

The

# SUMMIT



GROSSMONT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWS MEDIA | MARCH 2024

A photograph of a wooden door frame standing upright in a field of green grass and yellow dandelions. The door frame has six rectangular panes arranged in a 3x2 grid. The background shows a line of trees under a cloudy sky.

# OPENING OPPORTUNITIES

IMAGE BY RON LACH



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IMAGE BY POLINA KOVALEVA

# The SUMMIT

A publication of Grossmont College's Media Communications Department.

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Journalism major with an emphasis on advertising. Looking forward to writing some fun and interesting articles this semester.



The staff of *The Summit* is enrolled in an academic media news production course. A main function of *The Summit* is to provide a professional learning experience for students of any major classification who express an interest in journalism and have completed an introductory news writing course. To serve this function, *The Summit* is entirely student-run. Student editors are responsible for all editorial decisions, content and editing. The instructor/ adviser is available for training, guidance and advice, but has no control over the content or editing of the newspaper. Prior review is not exercised. These guidelines have been established to protect the First Amendment freedoms guaranteed to the student press, as well as a guarantee of valuable learning experience in all aspects of newspaper management for the students. **Please direct all inquiries, comments and letters to the editor to [summit@gcccd.edu](mailto:summit@gcccd.edu).**

# BRIGHTER DAYS

The winter season is ending and the flowers are blooming. With new seasons come greater opportunities that will allow each and every one of us to blossom into the people we want to be.

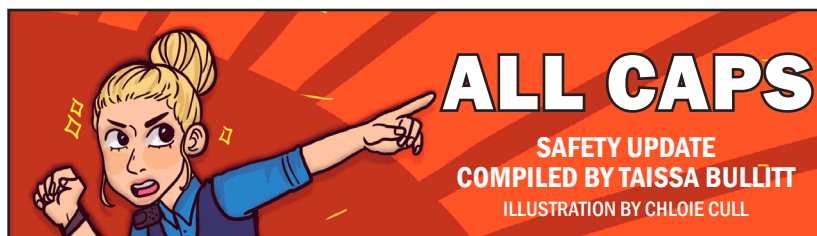
As editor-in-chief, I hope to grow as a writer and fulfill my duties, while helping my fellow staff writers become the aspiring journalists they can and will be. Brighter days are ahead of us, and this school semester opens the door to another step closer to success.



*Alana Mullaly*  
Alana Mullaly, Editor-in-Chief

## CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

At *The Summit*, we are very concerned with the quality of our journalism. If you spot a factual error, please contact us at [summit@gcccd.edu](mailto:summit@gcccd.edu).



Grossmont's Campus and Parking Services team, a.k.a. CAPS, handle campus safety concerns along with a sheriff's deputy from the San Diego County Sheriff's Office.

Grossmont's Campus and Parking Services team, also known as CAPS, is dedicated to ensuring safety among all students and faculty at the college. These events on campus were among those noted on the crime log\* since our last issue.

- **Jan. 23:** The campus deputy responded to a report of a disturbance. The deputy contacted two teens skateboarding on campus who then left after speaking to the deputy.
- **Jan. 29:** The campus deputy responded to a disturbance call in Building 20, Room 105. The deputy contacted the reporting party and told the student was not enrolled in the class so there was unknown information on the student. The deputy conducted extra patrol around the building but was unable to locate the student.
- **Jan. 29:** The campus deputy responded to a report of a disturbance in Building 60. The student involved was the same from a previous disturbance call in Building 20. The student was upset over the food pantry and was advised he could not order the food he wanted.

\*The Clery Act is a federal statute requiring colleges participating in federal financial aid programs to maintain and disclose campus crime statistics and security information. A daily crime log is kept allowing the public to view the most recent information.

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# CAMPUS CALENDAR

COMPILED BY SUMMIT STAFF\*

## MARCH

- 5:** California presidential primary
- 8:** Last day to apply for degree/certificate
- 10:** Daylight Savings begins
- 19:** Food Distribution, Noon to 2 p.m. (Main quad)
- 25-30:** Spring Break

## APRIL

- 1:** Second eight-week session begins
- 10:** Health Fair, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Main quad)
- 12:** Next issue of *The Summit* hits newsstands

## WOMEN'S MONTH EVENTS

- MARCH 5:** FemmeVoices in STEM, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (31-128)
- MARCH 7:** Women's Small Business Owners Career Panel, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (60-140)
- MARCH 14:** Women's Mental Health Across the Lifespan, 10-11 a.m. (Griffin Gate)
- MARCH 19:** Trailblazers: Celebrating Female Composers, 6-7:30 p.m. (PVAC) \$
- MARCH 27:** Paint & Sip - Female Icons, Noon to 1 p.m. (Griffin Gate)

## MUSIC EVENTS (PVAC)

- Grossmont Symphony Orchestra  
March 1, 7:30-9:30 p.m., \$
- GC Concert Band with GHS Band  
March 7, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
- Trailblazers: Celebrating Female Composers  
March 19, 6-7:30 p.m. \$
- Jazz & Afro-Cuban Ensembles  
April 9, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$
- Music Major Recital: April 11, 2-3 p.m.

## CAREER CENTER EVENTS (ONLINE)

- MARCH 8**  
10-11 a.m.: Privacy and Your Digital Footprint  
11 a.m. to noon: How Credit Works
- MARCH 12:** Pathways to Work Info Session, 1-2 p.m. (60-140 and Online)
- MARCH 15**  
10-11 a.m.: Empathy and Self-Awareness  
11 a.m. to noon: The Why
- MARCH 22**  
10-11 a.m.: Social & Diversity Awareness  
11 a.m. to noon: Effective Communication
- APRIL 5**  
10-11 a.m.: Developing Emotional Intelligence  
11 a.m. to noon: Customer Service
- APRIL 12**  
10-11 a.m.: In-Demand Jobs & Resilient Careers  
11 a.m. to noon: Resume Writing

## THEATER (STAGE HOUSE THEATRE)

*Lost Girl*, March 14-16, March 21-23, 7:30-9:30 p.m.  
March 16 and 23, 2-4 p.m. \$

## FINANCIAL AID FRIDAYS (10-172)

March 8, 15, 22 and April 5; 9 -10:30 a.m.

## CULINARY ARTS DINNER (60-173)

March 7, 14 and 21; 5:15 p.m. (60-173) \$

\*Events subject to change; visit [grossmont.edu](http://grossmont.edu) for online meeting logins and latest info. | \$ Indicates admission cost

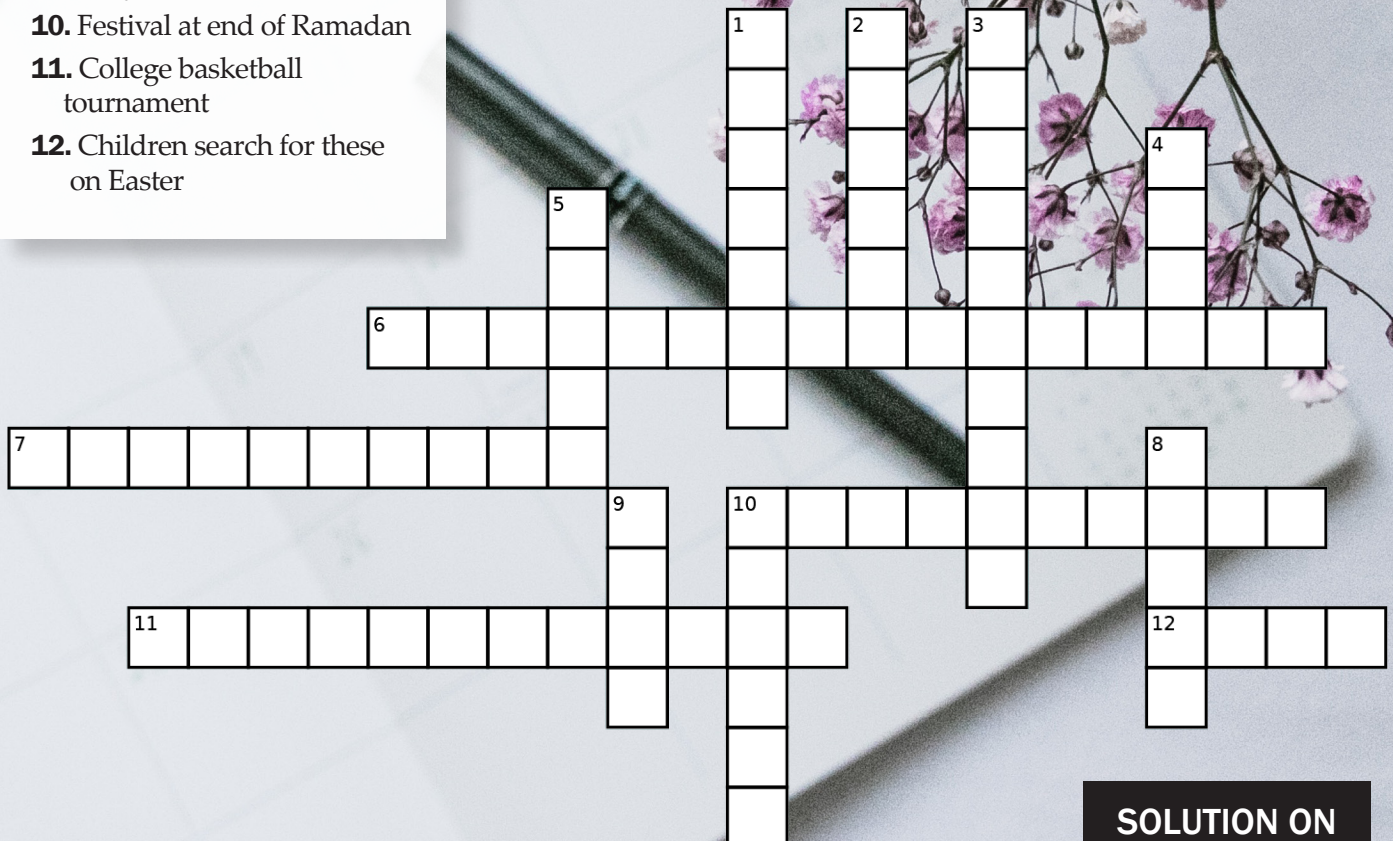


### DOWN

1. March 11 is the first night of \_\_\_\_.
2. Four-leaf \_\_\_\_
3. Character in Irish folklore
4. Pot of \_\_\_\_
5. Mascot for Easter
8. Color you wear on St. Patrick's Day
9. The 40-day period before Easter
10. Christian holiday celebrating resurrection of Jesus

### ACROSS

6. March 17
7. Friday Before Easter
10. Festival at end of Ramadan
11. College basketball tournament
12. Children search for these on Easter



**SOLUTION ON  
PAGE 11**



# UNDER ONE ROOF

IMAGE BY JACOM CUMMINGS

The long-awaited arrival of Building 36 presents new possibilities at Grossmont.

| BY JACOM CUMMINGS |

Grossmont College leadership, students and alumni gathered together Feb. 15 for the unveiling of the newest building on campus: Building 36. A public ceremony was held outside the finished building featuring a series of speakers and certificates before a ribbon-cutting. Afterward, attendees had the opportunity to explore the new facilities and enjoy the celebrations at their own pace.

Building 36 will now serve as the new home for Grossmont's Math Department, Veterans Center and MESA Program among other purposes. The completion of the project represents not only the culmination of years of effort, but also millions of East County taxpayer dollars, as the construction was funded by voter-approved bond measure Proposition V.

As guests settled into their seats, the event began with a few words of welcome from Ernesto Rivera, Grossmont's director of College and Community Relations. Following Rivera's remarks, the audience heard several speeches from a variety of academic and political figureheads. The event brought together several notable members of the community, from El Cajon City

Councilmember Phil Ortiz to Grossmont College President Denise Whisenhunt. Several certificates were presented during the opening ceremonies, including a Certificate of Recognition from the office of State Sen. Brian Jones (R-San Diego) honoring the opening of the building.

Whisenhunt emphasized the role of countless individuals in making Building 36 a reality, offering several acknowledgments and words of encouragement for the students and faculty to make the most of the new space.

One such student is Yoosif Gaboola, a Math and Science Center Tutor as well as speaker at the opening event. Following the cutting of the ribbon and the official end of the opening ceremony, Gaboola offered a few thoughts on the significance of finally having Building 36 on campus.

"It's a place where students can come together and solve problems, but also build off each other, right?" explained Gaboola, "Some students know some things, but then they have trouble with others. That's where having a community helps you the most."

Community became a central theme as the night went on, with many guests flocking to the building's second-story terrace to enjoy

complimentary refreshments and each other's company, all sound-tracked by the smooth tones of Grossmont's Jazz Club.

For others, however, it was time to get back to work inside the building and prepare to answer student's questions or teach classes. In one of Building 36's new classrooms, Adjunct Math Professor Alejandro Ortega reflected on the newfound "accessibility of learning" offered by the room.

"From the instructor perspective, I would say that this new building with all the boards and all the lighting here, really does create a different atmosphere for students that's more conducive to learning. Now, with the students having all the boards and screens there, they'll feel more inclined to participate," Ortega said.

He also spoke of a newfound ease in performing group activities and encouraging student collaboration, citing the new resources of Grossmont's math rooms.

Building 36 is also expected to provide students with more convenient math and science tutoring, due to the centralized nature of having the STEM Tutoring Center in the same facility as the Math Department. Grossmont's Dean of Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Exercise Science and Wellness,

Shawn Hicks, spoke on the “student-centered” space the new building offers to students.

“If a student is sitting working with a tutor in the center, and they get stuck and need more help, they have that access to their faculty member or instructor right next door. It’s all the resources that a student could need or want at their fingertips,” Hicks said.

Even as the festivities continued outside, the tutoring center was alive with the chatter of students and their tutors, with equations and guides written across the countless whiteboard surfaces of the busy room. In addition to several tutors, students are aided by many computers and other teaching tools available to them during the center’s hours.

STEM disciplines have been one of the guiding forces of the vision for the new facilities in Building 36. The building will be home not only to the math department and STEM tutoring, but also Earth Science, Anthropology and MESA.

The Math, Engineering, Science Achievement Program (commonly known as MESA) is designed to offer students support in STEM disciplines. The program is a new arrival to campus, as explained by Brodney Fitzgerald, MESA director at Grossmont. Fitzgerald said the new MESA facilities at Building 36 will be a computer lab and social area for students interested in the program.

As for future goals, Fitzgerald said, “We’re hoping to get hundreds of students that are in this MESA program that transfer to four-year colleges and get STEM careers.”

However, in the quietest part of these premises, community is not found in academics but rather in a mission to serve those who served. Building 36 is now the newest location of Grossmont’s Veterans Center, an office designed to aid current and former members of the US military, as well as their families. David Doyle, a worker at the center, delved into the professional and personal significance of the new workspace.

“This new building for the veterans, it’s a new place for us to gather and be ourselves, and to unwind,” he said. “While we’re veterans, we can’t just stay idle... it’s also a place where we get a lot of work done.”

**“Now that this building is now open, it means so much for the community, because we are promoting the sciences and math and veterans, all under the same roof.”**

**—Grossmont President Denise Whisenhunt**

Doyle continued: “Most of us are still getting used to being ‘normal,’ so this is a place where a lot of people that normally would be lonely outside, in the normal world, can gather, get together and not feel so lonely.”

Wherever one looks, one can see the mission statement of unity and helping others already at play in Building 36. Whisenhunt provided an expression of gratitude for finally seeing the project completed.

“Now that this building is now open, it means so much for the community, because we are promoting the sciences and math and veterans, all under the same roof. This is incredible, the faculty have worked so hard tirelessly, as well as classified professionals and student input, to make it an extraordinary day.”

It’s clear that to many at Grossmont, Building 36 opening its doors has also opened several new doors of opportunity. 🐦



**If you are having trouble navigating campus, the Student Support Hub is one click away.**

**| BY ALANA MULLALY |**

In Canvas, you might have noticed a new button on the side panel called “Student Support Hub.” What might seem like a small detail welcomes a huge and easy opportunity to get involved on campus.

Dawn Heuft, Instructional Design Technology Specialist at Grossmont College, created the Student Support Hub to make navigating resources around campus a lot easier. Any information you need is just one click away, with ample directions on how to answer your questions.

The hub has been available to view for a while but was just put out on the main Canvas side panel to make it more prominent. It used to be optional for professors to allow on their course side panels, much like the home page, modules, announcements, grades, etc., but now it shows on every course.

“Student Support Hub was put into Canvas to help connect students to the very services they might need,” Heuft said. “We put [the Student Support Hub] out on the global navigation that takes you to a landing page,” with either Grossmont or Cuyamaca college links available to click.

Whether you go to Grossmont, Cuyamaca, or both, students can press on either support hub to get information for their respective schools.

The support hub highlights the most critical information students might need to know. This allows online and face-to-face students to navigate how to get the help they need fast.

When first clicking on the Grossmont hub, Canvas and technology help desks, as well as how to change your display name, are all highlighted at the top with easy access to instructions.

Heuft said the display name change is something she is very passionate about. This gives students the chance to change their name if they do not go by or associate with the one pre-set on Canvas. The feature allows students to change their display name in a variety of places on Canvas, but unfortunately not everywhere.

The Student Support Hub wants to make finding help and information easy for students.

Student services had partnered with the hub to make information more accessible. Drop-down “accordions” make it possible for students to learn more about a topic by clicking a link to the respective page on the Grossmont website.

For Heuft, creating the support hub was a “passion project filled with love” made for Grossmont and Cuyamaca students to be at ease while navigating the campus.

Adelle Roe, who stepped into the role of Online Education Coordinator last semester, came on board and contributed to the support hub by adding the “Types of courses offered at Grossmont” module.

In an email, Roe said, “I tried to use simple language to clearly define the variety of choices students have here [on campus].”

Like Heuft, Roe’s purpose for contributing to the hub is to create a space for students that gives them easy access to information they might need.

Heuft and Roe said they both welcome student feedback on ways the hub can be made better.

“I’d be grateful for any student feedback on what else we might want to include,” Roe said. 🐦



# THE WAITING GAME



## I've applied, now what?

| BY JANELLE CARTER |

It's the start of the spring semester and many Griffins are expecting to hear from all the universities they applied to during the fall.

If you're one of those students, you may be wondering, "When will I be hearing back?" Well, fear not, you will get a response sooner than you think.

In March and April, the majority of schools will start announcing decisions. Students need to look out for notices of admissions and take steps to ensure a successful transfer.

All students who applied to UC and CSUs should pay close attention to their emails these next couple of months to see if they will receive any important information from their desired schools. This includes thoroughly looking through junk mail and spam folders.

As announcements for admissions begin to roll in, universities may also ask for students to send in their transcripts. Deadlines for transcripts and other official documents may vary depending on which universities students applied to and their requirements.

Grossmont requires students to apply to graduate. Grossmont Transfer Center

Coordinator and Counselor Sarah Moore offered this advice: "Students who are applying for an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) specifically should be applying right now if they haven't already. It's best to do that ASAP."

The last day for students to apply for a degree or certificate is March 8. Students can complete a request form on the Grossmont website or visit the Transfer Center (10-173) on campus to receive assistance from a counselor.

Students should also consider applying for FAFSA or CADAA (California Dream Act) if they have not already. The deadline for most state financial aid programs is April 2.

When it comes time to hear back from universities, students may have a lot of anxiety about whether they may get admitted or not. There will be students who get accepted into the schools they applied to; however, there are case scenarios where a selected few will not get accepted and that is okay.

"There's appeal processes at universities. Students can ask for their admission decision to be re-considered and provide any new information at that time as a part of their appeal," Moore said. "So that's something students should really consider based on the reason for the denied admission."

Moore emphasized there will be universities still open for fall transfer accepting applications. Counselors in the Transfer Center can help students look for those opportunities if the student is open to applying to other universities.

Often, students will have to look into what courses they are missing. They may have to stay back, complete a few more units and apply to the schools of their choice in a future term.

Students should know that if they receive a denied admission, it is not the end of the road for the student and their transfer journey. They have options.

Students should also note receiving notices of admission from universities will take time. Some students may receive news faster than others and because of that, it might feel as if it will take a lifetime to hear back. Although students should not worry, it is important to have patience and to remember that it is all part of the process.

Grossmont College graduate Katerina Rodriguez transferred to San Diego State University (SDSU) in the fall of 2022 and is expecting to graduate this summer in 2024.

**"Just trust yourself; be patient.  
It's all gonna work out."**

**—Katerina Rodriguez**

Rodriguez shared words of advice to future transfer students: "The one thing I'm ever going to tell to any transfer student, that transfers, is that you guys need to have patience."

Rodriguez recalled her experience applying to SDSU and how she felt waiting to hear back from



admissions after submitting her application.

"My friend heard back actually before March," she said. "It was really weird, and I didn't hear back till the very last day of acceptance and it kind of just emotionally overtook me."

**"I want students to be encouraged, that what they are going for is possible, because it is."**

—Sarah Moore

Rodriguez mentioned she has seen people sharing their concerns on online forums such as Reddit about waiting for SDSU admissions and hearing back from the university. She advised students not to look for answers this way because it will only make them more stressed.

Rodriguez said she believes any student can go to any school they wish to attend. "Just trust yourself; be patient," she said. "It's all gonna work out. You're going to get accepted somewhere."

Mauro Avalos, a first-generation college student who transferred from Grossmont to SDSU, shared words of encouragement for transfer students as well.

"I would not stress about it too much," Avalos said. "Not saying that you shouldn't think about it or put it on the back burner, but because you know you put in all the hard work and effort, you should have some faith in yourself."

The counselors at Grossmont are there to help the students with the complexities of the transfer process. Moore encouraged students to come to counselors at the Transfer Center for help when they know they need it.

"I want students to be encouraged, that what they are going for is possible, because it is," she said. "It's never the end of the transfer story." 🐦

IMAGE BY QUOC BAO



# LESS STRESS?

## A simplified process promises to relieve some financial aid application woes. | BY MYA ALEXANDER

**A**pplying for financial aid can be confusing, and there is a lack of communication as to where Grossmont College students can receive assistance in the process.

Grossmont Student Madeline Lam said, "I thought that I applied for financial aid, but I guess not."

While some students have a tough time applying for financial aid, the process is supposed to be simplified next year thanks to the FAFSA Simplification Act. Starting with the 2024-2025 school year, the application will cut the amount of required questions by more than half.

One cause for the change is a parent or guardian who may need to participate in your FAFSA form as a contributor. The federal tax information will be directly transferred from the IRS to the FAFSA form. This information will be used to determine a student's eligibility for federal student aid.

For a transfer to happen, the student and their contributor must provide consent together and have both approvals on the FAFSA form. This requirement is completely new to FAFSA, and if consent and approval are not provided, Grossmont students will not be eligible for financial aid. The student and their contributor will each have to make their own StudentAid.Gov accounts to be able to access and complete forms for FAFSA.

Students should note that citizenship is required. The eligibility requirements for financial aid include being a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen. Once a student at Grossmont College completes the FAFSA form, they will have the option to select up to 20 colleges, career schools or trade schools.

The student will receive a financial aid offer from the selected schools and compare the offers to decide on which school to attend.

While Grossmont students may or may not be receiving financial aid, the new simplified updates will hopefully bring students quicker results instead of uncertainty.

In Lam's case, it wasn't applying for financial aid that was the issue, but understanding her resources to help with the application process. She said she is going to apply again with the new version of FAFSA.

Kili Marshall, a student currently in the waiting process, said: "They are withholding my financial aid due to verification issues on their end. It proves to be a challenge because the financial aid greatly aids in paying off any and all necessities such as rent and bills. Without it, I am struggling and barely even making it this semester as well."

While Marshall is in the verification process, she can either choose to speak with her direct guidance counselor or wait for financial aid to be given. The new wait time for FAFSA files to be reviewed takes approximately six to 11 weeks.

The staff at Financial Aid cannot guarantee students will have a better experience with the brand-new process of applying for financial aid. However, the staff is there to guide students and help clarify questions they have regarding wait times, proper documentation and eligibility for financial aid.

The staff members in the Financial Aid Office did not reply to live requests for additional information about how the new process can affect the students.

Students can find more information at [grossmont.edu/financialaid](https://grossmont.edu/financialaid). 🐦



# BYE, BYE BASKETBALL



**Griffins say goodbye to sophomores  
during home loss to Cuyamaca. | BY ALESSANDRO PABON**

If you missed it, the Griffins' last home game of the season was held Feb. 14, and before the basketball game started, they held a ceremony for their sophomores. Sadly for the Griffins, the Cuyamaca Coyotes spoiled their night in a heartbreaking fashion, defeating them 75-72.

The Griffins started slow, finding themselves down 23-13 with eight minutes left in the first half. They were getting a lot of good shots up, but could not get them to fall while everything shot by the opposing team was going in. At the end of the first half, the Griffins were not able to climb out of the hole they created and were down 36-28.

Once the second half started, the Griffins picked up a second wind. They started to change the pace of the game by playing faster and full-court pressing. The Coyotes felt the pressure, making turnovers and shooting bad shots, which helped Grossmont get back into the game.

Grossmont was only down three points halfway through the final half. They started to hit all the shots they were missing in the first half. On the offensive end, the scoring was mostly done by the sophomore shooting guard, Tre Edmond, who led the game by scoring 23 points. Unfortunately for the Griffins, it was too little too late and they were not able to fully come back. They did have a chance to send it to overtime, but they just barely missed the three-point shot. Losing this game put them at 4-21, with two games remaining for the year.

"In the first half we were very strategic in the approach we took defensively and it was effective in many regards except right in the middle of the key, which is precisely where we were concerned that would be the problem," said Assistant Coach James Hyneman. "In the second half and at halftime, the adjustment we made was to come out with more energy."

Hyneman said it was important to pick up the speed of the game and keep up the energy defensively for the duration of the match.

"All in all, second place in a game is still second place, but progress is still being made," Hyneman said.

Grossmont had a lot of games that were lost by less than 10 points like this game against Cuyamaca. When asked how they can change that for next season, Hyneman said it was "hard to tell" because of team turnover. "We have nine sophomores, so there will be a significant transition of personnel," he said.

The sophomores who were honored were Edmond, Diego Sanchez, Elijah Williams, Amari Leflore, Tyrone Lester, Sebastian Vann, Tony Sanchez, Micah Odell and Omarion Bellamy. 🐾



IMAGE BY ALESSANDRO PABON



# HEALTH Update

| BY PERLA CRUZ |

**W**ithin the first two months of the year, we were hit with an immense amount of rain and winter weather, which can comprise our immune systems. Fortunately, Grossmont College offers various options to be as healthy and safe as possible.

Since the pandemic, students have dealt with the COVID-19 virus. We have endured terrible losses and learned more about staying healthy through guidelines from the Department of Health. We have been decreasing our isolation and precautions, but that does not mean the virus is gone, so it's important to take preventive measures.

With the weather changing upon us, San Diego news reports are recommending staying warm and being cautious to prevent illness. If you are suspicious of testing positive for COVID, there are rapid antigen tests offered within the health office at Grossmont for students.

"They are accurate; I have tried it because I thought I was positive," said Chris Senske, a freshman at Grossmont College.

"It had been very hard back then with the pandemic," said Lorena Garcia, who had recently transferred to San Diego State from Grossmont and remembered it was a "hassle" due to the pandemic.

As isolation guidelines continue being lowered by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, we no longer have to stay home for five consecutive days if you turn out to be COVID-19 positive. The virus seems to be here to stay, just like the flu, so we must stay aware of keeping healthy in our daily lives.

In that spirit, Grossmont College will be holding a free Health and Wellness Fair in the main quad on April 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The fair consists of glucose screenings, wellness intervention and giveaways along with prizes.

Dianne Abdullah Smith, specialist for the Health and Wellness Center at Grossmont, encourages every student to attend so they can "see who our partners are, look for a primary doctor, insurance, and more."

The event will guide students to learn further about the benefits of staying healthy while academically succeeding. Amelia Saenz, a biology major, said she will be attending this event to gain insight into the college's care of student's health.

"It is important to get the word out for the significance for students to receive information needed to be in good health," Saenz said.

To help with meditation and mental wellbeing, sound baths are also being offered to students at Grossmont once a month free of charge. "Check the Grossmont's calendar for the event date," Smith said.

The Health and Wellness Center is located in Building 60, Room 130. Open Monday to Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Fridays 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.), this center includes health screenings, immunizations, lactation accommodations, personal counseling, and more. For students, illness or accident evaluations are free or low-cost for those who have already paid the health fee for the current year. 🐦



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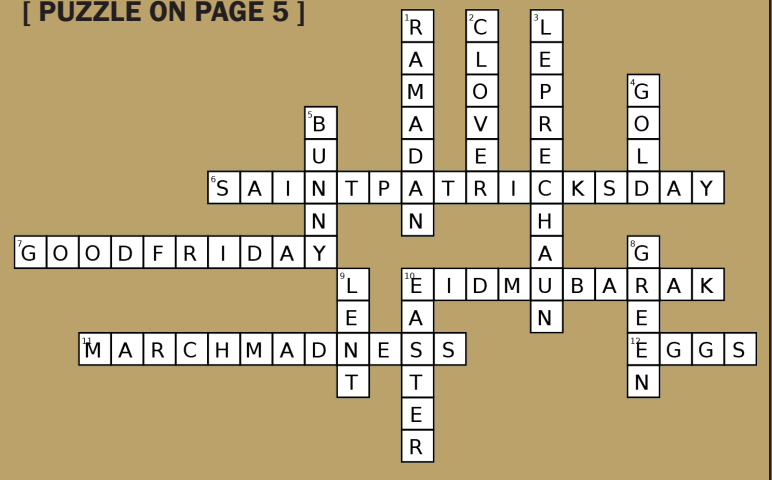


Grossmont Healthcare District's  
**Health & Wellness Library**  
An East County community resource



**BRAIN BOOST SOLUTION**

**[ PUZZLE ON PAGE 5 ]**



**LISTEN LIVE!**



# REEL TALK | SECOND LIFE

## Remakes, sequels and prequels ... oh, my.



### AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER

| Review by Alana Mullaly

"Water. Earth. Fire. Air, long ago, the four nations lived together in harmony ... then everything changed when" Netflix decided to remake the animated Nickelodeon show, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. This live-action version of the beloved animated show, created by Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko, had immediate pressure riding on the accuracy and promise to live up to the original's fame. The remake, features Aang (Gordon Cormier) and his newfound friends, Katara (Kiawentiio Tarbell) and Sokka (Ian Ousley), as they navigate Aang's avatar abilities while traveling the world to bring peace to the four nations. The four nations wield the elemental powers of water, earth, fire, and air, and it is up to Aang to master all four elements to defeat the fire nation. While the show brings back iconic characters, it leaves out important tropes and information regarding character introductions and development. The live-action adaptation of the bending, however, is phenomenal and leaves the viewer hoping and waiting for more of what the original animated show delivered. The remake showcases accurate representation of the characters' ethnicities and gives a taste of what CGI can accomplish, with Aang's trustworthy pets Appa and Momo as great examples of the latest technological achievements. First-time viewers will have their interests piqued and will definitely appreciate this show. As for original viewers, if you are optimistic, you can see the potential this remake has; if you aren't, the remake might be another disappointment like M. Night Shyamalan's *The Last Airbender*.

### WONKA | Review by Jacom Cummings

Roald Dahl's classic children's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* has been subject to many interpretations over the years, but *Wonka* is the first film to explain the origins of eccentric chocolate maker Willy Wonka. Directed by Paul King of *Paddington* fame, the movie stars Timothée Chalamet as Wonka, a young chocolatier who moves to the big city to follow his dream of selling whimsical candies. But many obstacles soon befall Willy, the first being the snobby "Chocolate Cartel" that controls the police with bribes of sweets, and the second being a sneaky contract placing Willy into the servitude of the loathsome Mrs. Scutt. Readers may be surprised to learn *Wonka* is a musical, complete with song and dance numbers, joining a recent trend of musical revivals in Hollywood. Overall, the cutesy choreography and dialogue will likely delight families and hardcore musical fans, but the average college viewer will likely find *Wonka* to be a bit too sweet.



### MEAN GIRLS

| Review by Mya Alexander

A major plot twist of *Mean Girls* is the cast regularly breaks out in song, unlike the original *Mean Girls* released in theaters 20 years ago and widely considered a modern classic. Tina Fey wrote the screenplay for this remake, which is based on the Broadway musical of the same name. Just like the 2004 plot, Cady Heron (Angourie Rice) becomes a target for the "Plastics": A group of popular girls led by Regina George (Reneé Rapp) and her side-kicks Karen Shetty and Gretchen Wieners (Avantika Vandanapu and Bebe Wood). Cady quickly learns the rules of the group and tries to fit in, but fails. The film teaches a valuable lesson about the importance of being true to yourself and creating an inclusive environment, with topics including femininity and politics. And who can forget the burn book, which seems to be a manifestation tool for girls to use as a source to gain power? Ultimately, the movie shows the power of female friendship and how girls can use their influence to create positive change.

