

UC Riverside

UCR Honors Capstones 2016-2017

Title

Two Cents: Four Years as a Contributing Writer

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1v74h46b>

Author

Kelley, Daniel James

Publication Date

2017-12-08

TWO CENTS:
FOUR YEARS AS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER

by

Daniel James Kelley

A capstone project submitted for
Graduation with University Honors

May 5, 2017

University Honors
University of California, Riverside

APPROVED

Dr. Reza Aslan
Department of Creative Writing

Dr. Richard Cardullo, Howard H. Hays Jr. Chair and Faculty Director, University Honors
Interim Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education

Abstract

This is the compilation of all the articles I have published in the UC Riverside student newspaper, the Highlander, since my freshman year. It is organized chronologically, starting with the first article I published in January of 2014 and ending with the last article I published the week before the submission of this project. Each article includes the title with which it was published, the section within which it was printed, and the date on which it was uploaded to the Highlander website. To keep within the style guidelines of University Honors, I have changed the font and spacing of each article, but I have maintained grammatical format as it appears in the Highlander Newspaper and online. I have omitted the illustrations that accompanied several of my articles in favor of concision. All of the articles are Opinion pieces except the first and last. This is unintentional, but nonetheless adds an interesting dynamic to the project. I am hoping that this project will showcase my development as a writer through my four years as a student at UC Riverside.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my family, Mom, Dad and Sam, for their unending support over the last four years; my friends, Alex, Annabel, Doug, Ilaria, Jordan, Ryan, Rudy, Siddu, and Skai, for hearing me out whenever I had a new hair-brained idea for an article; the various editors of the Highlander editorial board, for not letting me use Oxford commas; my adviser, Reza Aslan, for sticking with me through the confusing evolution of this project; and lastly University Honors, for not kicking me out the week before I turned this in.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
UCR receives grants for expanding online research database.....	9
At any age, students should have the option of college.....	12
A public-private partnership to fund technology in schools.....	17
Vaccinations and your government.....	21
Hypocrisy, thy name is news.....	24
Grass is the problem, grassroots is the solution.....	27
Smoke free but not toke free.....	30
Ravers gonna rave: Safety measures won't change EDM culture.....	33
If you give them an inch, they'll take a mile.....	37
The symptom not the sickness.....	40
Why calling Donald Trump an illegitimate president hinders our movement against him.....	43
Anxiety and Awe: the real Coachella.....	46
Reflecting on the Capstone.....	50

Introduction

I remember the anxiety as I walked toward the Highlander Newspaper office the first Monday of Winter Quarter. I was a freshman, and desperately trying to mimic the confidence of someone much more confident than me. I'd known since I started at UC Riverside that I wanted to get involved. With a college campus and four years in front of me, I figured the opportunities were endless. I saw the newspaper the first week of Fall and got the idea stuck in my head. I'd walked by the Highlander office a dozen times in my first quarter at UCR. I knew I only had to get my foot in the door, but I didn't even have the courage to open it.

They don't need any more writers, the voice in my head chided. Despite receiving a nearly perfect score on the written portion of my SAT's the previous Spring, the voice was unforgiving. *You're not even good enough to write for the paper.* The same insecurity had kept me uninvolved with campus life for all of Fall. I kept my head down when I passed the hundreds of student organizations, clubs and fraternities that congregated around the Belltower on Wednesdays passing out flyers and putting on events and socializing. I spent the majority of my time getting acquainted with my dorm-room. Though I'd done well in my classes, I'd spent the winter break in regret. One quarter down in my college career and I was facing an existential crisis.

I wanted to be involved, I wanted be busy, and I wanted to write. I wanted to

spend my Wednesdays socializing around the Belltower and make friends beyond the residence halls. And I knew momentum was important. If I stayed on the path of least-resistance, travelling from class to dorm and never straying for the rest of my freshman year, I'd never break out of the habit. The first day of the new quarter, I knew it was now or never. I swallowed self-doubt and took off for the office of the Highlander Newspaper.

Striding into the center of campus, I repeated a line in my head. *Hi, I'm interested in writing for the Highlander. Hi, I'm interested in writing for the Highlander. Hi, I'm interested in...* I knew I was over-thinking it. I reached the newspaper's office on the first floor of the Highlander Union Building just as class was letting out of the four-hundred-seat university lecture hall next-door. I lost track of my line in the noisy din of the crowd passing through the student union. *Last chance to try again tomorrow*, the voice in my head taunted. I pulled open the door and stepped in.

The lobby of the office was empty. Awkwardly I took a seat in one of the armchairs surrounding a coffee table covered in copies of the most recent paper. I gazed at the front page trying not to look out of place.

"Hi, can I help you?"

A student emerged from a back room. My words nearly caught in my throat as I stumbled up out of the chair and dropped the paper back onto the coffee table.

"Hi, my name is Daniel," I said, as I extended my hand to the student. "I'm interested in writing for the Highlander."

And there it was. All my cards on the table. No turning back. The fate of my four years to be determined by whatever followed.

“We’re always looking for new writers,” the editor-in-chief said with a smile.

“How soon can you start?”

I saw my name in print the following Tuesday. The editor-in-chief asked that I submit a sample article as a sort-of test-run, and stuck me with the single unclaimed prompt in the News section. In hindsight, it was easily the least inspiring topic I’ve written on. I still poured all my energy into it. The rush of seeing it through to publication got me hooked, but I didn’t continue with News past that first piece. In my mind, there was more to writing than stating the facts. The paper presented a unique medium through which to take a stance on the multitude of issues that I saw happening around the world, the issues that had motivated me to pursue political science as a graduating high school senior. In an unself-conscious way, I wanted to give my two cents. It was in Opinions that I found my home.

Every Monday I would receive an email from the Opinions editor listing potential topics for the week: a new federal mandate; arrests at a music festival; a riot in Berkeley. I tried to nab the sexiest topic before the other writers could. In the absence of scandal or controversy, I’d try to take an unexpected angle, or tie seemingly trivial issues to the bigger picture. What kept me committed once I chose a topic was the belief that every issue I took on was worth discussing. My passion only rose once I started pitching my

own topics in my third year. Donald Trump's election, however unfortunate, offered all the material an Opinions writer could ask for.

The weeks I felt inspired, I'd pick a topic around lunch, send a brief summary by Tuesday morning, and have a draft submitted by Thursday at 5p.m. Through the weekend, we worked on edits and final touches, and by Tuesday of the following week I'd grab a hot paper and rip it open to the Opinions section to see my name in print. I was offered a chance to take on a staff writing position at junctions through my four years, but I never pursued it. Leafing through the paper, I realized how many pages the Highlander staff were responsible for filling each week. The Opinions editor himself was credited with a minimum of two a week; News and Features usually wrote three. I speculated my best work was limited to one a week. And plus, I needed further and further to focus my energies elsewhere. Classes picked up, I joined a club, I got a job. The Honors program started us on capstone work and I spent my free time volunteering for political campaigns and non-profits. Most weeks I had no interest in taking on an extra writing assignment. But I never left emails from the editor unread. Once I got a taste of having published work, I made sure to keep my eyes open for that next hot topic that would get me riled up enough to write 400-700 words.

Working within a word count was the perpetual challenge. In all my years of high school English class, I never appreciated how short seven-hundred words truly was. It took me a few years of submissions to get in the habit of word-counting myself as I wrote, rather than after I'd filled five pages. There were more than a handful weeks in

which I sparred with my editor about a line, or a page, that I insisted needed to remain. Condensing was far more work than expanding. From article to article, I gradually ditched extended metaphors in favor of straight-talk, and along the way, learned a valuable lesson about the economy of words. I've realized how much can be said in the span of a page.

Sometime around the end of my sophomore year I brought a paper to a friend's place to show off my most recent passion piece. One of his roommates took a glance and scoffed at me.

“You know no one reads the school paper, right?”

I laughed it off. I figured *someone* must be reading my articles, but it made me think. The Opinions section was buried in the middle of the paper, past page eleven or twelve. The newsstands emptied out before Friday each week, but I supposed I never saw anyone sitting around the student union reading the paper. I promoted my work to my friends, but I never advertised past a Facebook post. The comment made me wonder about my own reasons for writing in the first place. Did I stay up late Thursday nights revising and re-editing and reworking pieces because I cared that other people read my words? Truthfully, I had never thought about it before then. A few days of soul-searching and I concluded that readership had never been the motive. I wrote articles knowing that people might read them, not *because* people might read them. If they did or if they didn't, I'd have no way of knowing anyway (I didn't discover the comment section of the

Highlander website until my senior year, and by then writing had become more habit than action). I wrote because it was good practice, because I enjoyed the process of developing an argument, and because the fulfillment of seeing an article to print was worth the time and stress I devoted. I wrote so I would have more to show for four years of college than a one-page resume and a degree. More than anything, I wrote articles because it was fun.

As I've compiled my work for submission, I've had time to reflect on my four years contributing to the Highlander. Sometimes I think I didn't write as consistently as I should have. I spent weeks without writing an article; I didn't publish anything in 2016 other than an anonymous Letter to the Editor slamming the UCR student government. There were dozens of arguments and articles I could have taken on if I'd taken the time. Often the sexiest prompt got scooped up by another contributing writer before I had a chance to claim it, and too often I decided not to write an article because of it. Sometimes I think thirteen articles over four years isn't much, considering that I could have published seven-hundred words a week if I made the commitment.

But I don't let the self-doubt get to me anymore. I could have written nothing. And besides, I was more than a part-time contributing writer through my four years. In college, I've taken on the role of student ambassador, United Nations delegate, campaign director, environmental activist, elections intern, campus tour guide, study abroad student, language tutor, and background actor. My freshman self would be relieved to know I achieved my goal of getting involved, and that I may have never started had it not

been for that nervous walk to the office of the Highlander Newspaper. Writing for the paper has given me a lot and taught me even more. It has enabled me to develop a craft and helped me to find my voice. It's allowed me to produce a body of work that is entirely my own. Above all else, it's given me an outlet through which to express myself, even when I thought no one was reading.

“Opinions are like orgasms: mine matter most and I don’t care if you have one.”

-Someone on Twitter

UCR receives grant for expanding online research database

News

January 21, 2014

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, a nonprofit corporation dedicated to the preservation and expansion of academic knowledge in literature and art, recently awarded a grant of \$405,000 to UC Riverside's Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research (CBSR). The grant will fund the development of new software that will be used to update and revise the English Short-Title Catalog (ESTC). As a database originally developed through joint partnership between CBSR and the British Library, ESTC documents all printed or bibliographically recorded English works between 1473 and 1800.

The ESTC, in its over 30 years of development, has received nearly \$10 million in grant funding, and now contains copies of over 90 percent of all works printed before 1800, translating to well over 500,000 documents. However, it is primarily a reference directory and most of the recorded materials are not directly available to the online viewers.

“Right now, (the ESTC) is very much a scholarly research tool, not something necessarily that the general public would use that often,” stated Dr. Brian Geiger, current director of CBSR. “It is mainly professors, graduate students, even people interested in old books who would use our catalog.”

The new software not only expands ESTC's online presence, but also allows scholars from all over the world to access and edit the catalog by updating their personal scholarly works or editing information that is incomplete, inaccurate or simply nonexistent.

The Mellon-funded project aims to refocus the work done in the ESTC from professional catalogers to the actual users of the catalog.

In addition to the Andrew W. Mellon grant, the CBSR has received grants in 2010 and 2011 from Google to incorporate Google Books into the ESTC to aid in its expansion into digital reference.

Geiger sees the creation and maintenance of the ESTC as one of the most amazing accomplishments in bibliography in the 20th century, as a couple thousand new records are added to the ESTC every year. Although the catalog's rapid rate of expansion would require frequent major funding from outside organizations, Geiger stated his good faith in the catalog's continued success.

“Ultimately, (the new version of the ESTC) will allow those who use the catalog to ask new questions about the materials,” stated Geiger concerning his vision for this project.

“With the newly created benefits of the updated edition of the ESTC, our knowledge of English literature, documentation and records can only expand.”

By Oct. 2015 — the software's projected completion date — the ESTC will contain close to 600,000 recorded documents.

At any age, students should have the option of college

Opinions

February 16, 2014

If you were never presented with the option of attending college, do you think you would? Statistics don't lie: Having a college education is preferable to not having a college education. America's current unemployment rate is at 6.7 percent. Close to 8 percent of all working non-college graduates are unemployed — but only 4 percent of college graduates are.

I personally know I wouldn't be a current college student majoring in political science if my parents, teachers and fellow students hadn't pounded the idea into my head until it became the only thing I could think about. Everything that we had planned for, and the hard work we put into our lives, had ultimately come to applying for colleges. And I am thankful for the circumstances that have guided me where I am now because I've come to realize how vital a graduate education is in today's world.

But while I am cognizant of the statistics, and more importantly, the individual reality of trying to enter the workforce with only a high school diploma, too many other students have never been, and will never be if they're not also given the same insight. I was fortunate enough to have parents who attended college, were aware of its infinite

advantages and were willing to push me toward continuing my educational career.

But too many other students don't have the same support structure or the same understanding of the benefits of a college education. These students can come from anywhere in the country, but more generally are from the more disenfranchised areas, where the culture does not tout college as an image of success. And because of this, these students don't have the same opportunities to work toward a higher education.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to attend college. Whether or not they have the means to do so, shouldn't they at least be aware of the opportunity to continue their education?

Certain high school alumni within California believe so.

These individuals have graduated from college themselves and are returning to the high schools they attended to host college workshops. Within them, they educate students and parents alike about how to begin working toward college in their high school career, how to attain the means of affording it, how to apply when the time comes, and ultimately, why students should consider going. Comparable to the goals of these returning high school alumni, UCR's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) seeks the same results by participating in similar activities across the Inland Empire, all aimed at educating students on why they should consider a college education, and further, how they can

achieve it.

However, these programs and individuals face criticism. Some argue that these workshops incorrectly guide students toward an unreachable goal, toward something that is not right for them. The criticism claims that sometimes these workshops mistakenly inform students only of universities that may be too expensive for them to attend, or otherwise, schools that may even be too hard to be accepted into. Secondly, they argue that the seminars only target high school seniors whose time to apply and be accepted into colleges has passed, and thus, that they are impractical.

I would concede that, for such programs to be effective, they will need to revolve around students who still have the opportunity to steer themselves and their education toward college. Critics claim that these workshops are futile, and the students they are designed to aid cannot use the information they gained. But in many cases, students return to acquire a college degree even after they've entered the workforce. These workshops may very well influence a high school senior to return in one or three more years to pursue a higher education. But adjustments may be needed if they aim to push students toward going to college right out of high school. If the seminars are presented to students early on in their high school career, they may very well steer students to apply the lessons they learned to the remainder of their formative years. When application season rolls around, they will already have the academic resume to propel their academic career into college.

Regardless, what these alumni are doing, and similarly, the actions of UCR's EAOP, are measures that should be supported and made more prevalent. Because of them, students all over the country are realizing opportunities they never knew existed.

Of UC Riverside's undergraduate student population, first-generation college attendees comprise 50 percent of admitted freshmen in 2013. That's nearly half of the student body. More young adults in our generation are attending college than in previous generations. That translates into a maturing generation of college attendees and graduates who will enter into the workforce with four or eight or more years of experience working in their desired field, and who will then have the opportunity to contribute and grow.

Even if only a hundred, if only 10 or even just one student is moved by these programs to want to carry on their education at college, that's one, or 10 or a hundred educated young adults that have the opportunity to achieve goals they never before thought they could. And because of this, these programs are a success.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, to contribute or to grow. College gives individuals the chance to do all three. And whether or not you're in favor of high school students moving on to a higher education, at the very least, shouldn't everyone be aware of what they can achieve through college? Only after knowing all the options can one truly decide how they want to continue their life, and perhaps most will find that the

attainment of their goals comes most readily through a college education.

A public-private partnership to fund technology in schools

Opinions

February 18, 2014

What a peculiar state we are in. Our government, ideally, is supposed to function through its separation of powers, but stands today dysfunctional because of it. Because of this dysfunctionality, making changes to our nation via traditional methods is near impossible. And who are the victims of this? We, the people. Yet of all people, those who can least afford to suffer right now are the students.

Most everyone is a student at some point or another in their lives, and soon, today's students will be tomorrow's leaders. To get us out of this state of dysfunctionality, we're going to need leaders who are successful students. And to become successful students, we need to obtain the education that will equip us with the skills and worldliness necessary to fix the issues and dilemmas that will be dropped onto our plate with the coming election season.

Early in February, President Barack Obama announced an initiative that will, over the next five years, bring improved technology to over 15,000 schools for greater use in educational purposes, through a privately sponsored \$750 million initiative. This is a part of ConnectED, a White House program started last summer aimed at improving

education through technology. Funded and supported by several business leaders in such companies as Microsoft, Apple, Verizon and Sprint, Obama's initiative aims to "strengthen access to technology for 99 percent of all students," according to the New York Times. This was announced after the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) disclosed that it will be doubling the amount of money it devotes to creating high-speed Internet connections to meet the president's promise, an investment worth well over \$2 billion.

Each company involved in the initiative has committed a large share, either in the form of monetary funds to be given to schools, or in the form of actual technology. Apple, for example, has promised to give \$100 million in iPads, Macbooks and other devices to many disadvantaged schools. AT&T has pledged \$100 million to be used to give middle schoolers high-speed web access on their Internet devices. Microsoft will be giving 12 million copies of its Office application software to high schools. Verizon has put another \$100 million into the pot.

The president is using his executive privileges, as well as his business connections, to make real changes. He realizes that change will not come through Congress, so he is taking steps to make change however he can. And by taking these measures, President Obama is doing exactly what our leader ought to do: Invest in our future.

What works about this initiative is that it very well may be big enough to succeed — and not “too big to fail.” These are funds and products given by big-name companies, whose names and actions carry a lot of weight, both in the private and public sector. They are placing an investment into our country’s future by aiding its students. That \$750 million is not going to one age group of students or one school district, nor is it being used for one sole purpose, or being used to fund one sole piece of hardware. Its recipients include classrooms in grade schools to high schools. Its goals are numerous: improve Internet speed, give greater access to learning tools like computers and tablets and ultimately move classrooms into the digital age in a big way.

The initiative comes with its own problems, however. Will these funds be sufficient to cause effective change in classrooms on the small scale, or will they only allow the average school to buy one new wireless modem? Built into this plan is the need for time: The \$750 million will be used over five years. Immediate change may not be guaranteed. But effective and lasting change never comes overnight. This initiative is an investment in our future. And thus, it is worth the risk.

Overall, the goal is connectivity. It aims at getting students acquainted with Internet, as well as the tools that access it. These changes to education are necessary for our nation to pull itself up and improve. This is important, because it modernizes education. In today’s world, the ability to maintain and create a network on various mediums, whether they be

on a computer, smart phone, or tablet, is vital to success. With nearly everyone in America on one, if not several social networking sites, with nearly every piece of news available digitally and with communication so fundamentally advanced by modern technology, students will need the know-how to use this technology to its full potential.

And how do you modernize education? Today, you bring technology to the tech generation. It is how young adults, young students and even small children are learning, connecting with others, and sharing ideas throughout the world. The initiative does just this. For that, I'd say, "Good on you, Obama."

It is not sufficient for only those graduating from the top-tier schools and the most well-endowed institutions to be our leaders. For today's problems to be solved, we need the perspective and insight of many different people. We need people who yesterday didn't have the credentials or the opportunities to arise as leaders, but tomorrow, because of these advances in technology and education, may very well be those who can solve our nation's crises.

Vaccinations and your government

Opinions

February 10, 2015

In a recent interview with NBC News, President Barack Obama declared his stance on the now decades-old controversy over the dangers of disease vaccination. “I just want people to know the facts and science and the information,” said Obama in reference to parents who refuse to immunize their children from deadly diseases. “The fact is that a major success of our civilization is our ability to prevent disease that in the past have devastated folks. And measles is preventable.” His last point is why this issue requires our attention.

During 2014, the United States had a record number of measles cases, with 644 cases from 27 states reported to Center for Disease Control’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD). For scale, this is the greatest number of cases since measles was eradicated in the U.S. in 2000.

Let me be clear: Measles was eradicated from the U.S. in 2000.

Now, 15 years later, because of bogus science and misleading rhetoric propagated by both our media and certain political figures, a completely preventable disease once again

threatens public health. And it shouldn't. The science is indisputable: Vaccinations do not cause autism and are not a public health threat. But the debate, and the subsequent public insecurity it provokes, is. So the question rises: What should we do? And better yet, what should our government do?

Although it might effectively resolve the issue, it is not within the federal or any state government's authority to immunize all children without the consent of their parents with no exceptions. Some parents refuse to immunize their children because they are misled by incorrect science, but many opt out of vaccination due to religious reasons. We as Americans do have that right.

Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of our government to preserve public safety. We can not and we should not forcibly immunize children, but we can conform state law to require immunization against contagious diseases as an unconditional requirement for enrollment into public school systems. Seeing as how the federal government is crippled by political obstinance, the more effective route might be through state legislatures, where gridlock is bad, but not as bad.

Either way, our governments must act quickly. Children, who have the least control over whether or not they are immunized, are also the most at risk for contracting disease, and because of this, making schools safe for students should be a top priority.

However, as exemplified by the measles outbreak that occurred at Disneyland in December, which, according to Reuters infected 58 people with the virus, the danger to public health posed by unmitigated disease outbreaks extends far beyond our classrooms. It isn't quite enough for our school districts to mandate immunization when there are limitless other public spaces where transmittable diseases can explode into an epidemic.

This is a public health issue, but it is also a public knowledge issue. Although our media's culpability in this problem is undeniable, they reside in the private sector. However self-serving it may be, we can't reform Fox News' or CNN's agenda.

Unfortunately, the public sphere is equally as liable, but perhaps even less controlled. When we have politicians like New Jersey Governor Chris Christie calling for "balance" between public health interests and parental choice, this intentionally distorts the issue by implying that the debate is equally legitimate on both sides, and undermines the very purpose of government: to uphold public safety.

Frankly, the only way we're going to eradicate measles again is if our elected officials stop co-opting issues of public health for political gain and speak the truth. This is why President Obama has the right idea. He leaves no room for misinterpretation when he says, "There is every reason to get vaccinated — there aren't reasons to not." For this, I say, "Thanks, Obama."

Hypocrisy, thy name is news

Opinions

February 17, 2015

Recently, “Nightly News” anchor Brian Williams announced he would be stepping down from his program for a temporary leave of absence. This comes after revelations that Williams, the 10-year managing editor for NBC, lied about his experience covering the Iraqi conflict in 2003, in which Williams claims that a helicopter he and his crew were on was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade fired by Hezbollah insurgents.

Our mainstream media, quick to capitalize on such a story, asked, “What does this mean for Brian Williams? Will he be able to remake his image? Will NBC find a new host?” In this circumstance, what is not said tells more than what is.

Take note of the rhetoric propagated on any one of our major media platforms. CNN studies how NBC can deal with Williams. Fox News, eager to diminish the legitimacy of a competitor, asks if NBC has “learned anything” about journalistic embellishment. Twitter sees #BrianWilliamsMisremembers explode.

But instead of prompting a dialogue in America over dishonesty in our media, CNN, MSNBC and Fox News keep the conversation focused squarely on one man. Herein lies

the real issue. Our media isn't simply the representation of public opinion; it is a mechanism to create and maintain public perception. What we forget is that our mainstream news contributors lay the boundaries and terminology of the national conversation.

Following the disappearance of Malaysia Airliner 370 in March, we became desensitized to two words: "Breaking news." Last year, Russia invaded a sovereign state, Ebola ravaged West Africa, and ISIS further destabilized the Middle East. But, like kids with laser pointers, our main news contributors used those two eye-grabbing, trend-setting words to keep dredging up an interesting but unchanging story in Southeast Asia for the cat-like viewers, while the political and social landscape of the world changed dramatically.

Now, while the mainstream media drags Williams' reputation through talk shows and op-ed columns, Greece experiences radical political change, ISIS executes an American aid worker and Ukraine fractures in full-blown civil war. If we're going to have a conversation about journalistic integrity, the conversation we should be having is the influence our news contributors have on public opinion, and their irresponsible management of that influence.

In media, as it is in politics, money is the corrupting influence. Breaking news headlines,

overblown stories of heroism in Iraq, and critical analyses of erotic novels sell. News contributors and pundits alike have no incentive to change their tune when they consistently rake in millions of viewers a night. And like politics, the American people act as voters every time they turn on the “Nightly News” or the “Kelly File.”

For our media institutions to change, it is a matter of public demand. Media reform to more closely resemble Walter Cronkite’s honest 19-year residency at CBS’s nighttime news desk will require a change in the attention the public gives to the modern broadcast media. Until we stop casting our viewing votes to keep yellow journalism on the air, we can’t expect our media institutions to fulfill their duty to inform the American people.

Through the protraction of “ConflateGate,” Williams has been made into a scapegoat by media entities in an attempt to claim innocence from the same irresponsible news coverage that they themselves perpetuate.

So whether or not NBC will need to find a new host, the better conversation might be whether or not NBC needs to find a new act. If Williams indeed loses his chair at the “Nightly News” desk, so too should our media enterprise as a whole, for ignoring the real issues in our world, and limiting the public discourse to a vocabulary of only two words.

Grass is the problem, grassroots is the solution

Opinions

March 3, 2015

Amid the persisting “megadrought” that is ravaging California, human usage of water, according to the Public Policy Institute of California, has not changed. Californians are far too comfortable with their water-use habits, but it is not urban water use that is the main problem.

To assuage the devastating impact of the drought and influence Californians’ water habits, our response must not only focus mainly on agriculture, but include our private sector. What UC Santa Barbara professor Gary Libecap proposes is the strengthening of property rights and the introduction of a more robust water market. Simply, there is more incentive to conserve water when prices are high. The fluctuations of the free market, and the consequent financial hardships they produce are what will meaningfully influence Californians to alter their water habits.

California’s public institutions have a role to play as well. Last year, Gov. Jerry Brown called upon Californians to reduce their water consumption by 20 percent by the year 2020. In accordance, UC President Janet Napolitano directed all UCs to reduce their water usage by 20 percent as well. A change to institutional water policy, like UC campus

water policy, not only eliminates large portions of California's total water usage, but more importantly, sets precedence for a culture of conservation within California's most populated areas.

UC Riverside has to step up.

Irrigating farmland in the Central Valley represents roughly 80 percent of all human water use in the state. According to the Office of Sustainability, of the entire UC system, the Riverside campus currently uses 1.5 to 1.9 million gallons of water per day, the most out of any UC. There are two reasons for this gross overconsumption. Over half the water used at UC Riverside goes toward irrigation of our landscape: to the agricultural crops, and the grass.

Second, our campus has received a large water grant with the land grant for the University, and UCR has acquired rights to more water from gifts over the years, making our water incredibly inexpensive. Consequently, UC Riverside's administration has little incentive to affect water policy change any sooner than the 2020 deadline. Yet with all the science pointing to continued and increasingly devastating problems, we can't wait five years to become part of the solution. Our current policies are unsustainable. UC Riverside is leading the charge into the future in every other field from medicine to technology, but we can't allow our water policies to remain the problem.

Expediting change to our university's policies will require mobilization at the grassroots level. It has to start with students. Luckily, these movements already exist.

The California Public Interest Research Group, CALPIRG, is one group currently working to expedite the water conservation effort across the UC system through this kind of grassroots mobilization. CALPIRG is campaigning to alter UCR's water impact by changing, primarily, how we use water on our grass. But the water conservation campaign across the UC system is about more than changing policy; it's about eliminating apathy.

It is not just our policies, but our culture, our habits and how we view water that must change to reflect just how precious and limited our water is. Unfortunately, the only factor that will draw sufficient attention to the scarcity of water is the scarcity of money.

With 17,000 jobs and over \$800 million lost due to the drought in 2014 alone, and no indication that these damages will cease, there is no doubt that our consumption of water must change, and fast. We can't wait generations for California culture to catch up with the times. Our water usage needs to change now.

Smoke free but not toke free

April Fool's Opinions

March 31, 2015

As the drug capital of Southern California, Riverside is home to the most vibrant and lethargic stoner community south of Humboldt. But since the University of California system went tobacco-free in 2014, potheads are finding it harder and harder to get away with smoking weed on campus. With the inability to light up, many students have taken to the underwater dorm halls and social media spheres in an attempt to restore our right to toke.

Of UCR's 420 student groups, many, including the Rastafarian Student Union; the Roots, Rock, Reggae Club; and UCR Botany Enthusiasts, have united in an effort to petition UCR's administration to designate the floating Bell Tower lawn as a marijuana-smoking area. Even religious groups like Bong Rips for Jesus have thrown their support behind the expansion of UCR's marijuana acceptance policies. #UniversityofCannabis is trending on Yik Yak and Twitter. The last Wednesday of winter quarter saw a peaceful demonstration in the Pierce canal, where over 1,000 UCR students floated cross-legged on innertubes in a circle and passed an unlit joint around as a sign of solidarity. Many demonstrators wore T-shirts and held banners that read "One joint, one hit, one UC."

The movement has actually gained great support from UCR's faculty. The prevalence of marijuana usage during finals week has led to an increase in the average GPA of CHASS and SoBA students, and thus, UCR professors are endorsing its usage as a study aid. Some are even secretly offering their office hours as study-and-smoke-sessions. UCPD recently released a statement commending the decreased level of alcohol-related infractions and incarcerations at UCR, which references the increased use of weed as the reason behind it. Even the health department has come out in support of expanding our pot policy, citing the decreased use of addictive prescription drugs like Xanax and Adderall in the student body.

The administration has been "pretty chill" about our student body's marijuana movement, but still does not allow the sale of cannabis products on campus, and only two marijuana-smoking areas have been designated as of now, one outside of Lothian Residence Hall, colloquially referred to as Narnia, and another in the orange grove greenhouse boats behind the humanities building. With increased boat traffic in between the residence halls, the issue that many pot enthusiasts are taking with these areas is their distance from restaurants and vending machines. This is expected, considering how badly stoners want food, and how unwilling they are to move.

To be more accommodating to our diverse, dope-smoking student body, UCR should consider allowing residence halls to serve cannabis-infused brownies, and hold quarterly

marijuana-smoking cooperation seminars, titled Puff-Puff-Pass Sessions. Similarly, our stony school administration should consider growing cannabis plants in the Botanical Gardens, and allow our medical school to study the medicinal qualities and health implications of cannabis.

Should such changes to our drug policy happen, UC Riverside would become a leader in the national marijuana movement, and could be the domino that causes the UC system to go green. But we'll need to make it happen fast. In 2016, when legal weed will likely be on the ballot in California, UC should expect to see its energized and vaporized student population stand up (or sit down) for their rights, no longer in fear of their toking privileges being revoked.

With luck, and a copious amount of bong rips and Bob Marley, we will see Spring Splash 2015 turn into Woodstock 1969. Although the UC system is tobacco-free, we should endorse and accommodate the healthier, happier smoking alternative. After all, we are the Highlanders.

Ravers gonna rave: Safety measures won't change EDM culture

Opinions

November 9, 2015

If you were among the 70,000 people raving their faces off this past Halloween weekend at either of SoCal's premiere electronic dance music (EDM) events, HARD's Day of the Dead or Insomniac's Escape: Psycho Circus, I hope your recovery hasn't been too bad. If you were among the nearly 500 people to get arrested for things like smuggling two joints and a tube of Vick's VapoRub past security, I pity you (but it's your own fault).

After the deaths of two young women at HARD Summer in August, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has been on HARD Events' CEO Gary Richard aka DJ Destructo's subwoofer about safety at his EDM events. A task force was convened to analyze safety at raves held on LA county-owned land, like the Fairplex. Surprise, surprise, they found that drugs were taken at the festivals. As a result, HARD voluntarily downsized in order to keep hosting raves at the Fairplex, which led to the addition of new security measures and rules at their events. The maximum attendance of Day of the Dead was cut from 65,000 to 40,000 and HARD agreed to cancel a summer rave at Fairplex. LA County even barred young people from raving on Halloween by raising the minimum age requirement from 18 to 21 at Day of the Dead. And, HARD suffered. Only about 20,000 people attended Day of the Dead.

LA County is sending a very clear message to the rave scene: “I’ve seen enough. I think we all have,” says Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. “And we simply need to make ourselves abundantly clear with respect to that which is unacceptable. (Raves are) a violation of public safety and public health.”

Oh yeah, because LA is such a beacon of public safety anyway. No one died at either Day of the Dead or Escape this year; but they easily could have. At Escape, I saw dozens of people collapsed on the grass or stumbling to the medical tent, overwhelmed by whatever substances they had taken, being babysat by friends who were also very obviously hopped up on something illegal. Looking at the arrest rates and attendance for both festivals, what did these security measures actually prevent?

A third of all the arrests which occurred at Day of the Dead were for fake IDs. Another third were from alcohol related intoxication, belligerence or drunk driving. 310 out of the 500 arrests occurred at Day of the Dead. Does this mean there were fewer drugs stuffed into underwear and glitter bras at Escape?

There’s just no way: more than double the amount of people attended Escape than Day of the Dead, with crowds of over 40,000 at both days of the San Bernardino festival. Did changing the minimum age requirement from 18 to 21 reduce the instances of public

intoxication and drunk driving? Obviously not. Did LA County's finger-wagging stop thousands of young people from spending their Halloween being blinded by lasers and deafened by bass? Nope. Which leads me to my point: ravers gonna rave. They just might not rave in LA anymore.

People enjoy electronic music, mind-altering substances and dancing way too much to let tighter security and an age limit keep them away from raves. However, LA's decision to hobble HARD's massive-ness and alienate it's 18 to 20-year-old crowd is an obvious signal to ravers that they aren't welcome in Los Angeles. I braved the TSA-style scare tactics and K-9 inspections at two consecutive HARD Summers in 2014 and 2015, but after being told I wasn't tall enough to ride at Day of the Dead, I think I'll take my money and kandi to other events from now on. Sorry, Destructo.

The crackdown on HARD is a blow to LA's dance music culture, especially considering HARD Summer was the biggest festival of its kind that LA has ever hosted. EDM isn't just a fad, or some socially unacceptable weekend activity that our parents would rather we not partake in. It's a part of our culture, especially for us college kids. For county-level bureaucrats to deliberately cripple a company's sales and dictate where adults can spend their money and their Halloween is so not PLUR.

I am not advocating for drug use or tolerance to drug abuse and I'm definitely not

advocating for fewer medical personnel, security and first responders at EDM shows. However, we just can't point to the organizers of EDM events as the culprits for why so many arrests and emergencies happen at raves. Drugs like LSD and MDMA have been intertwined with the dance music scene since its inception. There's nothing Gary Richards or Pasquale Rotella can do to change that. Raves will always be a mosh pit of unknown pills, heat and alcohol because that's what makes them raves. No amount of admonishing, age requirements or K-9 units sniffing at crotches is going to stop EDM fans from taking risks at music festivals.

If you give them an inch, they'll take a mile

Opinions

February 6, 2017

Within only two weeks of being sworn in as the first 100 percent artificially flavored president of the United States, Donald Trump has made it abundantly clear that he has an interest in neither clean energy nor the public interest. There is no better example than the reignition of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

Months of hard-fought protests on behalf of Native Americans, veterans and hundreds of American citizens pushed the Obama administration to explore alternate routes for the construction of DAPL away from Standing Rock Reservation, North Dakota. Big win for the American public. Big kudos to Barack Obama. Obviously, the Tangerine Drama Queen couldn't stand that.

Four days after his inauguration, Trump spurred efforts to get the wheels of DAPL moving again. The executive order signed by Trump mandated the Army Corps of Engineers to find that alternate route "in an expedited manner," putting the pipeline's construction back on the front burner. Obama's move was less of a cancellation than a postponement, anyway. It might have momentarily saved his image, but it dropped the ultimate decision over DAPL squarely in Trump's lap.

But wait, there's more. In the same fell swoop, Mango Mussolini signed another order reinviting TransCanada, the corporation behind Keystone XL (did you forget about Keystone XL?) to reapply for the permit that Obama shot down back in November of 2015. In four days, Trump did more service for the oil and gas industry than Obama did in his entire presidency.

I've got to hand it to the spray-tan with a plan: He isn't like other politicians. He actually seems committed to making good on his campaign promises. But for a president that vowed to turn power back over to the people, he hasn't been listening very closely.

The Trump administration has made it clear that it will not be swayed by public opinion, whether it is telling him the majority of Americans don't support a Mexican border wall or that the banning of immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries is just about the most un-American thing a president can do. Even with a record-low of a 42 percent approval rating upon taking office, it's obvious that Trump will continue to ignore the protests, demonstrations and even federal court orders against his policies.

It is for this exact reason that the protests must continue. The social media backlash has to become more annoying. The marches must keep happening, and frequently. Trump's insistence upon DAPL in the face of overwhelming opposition is not unique nor isolated. It is demonstrative of his view of the American public at large: No means yes and yes

means oil. To back down now from the defense of Standing Rock would be seen as a concession of defeat in the eyes of the Trump administration and the vindication of its policies.

Therefore it's up to us to stand firm. If our legislative branch will do nothing to check the powers of the executive, as they've already demonstrated, and the Supreme Court vacancy is filled with a justice as hyper-conservative as Neil Gorsuch, the executive branch will only become accustomed to unchecked power. It is more necessary now than ever that the public be that checking force, even if its only role is to say no.

The Trump administration must be opposed, and loudly, at every wrong turn they take and every unconstitutional, immoral decision they make. If not, the egregious violations of American principles will grow. Even worse, we the public will become desensitized to injustice and the erosion of democracy will normalize, making our fight even harder in the future. We have to remain resolute in the face of a federal government that doesn't listen to us. For the sake of all the battles yet to be fought, it is up to us, the American people, not to back down an inch.

The symptom not the sickness

Opinions Write-off

February 14, 2017

Last week's fiery events at Berkeley ignited a new debate over the drawbacks and downfalls of protesting. Armchair activists, safe behind their keyboards, stick their nose up and declare protests to be a nuisance or claim that these riots have somehow discredited any peaceful opposition to the "alt-right" and the Trump administration.

These are the same people who said, "Get over it" the day after the election. Even among those on the left, the common condescension is, "You should have voted." Maybe they didn't get the memo: Three million more people voted for Hillary Clinton and we still got the Tweeter-in-Chief as president. And that's not even considering how many more were barred from voting due to Republican-trademarked voter disenfranchisement laws.

Our civic process is more nuanced than just one election every two years. It's an ongoing dialogue between the representatives and the represented, and it doesn't end at the voting booth. Maybe we need a history recap.

Since the Boston Tea Party, the American people have wrestled control of their political destiny from the hands of oppressive governments through protests, demonstrations and violent, fiery riots. Women, African-Americans and the LGBT community didn't gain the

rights they have today by asking nicely. They got out on the streets and pissed people off. When the time came, these movements translated protests into ballots, but between elections the American public held its representatives accountable through the flamboyant exercise of its First Amendment rights.

Protests force our government to pay attention. Demonstrations magnify the influence of popular opinion past the voting booth. Modern American protests bind the public together under a common cause. Events like the Women's March convince citizens not only that their rights are worth fighting for, but that individuals are not alone in their fight for them. They offer the average person a very real way to get involved in the civic process: You really just gotta' show up; the cardboard sign is optional. Just as they did during Women's Suffrage, the Civil Rights Movement and the Stonewall riots, protests keep the dialogue between the public and its government going.

Our duty as citizens to fight for equality and freedom today is no different than it was in the 1960s, the 1920s or even the 1770s. The constitutional tools at our disposal today are the same, but the stakes are higher. We need to stay involved, and it is America's nascent protest culture that will keep us engaged and informed throughout the next two years.

We shouldn't be afraid of the students rioting. We should be afraid of the people they're rioting against. Secretary of Education Becky DeVos and Attorney General Jeff Sessions,

successfully confirmed as of Wednesday, threaten to dismantle decades of civic progress. Trump's immigration order has been smacked down in the courts, but it hasn't faced the Supreme Court yet. It is not just Obamacare that's under fire from this administration. Our entire constitutional infrastructure is in danger. It is apparent that Donald Trump wants nothing more than to silence the press, eliminate the entire judicial branch and outlaw public assembly all so his paper-thin ego can get a break. For us to become complacent between elections is exactly what this administration wants.

Protests aren't some malfunction in the fabric of society. They are a symptom of a healthy democracy. Like when you're running a fever: It means your immune system is working. Trump's brand of fascism is the virus that our democratic immune system is trying to rid itself of through protest. The threats that we face from this administration dwarf any amount of broken windows or offended white people. It is more vital now than ever that we get outside and piss people off.

Why calling Donald Trump an illegitimate president hinders our movement against him

Opinions

April 17, 2017

We've seen it splashed across our computer screens, Instagram feeds and bumper stickers since November: #notmypresident. The slogan corresponds to the sentiment that Donald Trump is not the legitimate president of the United States. As the threat of fascism grows ever more real every day, it is worth discussing why calling Trump an "illegitimate" president hinders our movement against him.

I understand the frustration, but this is the reality — Trump is the legitimate president of the United States. By saying this, I am not supporting his ideology, policies or rhetoric; I am simply stating a matter of fact. Legitimate, in this case, only means "legal."

Why are so many people denying Trump's legitimacy? Trump did not win the popular vote. This is true. Neither did George W. Bush. But both won the electoral college. As outdated as that system is, it is how we have elected our presidents since the framing of the Constitution. Ironically, Americans seem to love the Electoral College when their candidate wins, and conveniently turn their pitchforks against it when they don't. Trump didn't take the White House in a military coup, or buy it in a lucrative real estate deal. He was elected through the historical, agreed-upon process by which America has always

elected its leaders. In a word, he won fair and square.

Though we know Russian hackers influenced the election, we don't know the extent to which the Trump campaign colluded with them to swing it in their favor. Until such allegations are corroborated, the simple fact remains that nearly 63 million Americans voted for the guy. The margin of victory which delivered Trump the presidency was less than 107,000 across three states. One hundred and seven-thousand Russian hackers didn't go into polling stations in Michigan and Pennsylvania to mark off Donald Trump on the ballot. Americans did.

By calling Trump illegitimate, we are, in effect, calling the system through which we elect our legislators illegitimate. We are diminishing the only tool we have to elect a better administration in 2020. And that is damaging to our democracy. Trump's administration is actively working to foment distrust in our government, whether it be by delegitimizing oversight institutions like the Congressional Budget Office, questioning the validity of elections at large or accusing the previous administration of illegally undermining a political candidate. If we the public lose faith in our electoral institutions, we are aiding this administration in their nihilistic pursuits. Working within the established system to oust Trump in four years is the only way to ensure that our democracy endures into the future. Updating our electoral system is progress; turning against it is dangerous.

However, there are legitimate reasons to refuse to accept Trump as the legitimate president. To do so is to accept him as our country's leader, and a leader does far more than sign executive orders. As Barack Obama demonstrated, presidents are as much cultural figures as they are politicians. They fulfill perhaps the most important role in the global arena, in both politics and economics. They have immense influence over peace, war and human rights, and have been called leaders of the free world for a reason.

To myself, and at least nearly three million other Americans, Trump is illegitimate because he does not represent our views or our values. On everything from immigration to climate change, the popular vote count demonstrates that Trump's is the minority opinion. More importantly it proves that Trump does not speak for the majority of Americans.

Donald Trump may be the president, but we are still the electorate. We have the ability, and the right, to get rid of him. However flawed, our electoral system is more than sufficient to dispose of an illegitimate leader in 2020. Certainly it is our only weapon against him.

A tweet I read from actress and singer Audra McDonald the night before the inauguration sums it up: "Remember, tomorrow we are not crowning a king, or bowing down to a dictator. Tomorrow our new employee starts his temp job. We're the boss."

Anxiety and Awe: the real Coachella

Arts and Entertainment

May 1, 2017

What do you think of when you hear the word Coachella? Celebrities, ferris wheels, H&M, Native American headdresses, cultural appropriation? I just got back from my fourth Coachella. When I hear the word, I think of heat. I think of impatience. I think of dirty bandanas and bad sunburns. I think of pure exhaustion, blisters on the bottom of my feet and blowing dirt out of my nose days after getting back from Indio. I think of the anxiety of anticipation, because Coachella doesn't begin on a Friday at 11 a.m., it begins in January, and lasts four months.

The lineup drops a few days after New Year's Eve. The hype train leaves the station. I cringe every year I shell out 500-plus dollars from my savings account, but it's worth it to see that confirmation email sitting in my inbox. The wait begins as I realize Coachella is a million miles away. February dumps the weight of winter quarter on us. Beyonce announces she's pregnant in the middle of March and Instagram whines when Lady Gaga is tapped to replace her. I have a hard time believing Coachella is weeks away once spring quarter starts and my impatience only grows worse when my tickets finally ship. The set times are released at the start of April and 100,000 hearts break across Southern California. Classes drag on, my dealer is ignoring my messages and not a minute too

soon, the week is upon us. Bubbling with excitement for the experiences just ahead, I shove my camping gear into my four-door Honda Accord Wednesday night, but I can't sleep a wink.

Come Thursday, I desperately need to pee on the drive down the 10. Our caravan creeps forward as we get in line outside the venue. I grow sick of the same tunes we've been spamming since January. I can see the top of the Outdoor Theater above the wall of the Empire Polo Club. My mind is racing with paranoia as we approach the security check. A young security guard searches through the trunk. Another scans our wristbands. A police officer gives us a wave, and just like that, we're in. Trembling, I take my first steps onto the green grass of Lot 8 and crack open my first ice-cold beer of the weekend. The campgrounds hum with excitement. But we are not in yet.

I wake up Friday covered in sweat and my head is throbbing. The wind knocked over my E-Z Up and my tapestries are torn to shreds. The line at the water station isn't moving and it's way hotter than I expected. I can hear the thump of the speakers as we march through security — Coachella is mere inches away. But I'm held back: Julian needs to go to the bathroom, Rebeca left her sunglasses back at the campsite and half the group wants food, but no one wants the same thing. . That one girl who tagged along at the last minute doesn't like the taste of water and wants to spend the entire day in the Yuma tent. My best friend's new girlfriend can't stand the crowds in the Sahara tent. Annabel wants to see Big Gigantic. Sam wants to see King Gizzard. I've been dying to see Bonobo since

January. No one has any idea where anything is and I realize leading a group around the Coachella polo fields is like herding drunk sheep. We all get split up before 4 p.m. and my phone dies before 5. 100 degree heat eats away at my excitement — even after four months of whipping my body into shape, my legs aren't in the mood to dance. All my expectations for an unforgettable weekend fall like sand through my fingers, and I wander, alone, through a crowd of strangers.

But then I see them: All smiles, patiently waiting outside the DoLab, is every member of my squad. Like Odysseus's return to Ithaca, our reunion is nothing short of epic. As the sun sets and the heat finally peels off, we scramble to the main stage. The lights dim. The crowd roars. After four months of anxiety and anticipation, planning and patience, we have finally made it to Coachella.

Under the influence and a clear blue sky, we sing and dance as we share a million laughs across three golden days of wonder. We become accustomed to the heat. Dirty bandanas and Claritin save us from the dust. Our bodies wear down with each passing day, but we ignore our mortality to squeeze every last precious drop out of the ephemeral weekend. By Saturday night, we've mastered the venue. Long walks don't seem so long. The crowds don't seem as hostile. It's awe-inspiring to realize how many thousands of people are experiencing the same thing. And too soon, the sun sets on Sunday night. The lights come on as Kendrick Lamar leaves the stage and the music ends. The harsh wind we ignored all weekend now sends chills down our backs as we take the long walk across the

littered venue back to our campsite. As the drugs wear off, we share a final night in the desert before we pack our gear in silence Monday morning and head back home. I wash away four days of dust, grime and other people's sweat. I finally rest my aching knees and blistered feet and rub aloe on my sunburned face. Far from the haze of Indio, I scroll back through thousands of photos and reflect on Coachella.

But I don't think of celebrities or ferris wheels. I think of heat, of \$400 tickets and months of saving up. I think of the paranoia of the security check and the disappointment of set time conflicts. I think of dazzling music, fantastical art, laying out on a massive grass field singing at the top of my lungs with my best friends and how lucky I am to have shared this experience with them. I think of exhaustion and excitement, and every moment of anxiety that it took to get me to Coachella for a fourth time. And I wonder when I can do it all over again.

Reflecting on the Capstone

This capstone project has taken many different forms over the past three years. I poured an immense amount of time, energy, passion, anxiety, and love into it as I navigated through college, and battled self-doubt and impatience every step of the way. Most of it was self-imposed. All of it was worth it.

In the capstone, I saw a chance to create something of value. I decided that I wanted to write more than a thesis or a long essay that would be typed up and filed away in the library. I wanted my project to be the encapsulation of everything I learned in college, and I wanted it to lead to something greater after graduation. This desire led to a thesis on the Middle East, an economic analysis of water rights in California, a student activist handbook, a confessional, a short story, a memoir, and a book about rave culture in Southern California. A dozen projects were started, but only one will be published as my capstone.

This project is the result of my ambition to squeeze every last drop out of my college education and translate it into 12 point, Times New Roman font. Though the product I have submitted does not contain even half of all the work I have done in the pursuit of the capstone project, I realize now that it was never about the product, but the process. Everything I have gained from working on the capstone I have gained from the grind. I did not create one project, but many, and opened doors that will lead far beyond my graduation. That is the value I was looking for from the start.