a media frenzy.

“Nightstalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer” is a four-episode mini-series that follows Gil Carrillo, a young detective in the Los Angeles Sheriff Department’s Homicide Unit, and his partner Frank Salerno, who had worked on the Hillside Strangler case in the 1970s. Carrillo and Salerno narrate the story in a series of interviews in which they recall each crime scene and the many complications that arose with the Nightstalker case. Director Tiller Russell does not shy away from exposing the many follies of the police during this investigation, pushing Carrillo and Sal to recount the many investigative mistakes that stalled their investigation. As the series goes on, it becomes evident that the police’s blunders would have dire consequences, allowing Ramirez to slip between the police’s fingers on several occasions. Russell goes on to explore the tolls that dangerous and demanding investigations can take on not only detectives’ family lives, but also the many relatives and survivors’ lives. Carrillo specifically is quite candid about the tension that emerged between him and his wife during the case as a result of the long and odd hours, as well as the paranoia that accompanies these detectives when hunting a serial killer.

“Nightstalker” allows viewers to feel as though they are living the investigation in real time, unraveling the story piece by piece. The first three episodes deal with the long string of victims and their respective investigations. The series does a good job of setting up a clear timeline that helps audiences clearly follow what quickly becomes a convoluted case due to the unprecedented behavior of Ramirez. “Nightstalker” is careful not to reveal any hints of the killer’s true identity within the first three episodes — an effective tactic that sets audiences up for a rewarding payoff upon finally arriving at episode four, which deals entirely with the killer himself. This episode delves into the details leading up to and after Ramirez’s arrest, again relying on Carrillo and Salerno’s recollection of the events to tell the story. It delves into the surprisingly diverse reaction the public had in response to the revelation of the Nightstalker, as reporters recall the many groupies that showed up to Ramirez’s hearings, while yet the victim’s families could only think of getting justice for their lost loved ones.

The true-crime genre is exploitative to a degree by nature, making entertainment out of tragedy, but it feels even more so at certain points in “Nightstalker.” As Carrillo and Salerno recall each crime scene in excruciating detail, the series elects to show audience members the tragic images of Ramirez’s bloody crimes. Although these pictures are semi-censored with the particularly grotesque wounds blocked out by what appears to be tape, they are still quite unsettling to see onscreen. While it’s understandable that Russell wanted audiences to truly grasp the brutality of these crimes, these images at times feel more like they are there for shock value than to help move the story along. At points, the series even recreates some of these scenes with actors, doubling down on the bloodthirstiness of the crimes, and adding to this feeling of victim exploitation. This results in an uncomfortable, even voyeuristic, watch at times.

“Nightstalker: the Search for a Serial Killer” delves into one of the most grotesquely fascinating serial-killer cases in recent memory and the fear it brought into Los Angeles County in 1985. It allows audience members to gain a solid understanding of just how unusual this case is — revealing the truly dark side of humanity. “Nightstalker” will leave audiences wondering if people like Richard Ramirez are just born evil, or if they’re simply a product of their environment.

Grade: A-

Director: Tiller Russell

Release Date: Jan. 13, 2021

Image courtesy of Decider.

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UC San Diego Researchers Create New Sensor to Detect COVID-19 on Masks

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/uc-san-diego-researchers-create-new-sensor-to-detect-covid-19-on-masks/>) 👤 Nikita Cardozo (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/ncardozo/>)

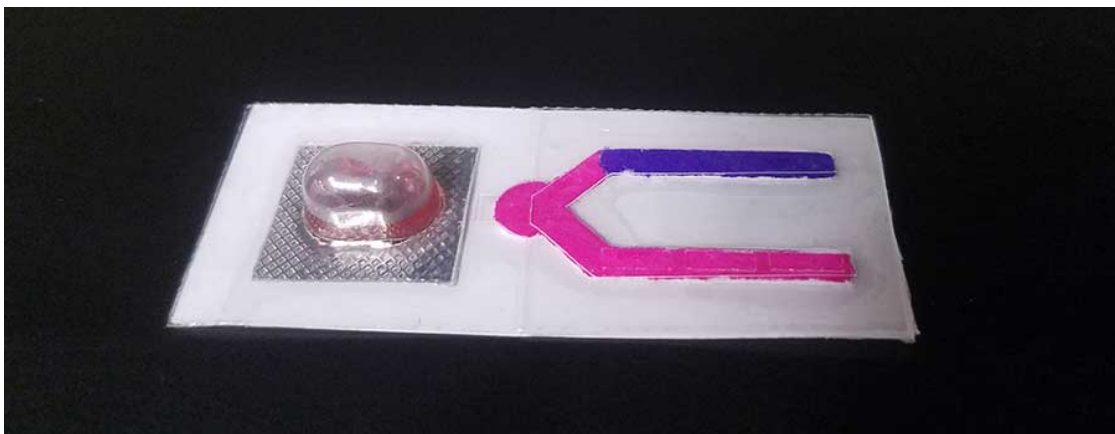


UC San Diego has been awarded \$1.3 million by the National Institutes of Health to develop a wearable sensor that can detect if a person has COVID-19 or has been exposed to it by someone else. The sensor will be attached to face masks to monitor for coronavirus molecules in a person's saliva and breath. It will detect the presence of proteases, protein-cleaving molecules, that are known to be produced from the COVID-19 virus. It would also detect the virus molecules released by other people and possibly inhaled by the owner of the mask.

The plan is that particles, including COVID-19 proteases, will build up in the test strip as the user breathes through the mask. In order to identify a possible infection, the user would squeeze the blister pack on the sensor to see if it changes to a specific color. The test strip releases nanoparticles that change color in the presence of COVID-19 proteases — a control line on the strip will show what the positive result looks like. If there is a positive reading, the mask owner can take a supplementary test to confirm the result, similar to a regular covid test.

UCSD nanoengineering professor and project lead Jesse Jokerst said to The UCSD Guardian that the sensor consists of a color-changing agent, and the goal is for the product to be a sticker that they could put onto any face mask, surgical or fabric. There isn't a specific timeline or date that this product will be available to the public or to UCSD, but they are working on making sure it is as cheap as possible.

The test strips for masks will be easily mass-produced through roll-to-roll processing, which would quickly and cheaply embed them onto face coverings. This will hopefully mean the strips will be a few cents each. Jokerst is working with UCSD School of Medicine researchers to test the strips on COVID-19-positive saliva samples and then hopefully on patients and healthcare workers at the San Diego Healthcare System.



“Currently it has been tested in artificial biomarkers, but the goal is to test the biomarker in human saliva in 90 days. Like the sewage surveillance system, the mask is a common tool so developing the sensor in the mask made the most sense,” Jokerst said to The Guardian.

This technology is just another example of the different measures that UCSD has taken to slow the spread of COVID-19, including mandating face masks, prohibiting guests in students’ rooms, and placing sensors in its wastewater system to monitor early signs of the virus. If there is a positive sign of the virus in the sewage system, UCSD emails people with information of the specific buildings so they can get tested if they used those buildings. For any positive cases, students will be moved into isolation housing.

As of Jan. 30, UCSD has had 346 students diagnosed with COVID-19, 142 living on campus and 204 living off campus in the San Diego area. As of Jan. 30, there has been one new case among students residing on campus returning after winter break. The campus did experience a surge of infections when the Winter Quarter began, however, the case number has been decreasing since then.

Although the stay-at-home order was lifted in San Diego on Jan. 25, cases remain high and there are still many restrictions in place. San Diego County remains in the purple tier, so this new technology has the potential to significantly slow the spread of COVID-19. It is important to realize that this sensor is not a replacement for social distancing, wearing masks, and attending public gatherings, or current testing protocols.

More information about this new technology can be found here (<https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/feature/making-masks-smarter-and-safer-against-covid-19>).

Photo courtesy of Erik Jepsen for UC San Diego.

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Super Bowl LV Preview: The League's Greatest Quarterback Takes on its Best

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/super-bowl-lv-preview-the-leagues-greatest-quarterback-takes-on-its-best/>) 👤 Wesley Xiao (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/wesley-xiao/>)



There's an ancient Chinese proverb that says, "So long as the sun rises in the East, Tom Brady will make it back into the Super Bowl." Brady, in his first year with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, has made it back to the championship. Opposing him is the potential new dynasty of the AFC: Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs.

The Buccaneers and the Chiefs have a lot in common. They are helmed by two generational quarterbacks in Brady and Mahomes. Their core offensive principles are essentially the same: throw the ball. They stretch opposing defenses across the field and capitalize on mistakes with splash plays down the field.

But how these teams throw the ball is totally different. Brady is the textbook definition of the old-school pocket quarterback and one of the most technically sound passers in the league. His lower body is married to his upper body, his hips, shoulders, and arm moving in one fluid motion when he throws. His game is built on technique, timing, and consistency.

Mahomes, on the other hand, plays backyard football. His throws don't look as clean as Brady's, but he can hit anywhere on the field from any position. He'll throw across his body or on the run and still make pinpoint-accurate passes. Mahomes has also embraced nontraditional throwing techniques, mixing in a no-look, underhanded, or a left-hand pass every so often just to spice things up. His drop backs are more like backpedals to create space for him to improvise and time for his receivers to get further downfield. Mahomes scrambles, rolls out, and runs designed QB-runs; Brady is immobile but a master of moving within the pocket.

In this Super Bowl, a lot of attention will be placed on the offense, but the key to this matchup could be the defenses. After all, defense wins championships. The Buccaneers' defense is top tier. They're ranked sixth in yards per game allowed and eight in points per game. The linebacker pairing of Devin White and Lavonte David is elite. The pass rush recorded five sacks against the Packers in the NFC championship game.

On the other hand, the Chiefs, historically, have not been a defensive powerhouse. Over the past five years they haven't had a defense ranked above the middle of the league. But that doesn't mean their defense hasn't produced. The secondary has quietly developed into one of the best in the league, highlighted by safety Tyrann Mathieu. The inside-outside pass rush combination of Chris Jones and Frank Clark have recorded 13.5 sacks and 43 QB hits.

With all that said, I think the Chiefs will win. Brady and the Tampa Bay offense have not been clicking the entire postseason. Their past two playoff wins are mostly because of their defense, not the offense. If the Bucs' offense is rolling it looks unstoppable, but they haven't shown that they can consistently keep it up. In the Super Bowl, they'll face a big challenge in the Chiefs' defense. KC's defense is coming off a game where they limited the Buffalo Bills, the second-best offense in the NFL in yards, to just 122 passing yards from breakout star Josh Allen. The Bucs' strength is ultimately their defense, but we've seen what Mahomes can do against elite defenses (see: the 49ers) in the Super Bowl. Brady has the Super Bowl experience, but Mahomes is just too hot to stop.

Prediction: **Chiefs**, 38-34

Photos courtesy of Jeffrey Beall and All-Pro Reels

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Tritons Drop Two Straight Vs. Long Beach State

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/tritons-drop-two-straight-vs-long-beach-state/>) 👤

Praveen Nair (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/prnair/>)



Despite some strong individual performances, UC San Diego's women's basketball team (2–5, 2–5 Big West) was unable to take a game from the top team in the Big West, California State University, Long Beach (9–1, 8–0 Big West), in a back-to-back series at RIMAC Arena, losing 54–50 on Jan. 29 and 74–53 on Jan. 30.

The UCSD Tritons entered Friday's game having lost two in a row against UC Davis in their first road games of the season, while Long Beach State — whose official team nickname is indeed "the Beach" — have torn through their Big West schedule, losing only a single December non-conference matchup with the University of Southern California.

Nevertheless, UCSD started out hot, with junior guard Sydney Brown scoring the first 7 points of the game by herself, and a triple from fellow junior guard Brianna Claros put the Tritons up 10–0 to start the contest. But despite three-pointers from UCSD's freshman guard Parker Montgomery and redshirt junior guard Emily Cangelosi, the Beach were able to claw their way back in the second quarter with a 15–6 run, and the Tritons led by just one point going into halftime, 28–27.

While the game remained close, the Tritons were locked out offensively for much of the third quarter, as they went 5:43 without a point after a Brown jumper early in the quarter. Still, UCSD kept it close going into the fourth, trailing by just four. The Tritons struck first in the fourth quarter, with a three-pointer and a paint jumper from Brown helping give UCSD the lead back with 8 minutes to go in the contest. Indeed, with just 2 minutes left following a Brown layup, the Tritons led by 3.

But a free throw followed by a three-pointer gave the Beach a one-point lead with 41 seconds to go. With 28 seconds remaining, UCSD senior guard Tyla Turner missed a short jumper, but got her own rebound; after the following timeout, Claros missed another jumper, and the Tritons were forced to foul. The Beach's Justina King knocked down both of her free throws to put them up 3. After another timeout, Turner missed a potential tying three-pointer, and while UCSD was able to get the rebound, Brown's attempt from beyond the arc met the same fate, and Long Beach snagged the rebound to seal the win.

The Tritons didn't have a great night shooting, especially in a fourth quarter where they went just 3-of-15 on field goals and 1-of-8 on 3-point attempts. UCSD was also just 5-of-10 on free-throws, shots that would have swung the game had they fallen in the Tritons' favor. Still, Sydney Brown had a career night, snagging a career-high 15 rebounds to go alongside a game-high 23 points on 9-of-20 shooting.

The next night, Jan. 30, against Long Beach State once again, 2 early triples from Turner had the Tritons up 11–6 halfway through the first quarter, but an 8–0 run from the Beach had them up 2 after the first period. Long Beach continued their momentum in the second quarter, as a 3-point barrage helped them build an 11-point advantage midway through the period. An 8–0 run in the final 100 seconds of the half consisting of 2 threes from Montgomery with a Cangelosi bucket in between, however, put the Tritons right back in it at the half, trailing just 31–28.

In the third quarter, although the Beach never got on a run, they were able to build on their lead, scoring 14 paint points to the Tritons' 4 in the period, helping them get their advantage back up to double digits. Despite three-pointers on back-to-back possessions for Turner, UCSD trailed by 11 going into the fourth quarter. That lead would only grow, as the Tritons were held scoreless for the first 3 minutes of the fourth before a fastbreak layup from Brown cut the lead to 14. After another layup from redshirt senior forward Layla Ybarra-Harvey made it 64–50, the Tritons were once again held scoreless, this time for 6 entire minutes. This allowed the Beach to get the lead up to 24, and although junior guard Madison Baxter made a last-second three-pointer to end the scoreless streak, the Beach took this contest convincingly, 74–53.

Some similar issues surfaced in this game for the Tritons, as in the fourth quarter, they shot just 3-for-14 from the field and 1-for-7 from downtown, leading to those 2 scoreless stretches that lasted more than 9 minutes combined. Tyla Turner was a bright spot in this one for UCSD, leading the team with 16 points and 8 assists, as well as a scorching 5-for-7 (71.4%) from three. Although Brown did lead the team in rebounds again with 8, she wasn't able to recreate her shooting from the day before, going 4-for-13.

Next week, the Tritons will travel to Honolulu for a pair of Big West games against the University of Hawaii (3–4, 2–3 Big West), before returning to RIMAC Arena for a series against California State University, Bakersfield (6–6, 4–4 Big West).

Photo courtesy of UC San Diego Athletics / Scott Flanders

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Game on: Reddit Users Battle Hedge Funds in a Race to the Moon

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/game-on-reddit-users-battle-hedge-funds-in-a-race-to-the-moon/>) 👤 Nelson Espinal (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/nespinal/>)



Over the past few weeks, the subreddit r/wallstreetbets rallied around Gamestop and AMC stocks to fight against the hedge funds. The movement left some people with a life-changing profit and platforms like Robinhood facing ethical dilemmas about their role.

The stock market is viewed in terms of the long game. People invest as soon as they achieve a decent salary in order to accumulate assets for later in life. Over the past few weeks, the perception and nature of the stock market changed in a revolutionary fashion.

On the Reddit thread r/wallstreetbets (<https://www.reddit.com/r/wallstreetbets/>), a group of traders banded together to battle against giant hedge funds. Some of the users identified stocks that these hedge funds were “shorting.” According to Investopedia (<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/shortselling.asp>), “shorting” is betting against the stock rising and making money as it falls. The “Redditors” targeted GameStop as the stock the hedge funds were going to short.

GameStop, labeled as GME on the stock exchange, was struggling as both a business and a stock as gamers turned more often to digital sales of games and Amazon for physical games. Once the mecca for gamers, GameStop’s popularity and viability was falling as stores all over California were closing.

Still, due to all of the shorts that were invested into GameStop, Redditors felt that GME was the stock to invest in. On Jan. 12, the stock hovered around \$20 as it had for the past few months. A week later, the stock rose to \$40 per share. Then on Jan. 26, the stock rose to reach \$380 per share by the time of closing. The total growth is 1,476.21 percent over the course of the whole month, with the majority happening during the Reddit turnout.

The Reddit thread, composed of now millions of people, features users from all walks of life. There are plenty of success stories from the Wall Street revolution. Take this student, who asked to remain anonymous, at UC San Diego: he is a senior from Revelle College majoring in economics. He joined the Reddit thread around two years ago, after his brother told him to join it. Luckily for him, his activity paid off as he paid attention at the right time.

“I was just going through my social media like usual,” the student told the UCSD Guardian. “Twitter, Instagram, my Discords for school, and then I end it with some Reddit scrolling. I usually check r/wallstreetbets and r/ucsd on a daily basis with relatively minimal attention. I saw a bunch of people talking about GME and I googled what it was. When I found out it was GameStop, I quickly just kept scrolling, thinking it was a troll.”

The following day, he went to check on the Reddit thread and found a flood of messages about GME with a series of rocket emojis. Up until this point, he had bought some penny stocks and thrown in some money on major stocks like Apple and Tesla. The anonymous student found the courage to buy 10 shares at \$90. The investment ended up providing some serious profit.

“I sold around when the share price was around \$380 because I thought this was absolutely the ceiling,” the student told the UCSD Guardian. “I ended up face-palming the next day because the stock would end up reaching the mid-400 at some point the next day. I still did pretty well for myself, so I am not complaining.”

Stories like the one from this student are found all over the internet. There are people that bought in earlier, with all of their savings accounts that now have life-changing money. Even children are making money from the movement; a kid who received some GameStop stock for his birthday gained some good returns on an odd gift.

Redditors targeted stocks other than GameStop as well. AMC Entertainment received a flood of money from the group when some users found hedge funds were also shorting AMC stock in droves and decided to stick it to them.

The stock price of AMC was around \$3 per share on Jan. 22. The stock rose \$16 per share by Jan. 27 and peaked at \$20 per share that day. With this 500 percent growth, people who missed out on the GameStop boom ?.

A local member of the San Diego community, Rob Brown, remained patient after he missed out on the GameStop wave. According to an article by Jonathan Horn of ABC San Diego, (<https://www.10news.com/news/local-news/despite-extraordinary-risk-some-san-diegans-profit-off-gamestop-amc-stock-surges>) bought 2,000 shares at \$4.85 and then sold those shares the next day at \$16.50. Cases like Brown happened all across the United States.

The entire movement against hedge funds that short started on Reddit. The specific nature of Reddit allowed for users to communicate among themselves. In the study “More Than Just Cat Pictures: Reddit as a Curated News Source,” (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01639269.2015.996491?scroll=top&needAccess=true>) Steven Ovadia investigated the inner workings of Reddit as a platform to figure out how it curates news.

“Because users vote on content, higher quality content often seems to rise to the top of the page, although that judgment is subjective and obviously excludes the lower-voted content, which is harder to find and compare against,” Ovadia stated in his study.

The content in a Reddit thread that rises are the more popular posts that have received an “up-vote.” As more people stumble upon the post, they can vote on whether it is worth being shared or not. Users in r/wallstreetbets, therefore, can display information about the stocks that are being shorted the most, and as the post receives more upvotes, the more the information circulates. With this information in hand, the users can strategize on how to best attack these hedge funds and organize hype for a specific stock.

Reddit’s platform, on top of democratizing the curation of content, allows for the publisher of the information or viewpoints to further engage with other members of the subreddit. The subsequence effect allows for information to develop into ideas about how to act.

“They found this ‘distributed moderation’ made for more civil discourse, so while it might seem overly democratic to some users more familiar with traditional websites, where all content is presented in an order of importance determined by site editors, there is an argument for engaging the community in the presentation of the content,” Ovadia wrote in his study.

While Reddit started this wave of investment, Jan. 28 featured a halting of trading on the investment platforms. The most notable one, Robinhood, shut down buying shares in GameStop, AMC, and other stocks that were receiving a high volume of trading.

The temporary suspension of trading resulted in the stock prices for AMC and GameStop dropping a considerable amount as people panicked to sell their shares before their platform stopped them from doing so. AMC reached a low of around \$7 and GameStop plummeted to around \$125 per share. Traders were left unable to purchase even during the dip in price on larger platforms like Robinhood.

Robinhood halted the investing in these stocks by citing “financial requirements” (<https://blog.robinhood.com/news/2021/1/28/an-update-on-market-volatility>) too difficult to meet due to the “volatility” (<https://blog.robinhood.com/news/2021/1/28/an-update-on-market-volatility>) of the stocks. The timing of the restrictions on these stocks prompted questions about the legality of this move and whether they were simply bailing out the hedge-fund billionaires.

The public outcry grew so much that a lawsuit was filed against Robinhood, alleging that it “purposefully failed this mission and failed their clients in an attempt to — what appears to be — appease their investors and/or potential investors,” according to a Fox Business article (<https://www.foxbusiness.com/markets/robinhood-lawsuits-gamestop-amc-restrictions>). The lawsuit also pointed to manipulation of the free market. The intentions of Robinhood remain unknown until the lawsuit is taken to court, but the consequences of their actions caused fallout that reached thousands of people

The fallout from Robinhood’s actions left many people who invested in these stocks or planned on doing so with nothing to show for. Another student at UCSD, a freshman from Muir College, had an order to buy AMC and GameStop stock before the shutdown. Once Robinhood stopped the trading of these stocks, his order was canceled.

“I was looking at the charts on the app and I was blown away by the gains that the stock was showing,” the student told the UCSD Guardian. “Redditors sounded as if they were going to hold and keep taking the stock to the moon. Unfortunately, my order got cancelled. The stock dropped that day and the next day and I know I should have bought the dip. I could have made so much money considering how much it is going for now. I have Robinhood to thank for my gains all being potential and, you know, not actually real.”

The stocks GME and AMC, as of the day of publishing, are able to be bought and sold in the Robinhood app and most platforms. The stock prices recovered, although they remain lower than the high they reached earlier in the week.

As for r/wallstreetbets, the Reddit group had grown from thousands of members to millions with their subreddit, receiving so much traction that it would crash from time to time. The group is now split into factions of people who want to focus solely on GME to take down the hedge funds and others who are more focused on smaller stocks like AMC, Nokia, and Blackberry so that they can experience a wild ride “to the moon” and make hedge funds lose money at the same time.

Out of all these stocks, an unexpected champion emerged from the fallout: Dogecoin. Dogecoin is a cryptocurrency that began in 2013 as a meme, its mascot being a Shiba Inu dog. The currency is volatile, as most cryptocurrencies tend to be, with a large boom occurring during the time in which Robinhood disallowed investment into any of the stocks redditors were targeting.

Some members of the group turned their attention to Dogecoin as they sought to take the currency from less than a cent in value to one whole dollar and beyond. As a way to stick to the government, they rallied behind the alternative currency, taking it from \$.01 to as high as \$.08 in one full day.

The volume and volatility of Doge coin is so high that Robinhood is instituting a five-day waiting period on any purchase of Dogecoin.

(<https://blog.robinhood.com/news/2021/1/28/an-update-on-market-volatility>)

The future target of r/wallstreetbets remains unknown for now. The group allowed people to expand their wealth as a group and fight back against hedge funds that take advantage of the market for their own gain. The unique characteristics of Reddit allowed for the information to be democratised and shared with thousands of people so that they could attack Wall Street all at once.

With a Reddit group remaining invested in the fight against hedge funds, investment services will need to prepare for future volatility and volume increase in the marketplace. As information about shorted stocks is circulated, r/wallstreetbets members will stock up on ammunition against Wall Street.

Photo by energepic.com from Pexels.

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A.S. Council Brief: Vaccination Volunteers, In-Person Spring Graduation, Student Vaccination Distribution

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/a-s-council-brief-vaccination-volunteers-in-person-spring-graduation-student-vaccination-distribution/>) 👤 Jocelyn Brossia (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/jbrossia/>)



This edition of the UCSD A.S. Council Brief news update includes the Week 3 and Week 4 meetings.

Week 3

UC San Diego Associated Students hosted their third virtual meeting of Winter Quarter 2021 on Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting featured discussion of CalPIRG's latest campus efforts, recent academic accommodations, COVID-19 vaccine volunteers, and new items for Senate approval.

Following roll call, the meeting opened with public comment from Revelle College freshman and CalPIRG intern Xuan Feldman, who provided information regarding CalPIRG's efforts in working on a Senate Resolution to take climate change action on campus.

"We had Assembly Member Chris Ward in attendance who gave an amazing speech about civic engagement and the importance of taking swift but equitable action on climate change," Feldman said. "We are working hard this quarter to help draft a Senate Resolution, hopefully for you all, to take climate action on campus."

CalPIRG's update came after their recent Winter Quarter Kick Off meeting. A total of 189 students attended the meeting, breaking all attendance records across all CalPIRG chapters.

A.S. President Kimberly Giangtran then highlighted the recent academic accommodations (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/24/ucsd-updates-p-np-for-winter-and-spring-2021/>) from UC San Diego, which include extensions for changing grading options, dropping courses, and withdrawing from the quarter.

"I just want to thank David Hickman for making a lot of these academic accommodations happen and for the students who helped us in this body, as well for spreading the word," Giangtran said. "The letter that was signed on by all of the college council presidents was really helpful and really helped show a unified front on the student end and the testimonies shared with us through the Office of Academic Affairs. There were over 1000 testimonies that really helped in making the case in the rep assembly."

Giangtran also detailed A.S.'s current efforts to secure short-term housing for students who may need it over summer due to COVID-19 displacement, the need to quarantine before heading home, or other external circumstances.

As UCSD partners with San Diego County and the San Diego Padres to administer COVID-19 vaccinations near Petco Park (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/17/uc-san-diego-health-opens-vaccination-super-station-near-petco-park/>), they are seeking additional volunteers, as Giangtran said in the meeting. As anyone is welcome to volunteer, she urged everyone to volunteer if possible, and to encourage their friends to do so as well.

The CDC recently released new guidelines for international travelers planning to travel to the United States, which requires proof of a negative COVID-19 test no more than three days prior to travel (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html#:~:text=If%20I%20tested%20negative%20before,for%20the%20full%207%20days.>). A.S. is in the process of trying to figure out if and how such guidelines could impact international students.

The Legislative Committee introduced Items L1–L9. Items L1–L7 were approved; the items were appointments of different students for positions with the Office of Spirit and Athletics, the Triton Lobby Corps, and the Office of External Affairs.

Item L9, the Expanding Senatorial Elections Act, which was sponsored by Biological Sciences Senator Mihir Pandya, was tabled indefinitely.

Item L8, also sponsored by Pandya, proposed an amendment to the A.S. Constitution: the Expanding Senatorial Elections Act, which was thus discharged to the Senate floor.

The amendment would increase international and out-of-state student representation in the Senate by including two new elected senator positions. L8 was met with concerns regarding the language of the amendment, logistical concerns, and possible overrepresentation.

Financial Controller Nicholas Butler voiced his concern about the expansion of the Senate being unnecessary.

“I don’t know if enlarging Senate is necessarily the move,” Butler said. “It already seems like things get a bit bogged down. I’m in favor of moving them from appointed to elected positions, but just expanding Senate — I don’t know if that’s the right move.”

Item L8 did not receive the required three-fourths majority vote from Senators in order to pass; 26 votes in favor were needed; it received 24 votes in favor and three votes against. The feedback that the Senators gave to Pandya while discussing the amendment will guide Pandya as he decides how to proceed from here. Feedback from Senators will be considered by Pandya and he will proceed from there.

Week 4

A.S.'s Week 4 meeting for Winter Quarter 2021 on Wednesday, Jan. 27 featured President Giangtran's review of a meeting she had with Chancellor Pradeep Khosla and A.S. Vice President of Campus Affairs Hannah Kreitman. The meeting addressed the UC Office of the President's upcoming transformational policing event (<https://www.ucop.edu/research-policy-analysis-coordination/policies-guidance/campus-safety/index.html>), tuition hikes, and student vaccinations — especially in light of the UCOP's plan to have students return to campus in Fall Quarter 2021 (<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/uc-plans-fall-2021-person-instruction-across-its-10-campus>).

“[Chancellor Khosla] hopes that we'll be at 80–90 percent [capacity] in the fall,” Giangtran said. “He also said that he hopes for an in-person graduation this year, [...] and he says not to get your hopes up too much, but the hope and goal is to have graduates walk the stage and to have their families watch virtually through a live stream.”

Chancellor Khosla also addressed that different student health insurance plans pose a challenge in administering COVID-19 vaccines to those who want it when the resources are available.

“People who have insurance back in the Bay Area or in a different state would have to get vaccinated through their primary care if they're not near campus,” Giangtran said. “And that's something that Chancellor Khosla has committed to doing for students. [...] He wants to get every student who wants to get vaccinated — he plans on giving them the vaccine.”

Social Sciences Senator Jamila Francisco asked Giangtran if graduates in Spring Quarter 2021, under Khosla's envisioned distribution plan, would still receive the vaccine if resources were not available until after their graduation date.

“It's all contingent and dependent on supply,” Giangtran said. “The Chancellor said he would vaccinate anyone who wanted one if he could. Currently, there isn't enough for us to do that, but I would guess that if we had the vaccine for graduating seniors before they left, then they would probably be next in line.”

Additionally, Giangtran met with the Educational Continuity Task Force to review UCSD's plans for the next few quarters. The next few quarters are projected to look very similar to how they are now: there will be hybrid models, with the option to attend courses in-person as well as remotely. The outdoor tents which host in-person course meetings will continue to stay up until at least Winter Quarter 2022.

The task force hopes to bring as many students back to campus as possible, with the goal next quarter of trying to house an additional 1000 residents on campus. Further, they would like to change dorm options to include only singles and doubles, hopefully permanently eliminating the option of triples.

Engineering Senator Alexander Levine posed numerous questions to Giangtran, including inquiring whether vaccinations would be required for students to return to campus once available.

“The answer right now is no,” Giangtran said. “We asked that to Chancellor Khosla yesterday and it’s something we hope people will do. It’s a hurdle that he — I think I’m quoting him: ‘it’s a hurdle we’ll get over when we get there,’ but I would hope that they do eventually mandate it, unless the student has some kind of allergic reaction or religious reason for not getting it. At the moment, they don’t have a set plan for mandating it but they are looking into doing that.”

Chancellor Khosla also spoke to Giangtran and Kreitman about the discourse regarding a possible tuition increase (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/10/uc-chancellors-discuss-possible-tuition-increase/>), saying that this is unlikely to happen at UCSD in the next school year.

“[Kreitman] and I heard from Chancellor Khosla that there is almost a zero percent chance of a tuition increase happening in the 2021-2022 school year,” Giangtran said.

The Academic Integrity Office updated Giangtran on UCSD staff and faculty’s attempts to crack down further on an uptick of violations of academic integrity policies in the past few quarters, which Giangtran attributes to the transition to virtual learning during Winter Quarter 2020.

Associate University Librarian Dani Cook also spoke during the meeting’s Special Presentation portion to shed light on the virtual and in-person library services (<https://library.ucsd.edu/ask-us/services-during-covid-19.html>) available to students at this moment in time. The Library is currently hosting virtual study rooms (<https://library.ucsd.edu/visit/de-stress.html>), as well as limited in-person study space (<https://library.ucsd.edu/visit/study-spaces/index.html>) available in the Biomedical Library Building by reservation only. Parents with underage children can request a family study table.

Through the library, students can access various articles, e-books, and more via VPN (<https://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/network/connections/off-campus/VPN/>). In addition, they are able to request scans of portions of books and documents, virtual consultations with a subject librarian for research assistance in a particular field, access to a LinkedIn Learning subscription, as well as in-person printer access, computer access, and curbside pickup for books.

Cook also urged students to take the biennial Student Satisfaction Survey:
(<http://studentsat.ucsd.edu/>)

“We’d super appreciate it if you could fill out some of those feedback questions,” Cook said. “We really do take this feedback very seriously, we look at it every year. We make changes, adjustments, especially as we’re looking towards maybe some changes in the Spring Quarter and in the fall.”

Financial Controller Butler then announced that he had received extra funding for the virtual Sun God festival (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/17/a-s-council-brief-increased-basic-needs-hub-funding-sun-god-festival-update/>) this year but will be finalizing details of the event before sharing more information.

During the Reports of External News portion of the meeting, Transfer Senator Yarenni Reyes Medina said that she is looking to foster a larger community for UCSD transfer students after examining results from pertinent surveys and reaching out to transfer representatives from the different colleges. She will be hosting an inter-college transfer social with A.S. by Week 7 or Week 8.

A.S. hosts their council meetings live on Zoom every Wednesday at 6 p.m. The public is welcome to attend. Links to future meetings are available on the A.S. website (<https://as.ucsd.edu/Home/OrderOfBusiness>); recordings of previous meetings can be found on the ASUCSD Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/ASUCSD/>).

Artwork courtesy of Yui Kita for The UCSD Guardian.

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Whose Street is Wall Street?

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/whose-street-is-wall-street/>) 👤 Praveen Nair
(<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/prnair/>)



If there is anything that the ongoing pandemic, the unusually fraught transfer of power, a generational economic crisis, and a refreshed reckoning with our nation's racial past have laid bare, it is an intense anger among the American people with their public institutions. It is only with that anger in mind that we can contextualize last week's happenings on Wall Street, where an impassioned uprising of retail investors called hedge funds' bluffs en masse and sent the stock prices of companies like GameStop, AMC, Nokia, and Blackberry skyrocketing — costing institutional short sellers billions of dollars in the process. That struggle, and the backlash it has caused from brokers like Robinhood, throws light on just how few people hold the keys to the financial system that affects so many Americans, even in a time when financial tools are at everyone's fingertips.

If, like many Americans, you found it bizarre that the strip-mall retailer you used to buy Xbox games from became the hottest financial asset in the country, there's quite a bit to explain. Shorting, as you may be aware, refers to the process of betting against a stock's price — but the actual mechanics of how that works is important. To short a stock, you borrow one from your broker, sell it immediately, wait for the price to drop, then buy the stock off the market at the reduced price, and return that to your broker. You earned the price of the stock at the beginning of the period, spent the price at the end, and you net the difference.

There are three key pieces to note here. First, since a stock can theoretically appreciate in value infinitely, but only lose a finite amount, the potential loss of a short position is infinite. Second, short-sellers don't actually *own* anything during the process of the short, meaning that it is theoretically possible for short sellers to short a greater quantity of stock than actually exists on the market. Third, to close out a short position, you need to buy a stock off the market. If it's hard to acquire one, and the price increases... well, you may be starting to see what went wrong.

Enter /r/WallStreetBets (<https://reddit.com/r/wallstreetbets/>), or WSB. Often described as “what would happen if you gave 4Chan a Bloomberg terminal,” the subreddit has long been infamous for its worship of *extremely* high-risk trading strategies; losing hundreds of thousands of dollars gets you just as much respect as earning the same sum would. But let it not be said that they don't do their research. Users on WSB discovered early this month, using publicly available information, that short sellers, mostly hedge funds, had accumulated short positions on GameStop (\$GME) of around 140 percent of the total stock volume. To close those short positions, that stock would need to be bought back, no matter its price. To capitalize on this, and to punish what many saw as a perversion of market principles against an American company many are fond of, WSB users began what is known as the short

squeeze (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_squeeze) — buying \$GME at ever-higher prices and forcing short sellers to either close their positions at massive losses or risk those aforementioned infinite losses.

News of the squeeze spread quickly. Fueled by the anti-establishment glee of sticking it to the man, as well as a fear of missing out on multiplying profits several times over, the price of \$GME, which had been \$4 last summer and \$17 in early January, skyrocketed past \$350 on Jan. 27 and hit \$469 on Jan. 28. But on the 28th, Robinhood, the trading app that became popular offering fractional shares to everyday Americans, disallowed users from buying any shares of GameStop (<https://twitter.com/RobinhoodApp/status/1354805613566410756?s=20>), as well as a few other heavily shorted stocks for which the same squeeze was underway. This action, along with similar ones by other brokerages, sent \$GME's price back down to \$132, although anger at this decision fueled a rally back up to the mid-\$300 range on Friday.

The decision of Robinhood, among other brokerages, to shut down trading for some stocks has kicked off a battle for control in the financial markets that spans far more than just WallStreetBets. Robinhood, as its name suggests, has been hailed in recent years for bringing trading to the masses, but its decision Thursday to halt trading on a legal, democratically initiated stock movement shows just how much gatekeeping remains in the financial sphere. (It should be noted that the company makes a significant chunk of its income selling users' trading activity to high-frequency trading firms, a fact that the SEC fined the company (<https://www.sec.gov/news/press-release/2020-321>) \$65 million for failing to disclose.) As much as brokers have put trading tools into the hands of everyday Americans over the last decade, there still exists a massive gap between the investment firms that run Wall Street and the retail investors.

This gap exists not only in terms of prestige but also in consequences. As just about everyone on both sides of the aisle has been saying this week, it seems that Wall Street has been playing by a different set of rules than the rest of us, and when the rules that have allowed them to make bad bets for decades finally turned on them, they couldn't take the heat. The WSB short squeeze is exactly the sort of action that hedge funds have been making for years, because, hey, it's just business. So it's hard not to find the reactions of many in finance comical when they come from the overseers of a regime that has presided over a massive movement of wealth from the lower and middle classes to the top 0.1 percent (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/12/16/business/economy/nine-new-findings-about-income-inequality-piketty.html>). Sure, the organization of retail investors from

WallStreetBets is an unprecedented event, but it's hard to make the case that a free, public forum sharing publicly available stock information is a market aberration deserving of censure.

WallStreetBets' gamble on GameStop is more than just an opportunity to make a quick buck, however, although that's certainly a big part of it. A quick read of the subreddit shows that many of the users (the most active ones, anyway) are largely motivated by disgust at the practices of hedge funds and brokerages, and its posts are rife with populist messaging about taking back control of the stock market. There's certainly something admirable about it, although one might be worried for newer investors buying GameStop stock without being prepared for the level of risk WSB usually traffics in; nonetheless, it's clear at a glance that there is a massive pool of people who have been waiting for an opportunity to strike back at the finance industry, against a system that feels rigged to work for just a few while the rest are left out.

But you've heard this story before. Just as in the banking crisis a decade ago, a glimpse behind the curtain reveals a system of moral hazards and failing incentives. Between 2007 and 2009, the CEOs of Citigroup, Merrill Lynch, and Bank of America were given — *given!* — a combined \$272 million when leaving their firms (<https://archive.thinkprogress.org/three-infuriating-facts-about-wall-street-ceos-five-years-after-the-crisis-ac49b6a7fc3d/>). All three companies received federal assistance. Lehman Brothers, upon its bankruptcy, had a debt-to-capital ratio of 30.7 to 1

(<https://www.livemint.com/Industry/Gi4CgVYJ4QLOiVGRKqx8JO/Learning-from-Lehman-what-goes-around.html>). While the Dodd-Frank Act and the Volcker Rule have improved oversight and reduced investment leverage, it has already begun frittering away under GOP leadership. While we've seen leaders from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (<https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1354830697459032066?s=20>) to Ted Cruz (<https://twitter.com/tedcruz/status/1354833603943931905?s=20>) call for investigation and oversight over Robinhood's actions last week, if those calls don't translate to constant vigilance and a commitment to making things different this time, we'll be in this situation all over again.

There might be a glimmer of hope, however. As the short squeeze devastated some hedge funds and frightened the living daylights out of others, Morgan Stanley reported (<https://www.ft.com/content/4f76d769-4460-450f-9373-1e54f7da6c19>) that many funds are beginning to retract their shorts, reduce their debt-to-capital ratios, and cut down on trading risk. If the financial crisis and regulation couldn't keep the funds from taking on massive risk,

it would be almost a miracle if a subreddit could. While the GameStop short squeeze is bound to end eventually, retail investors have sent a lasting message to institutional finance — that in an age of information, everyone can play at their game.

Photo by Chris Liverani (<https://unsplash.com/@chrisliverani>) from Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com>)

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Your Weekend Brunch Can Wait: Despite Removal of Stay-at-Home Orders, COVID-19 Still Runs Rampant in California

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/your-weekend-brunch-can-wait-despite-removal-of-stay-at-home-orders-covid-19-still-runs-rampant-in-california/>) 👤 Zara Irshad (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/zirshad/>)



Last week, despite COVID-19's continued prevalence across the state, Governor Gavin Newsom lifted California's stay-at-home orders, allowing for outdoor dining and beauty salons, among many other services, (<https://ktla.com/news/local-news/california-lifts-stay-home-order-heres-what-can-open-in-l-a-orange-riverside-san-bernardino-and-ventura-counties/>) to resume operations. It's no doubt that many Californians are likely eager to return to a remote sense of normalcy, given that the state has been on lockdown since last December (<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/12/03/california-health-officials-announce-a-regional-stay-at-home-order-triggered-by-icu-capacity/>) due to low ICU capacity.

However, if the goal is to reopen safely, then this is simply not the right time to do so. With ICU capacity at just 7 percent (https://covidactnow.org/us/california-ca/county/los_angeles_county/?s=1557497) in both Los Angeles and San Diego and total deaths in the state creeping toward 40,000 (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/california-coronavirus-cases.html>), regaining the ability to go out for brunch seems a little menial, if not tone-deaf.

If Californians want a chance at climbing out of the deep hole they've fallen into, they should continue to minimize nonessential outings until vaccines are distributed at higher volumes, instead of adding to the already growing problem.

The state has begun to roll out vaccines (<https://states.aarp.org/california/covid-19-vaccine-distribution>) on a tier-based system, prioritizing health care workers and the elderly. With roughly 120,000 (<https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/01/26/chart-california-picks-up-pace-on-administering-covid-19-vaccines/>) Californians getting vaccinated each day, it would seem as though the state is in much better shape than it was when the stay-at-home order was initially mandated back in December. However, it seems as though we shouldn't let our guard down yet, when you take into consideration that one does not begin to develop immunity until roughly 12 days after receiving the first dose, and full immunity does not take effect until 28 days (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-55181665>) after.

Governor Newsom did acknowledge this in his announcement of state re-openings on Monday, stating that, "We are not out of the woods. We are seeing a flattening of the curve (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/25/politics/gavin-newsom-recall-covid-restrictions/index.html>)." However, his failure to disclose the scientific evidence (<https://apnews.com/article/sacramento-california-coronavirus-pandemic-gavin-newsom-38bb44ea7cb39eab9f6f6c621daeaf10>) that he consulted in coming to the decision to reopen the state has put him under public scrutiny this past week. If we're not out of the woods, then what makes it safe to open up?

Especially considering the increasing severity of the virus, it seems a lot safer to continue avoiding unnecessary outings. Many experts have begun recommending layering two face masks over each other when leaving the house for maximum protection, in light of the discovery of highly transmissible
(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/01/27/double-mask-variants-guidance/>) COVID-19 variants. Chief Medical Advisor to President Biden, Dr. Anthony Fauci, stated on the “Today” show this past Monday
(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/01/27/double-mask-variants-guidance/>) that wearing two masks “just makes common sense that it likely would be more effective.”

The fact that despite all we, as a nation, have been through in the past year, medical professionals are only coming forward with the recommendation of wearing two masks now just goes to show how grave the situation is, even if Newsom’s new order contradicts that.

Furthermore, Los Angeles, which was deemed the most dangerous place
(<https://deadline.com/2021/01/los-angeles-county-number-one-in-danger-fema-says-1234664157/>) in the U.S. just a few weeks ago, had to alter their air quality regulations to keep up with COVID-19-related deaths. The emergency order (<https://ktla.com/news/local-news/air-quality-order-lifting-limits-on-cremations-expanded-to-o-c-extended-in-l-a-county-as-coronavirus-deaths-remain-high/>) calling for the suspension of cremation limits was implemented on Jan. 17, and has since been expanded to Orange County as well.

It’s astounding that this reopening of the state is dependent on ICU projections
(<https://ktla.com/news/california/california-lifted-stay-at-home-order-after-formulas-projected-all-regions-will-top-15-icu-capacity-in-4-weeks/>) rather than what is actually happening right now. To put things in perspective, last April, California had an average of roughly 1,100 new COVID-19 cases per week
(<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/california-coronavirus-cases.html>). As of January 2021, that number has been slowly declining from around 30,000.

While it’s true that we are gradually flattening the curve, the magnitude of cases now compared to back in April is shocking, especially when you compare public behavior at both times. In April, very few people left their homes for non-essential purposes, and instead, most followed guidelines and stayed home. Now, when the rates are nearly 30 times worse than back then, we’ve had the complete opposite reaction.

The difference, quite frankly, is that people are sick and tired, which is understandable after almost a year of this “half life.” But is a few more months of strict lockdown not better than another year?

Think of countries like Australia and Japan (<https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/coronavirus-government-response-tracker>) — who implemented some of the strictest stay at home orders at the beginning of the pandemic. Now, although there are still a few cases here and there, they have returned to a level of normalcy that the U.S. hasn't seen in almost a year. People are able to go to restaurants and even concerts without second thought, because they eradicated the large-scale spread of the virus with such strict lockdowns, and they continued to wear masks.

The bottom line is yes, with increased vaccine production, it seems as though we are nearly out of the woods. However, that does not at all mean that we should let our guard down in the slightest. At the end of the day, the decision ultimately falls upon the individual, as it often has, to protect themselves and others.

We can't undo Newsom's decision to reopen California, but we can help to make sure that it doesn't worsen our already bad condition by continuing to avoid nonessential outings and wearing masks at all times. I get it, going out for brunch sounds like a dream right now, especially after being cooped up at home for so long. But trust me, the wait will be well worth it if we can avoid having to continue this endless cycle of shutting down and reopening our cities.

Photo by the United Nations (<https://unsplash.com/@unitednations>) from Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com>)

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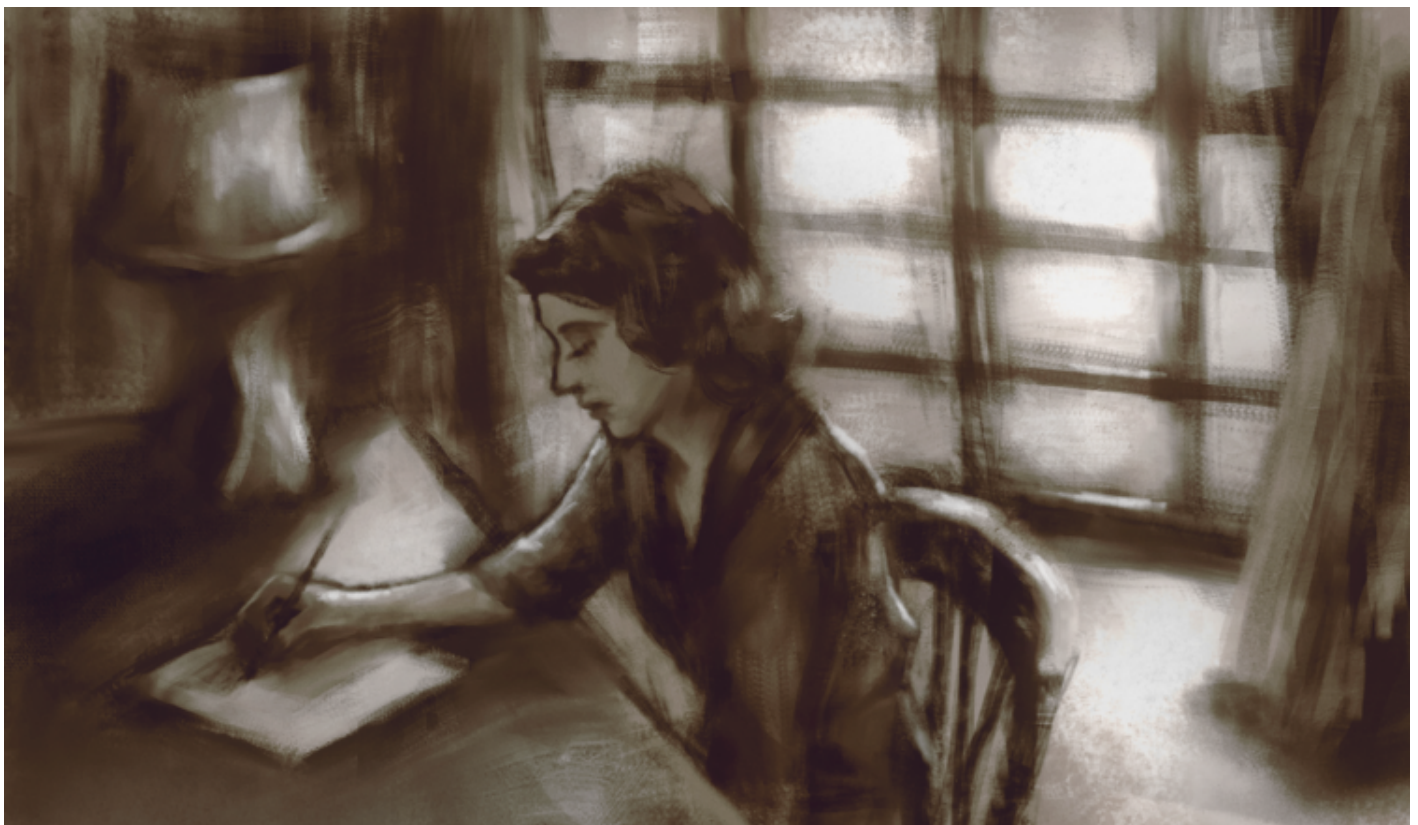


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Musings from the Museum: It is Time to Unite Behind the Shared Goal of a Nuclear-Free Iran

📅 January 31, 2021 (<https://ucsdguardian.org/2021/01/31/musings-from-the-museum-it-is-time-to-unite-behind-the-shared-goal-of-a-nuclear-free-iran/>) 👤 Sparky Mitra (<https://ucsdguardian.org/author/sparkymitra/>)



As we turn the page to a new presidency, let us look back at this week in history and bookmark the value of uneasy solidarity.

Brooches sparkled. The snow glistened. The world tuned in. America listened. Hands rose as oaths were taken. A diverse cast of leaders and speakers left status quos broken. Just as in every inaugural week, there was some fear, some optimism, and some political smears. Overall though, Jan. 20, 2021 and the days that followed united a broken, yet hopeful nation. A little digging through our society's dusty archives, and we can discover exactly how much we can achieve by prioritizing common goals over partisan philosophies.

President Biden's first (<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/here-s-full-list-biden-s-executive-actions-so-far-n1255564>) week in office has already shown us the strides he is willing to take to unify not only his own party, but the nation as well. To counter the COVID-19 pandemic, he expanded unemployment insurance coverage (a Liberal priority), while forming a task force dedicated to opening schools (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/05/republicans-democrats-differ-over-factors-k-12-schools-should-consider-in-deciding-whether-to-reopen/>) as swiftly and safely (<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-education-coronavirus-special-edition/2021/01/19/a-100-day-headache-bidens-vow-to-quickly-reopen-schools-792822>) as possible (a Conservative priority). He even initiated proceedings to rejoin (<https://www.reuters.com/article/amp/idUSKBN29R28P>) the Iran Nuclear Deal, formally known (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655>) as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, despite the often-conflicting visions of American legislators and foreign leaders.

Nuclear muscle power has been a point of contention for much of the world's modern history, yet we have also learned to prioritize people's safety over adversarial agendas. In fact, almost exactly 54 years ago on Jan. 27, 1967, an unforeseeable alliance was forged between the Soviet Union and the United States. These two nations signed (<https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/introouterspacetreaty.html>) a resolution to ban the placement of weapons of mass destruction into Earth's orbit. Space was deemed no man's land for use in military tactics. Despite the countries' scientific prowess, they prohibited the use of space as a launchpad to lodge attacks on civilians. Addressing the dangers of rampant nuclear arms preceded the nations' desires to flex those arms. Where did this unity perish when addressing Iran's nuclear capabilities?

Historically, we have been so sure that any efforts geared towards reducing nuclear weapons should be encouraged. However, for some cheap political points, we surrendered a deal whose end goal we all agree with: a nuclear-weapons-free Iran. We pulled (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trumps-exit-from-iran-nuclear-pact-addsdoubt-to-north-korea-talks-1525878947>) out of a deal which limited Iran's nuclear capabilities, because to some (<https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-trump-iran-congress-reaction-20180508-story.html>), we were not tough enough on the nation. Instead, we attempted to hand this same deal to North Korea, a country which has shown much less accountability in abiding to international agreements. Maybe we thought that we would be able to squeeze Iran more than North Korea. Well, North Korea refused every offer. Where Iran made concessions (<https://www.cfr.org/background/what-iran-nuclear-deal>) before talks even began, North Korea did not. Diplomacy necessitates negotiation. Negotiations often result in partisan changes to legal intricacies, which we should accept to fulfill the greater purposes of these multilateral contracts.

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 was far from perfect, but we recognized that this agreement cemented our goal of sustaining peace and tranquility around the world. We placed our bets on uncertain peace over guaranteed war. Biden's decision to rejoin the Iran Nuclear Deal should not draw contention. Our perspectives will differ on many topics, but when they align, let us be cautiously optimistic allies in achieving our shared objectives.

While the new administration has delivered many temporary fixes (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/01/27/biden-iran-nuclear-deal-challenge/%3foutputType=amp>) to enduring issues (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/26/world/middleeast/biden-palestinians-israel.amp.html?referringSource=articleShare>) so far, uneasy discussions with critics (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/01/15/gop-progressives-aoc-criticize-biden-covid-19-relief-package/4172318001/>) and opposition leaders are now required for permanent solutions. A glance back at our distant past shows us everything we can accomplish, if we can make imperfect solidarity last.

Art by Angela Liang for the UC San Diego Guardian