

# THE HAREBRAIN

Long Beach Poly High School PACE Parent Group

Winter 2022



## PACE Parent Group Scholarship Applications Open in February

Attention all PACE seniors! PACE Parent Group scholarship applications will be available starting Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022.

The application is a Google Doc that will be sent to all seniors electronically. Applications must be completed and turned in by the deadline stated on the Google Doc. There will be no extensions.

PACE Parent Group scholarships are primarily merit-based and awarded on academic, extracurricular, artistic and community achievements.

Students who wish to be considered must submit an application and may be asked to participate in an interview with scholarship committee members.

Recipients of the scholarships will be asked to contribute an article to the PACE Harebrain newsletter in the fall of their college freshman year.

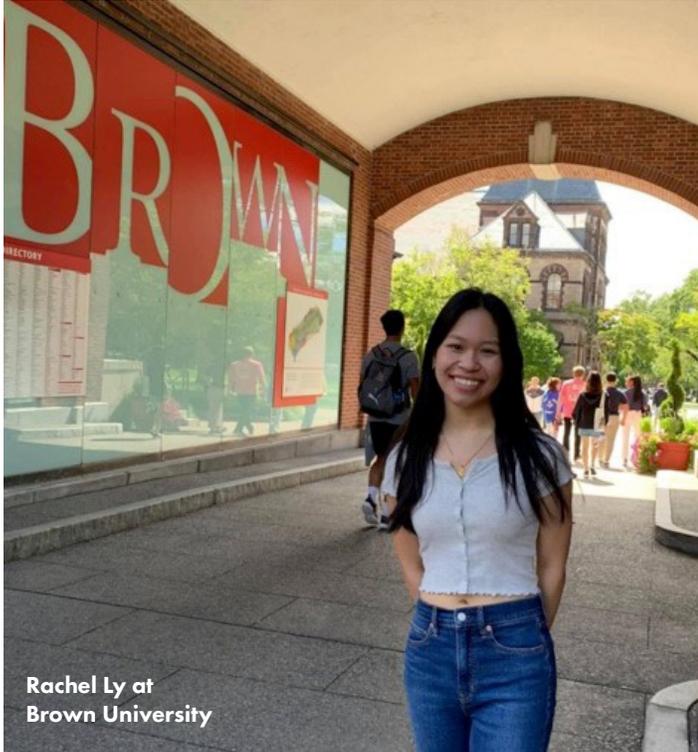
PACE teachers and parents got the word out about the pathway at two events last fall. Teachers Kim Floto, Ron Rita, and Patrick Gillogly talked to potential students at the LBUSD School of Choice fair (above), and the PACE Parent Group hosted a tailgate party at the homecoming football game (right).



The PACE Parent Group gave scholarships to 10 students in the class of 2021. Turn the page to read about their first year of college, in their own words!

## PACE Scholarship Recipients Hit the Ground Running in College

Every year, we ask our scholarship winners to tell us about their experiences in their first year in college. This year, the university freshmen are enjoying classes, getting involved in extra-curricular activities, and finding balance by applying the skills they learned in Poly PACE.



Rachel Ly at  
Brown University

Good morning, Jackrabbits! My name is Rachel, and I'm currently attending Brown University. Thanks to the Open Curriculum, I have the privilege of taking this year to explore anything and everything before committing to a concentration (Brown lingo for "major"). From moving across the country to having to create new schedules about things like when to eat, the transition to college has been overwhelming, exhilarating, and, above all, fulfilling. The academic freedom offered at Brown has been especially new to me and allows me to take both Healthcare in the U.S. and Tai Chi, Qigong, and Traditions of Energy Cultivation in China at the same time! With a background in rigorous academics thanks to PACE, the transition has been manageable, and I'm grateful for the fantastic PACE teachers who prepared me over the past four years. They may not be the exact same, but who knew AP Euro reading would provide me with the skills needed to get through my Tai Chi readings? Besides studying at the Sci-Li, I've had so much fun exploring Providence, going on late-night walks with my floormates, and developing an addiction to Rhode Island coffee milk.

Coming to Brown has been like entering a room where all that exists is passion and individuality (with a penchant for collaboration). I'm only able to celebrate these things because of my roots, though. PACE's focus on critical thinking and cultivation of humans rather than mere students has greatly

impacted my success reaching Brown. Don't take the teachers and peers that you have now for granted, because even with distance, they will be one of your biggest support systems going into college. So please, remember to study for those daily quizzes, read the assigned novels, and take care of yourself in between. —Rachel Ly, Brown University

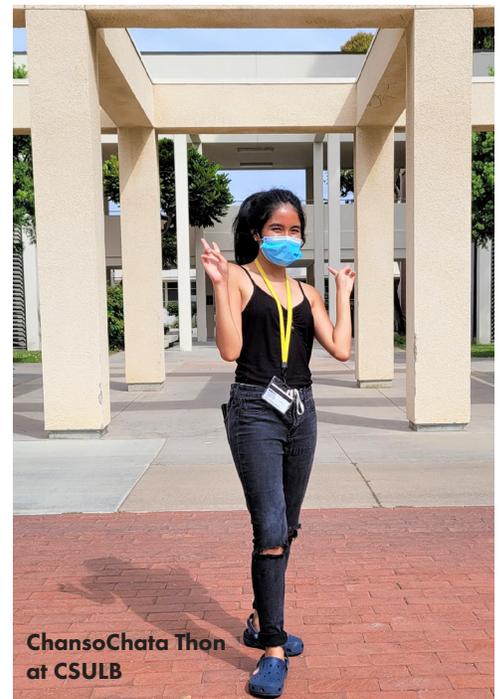
The words from previous seniors seem to haunt me: "These next four years will go quickly." They were right! The last time I was in class (at least at Poly) I was a junior in Spanish class...but apparently I'm in college now? To be honest, the other side isn't too different. Granted, I did stay local, and I am now attending Cal State Long Beach. Go Beach!

My experience here hasn't been too scary, but I credit that to PACE. All those endless nights I spent reading the Euro and APUSH books weren't all to waste! It prepared me for the endless pages of reading that I would encounter in political science class and the many more coming my way. I'm totally...totally...excited for that.

I'm currently majoring in pre-nursing, before I apply to the nursing program, which is notorious for accepting you ONLY if you score above a 90% on your TEAS exam and get straight A's in all your prerequisites.

The first thing I thought was, this is intimidating... yet, I haven't had any fears in my ability to meet that. I'm not sure why, but I know that PACE had a part in my confidence. Genuinely,

I am excited for what the future has in store for me, and I feel well equipped after those years of training. For the rest of the students still in training, remember that the amount of effort you're currently putting in will pay off, even if it seems a little hazy most days. —ChansoChata Thon, CSULB



ChansoChata Thon  
at CSULB

What's up from Atlanta! My name is Jacob Kraus, and I am a first-year student studying biomedical engineering at Georgia Tech. Transitioning from sunny, breezy Long Beach to humid, wet Atlanta has been quite the adventure. Before I got here, the last time I had attended in-person classes was during my junior year at Poly. The adjustment to college has been quick but not overwhelming, thanks to how well PACE prepared me. I remember those late-night and last-minute struggles of preparing for Meckna's quizzes, but that type of workload is typical of many of my classes. In my experience thus far, student life relies on effectively managing my time; college has given me an unprecedented amount of flexibility, but scheduling out each day of the week is not a new skill—it is one I gained from being a PACE student.



**Jacob Kraus at Georgia Tech**

Initially, as move-in approached, I felt hesitant coming to the South, as I did not know anybody who would be going to Tech. However, because so many students were in the same boat, everyone was enthusiastic about meeting new people, and making new friends has been a process my peers and I have embraced. Getting involved on campus has also helped me to assimilate. I have been doing an internship, participating in intramural sports, taking committee positions in clubs, and even joining a fraternity. Being far from home is hard, but I'm not alone on the East Coast. My friends from PACE attend college around the country, and although most of them are back in California at great schools, I have a few who are in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and close by in the same state at the University of Georgia (we both know Georgia Tech is better, of course).

Being in Poly PACE laid the foundation for the student I am today, instilling within me resilience and determination. For those sending in their college applications, best of luck, and remember to have an open mind as decisions roll around! As Dr. Salas always says on the intercom...GOOOO JACK-RABBITS! —*Jacob Kraus, Georgia Tech*

My name is Ethan Jenkins and I am currently a freshman at the University of Virginia. I am majoring in electrical engineering with a possible minor in either political science or economics. Since arriving at UVA, I have become involved in

extracurricular activities. I am on the club volleyball team and a member of the Persian Cultural Society, and I have become heavily involved in intramural sports. My first semester has been amazing, everything I ever wanted from college, and I highly recommend everyone apply.

I believe that PACE prepared me for what lay ahead in college. The

high level of academic rigor in the PACE program ensured that I would be able to handle the difficulty and workload of my college classes. PACE taught me how to effectively plan out my schoolwork so that I can stay on top of assignments and avoid procrastination. These skills have become useful in college as you do not spend much time physically in the classroom. The large majority of time is spent completing assignments and preparing for tests and exams. The compilation of these skills taught to me by PACE ensured I was prepared for the academic challenges I would face in college.

The PACE program also prepared me for the academic environment of college. Like in PACE, at UVA I am surrounded by other like-minded, academically motivated students who value their education above all. Everyone is focused on their schoolwork and, like in PACE, everyone is there for each other to ensure the entire community succeeds. In college, like PACE, the school week is a bit of a grind, but there are always ways to blow off some steam on the weekends and take a temporary break from your schoolwork.

—*Ethan Jenkins, University of Virginia*

Hey, Jackrabbits! It's Shiraz, writing to you from my dorm room at UC Irvine! While the stress of college admissions, AP exams, and the pandemic made my senior year at Poly seem never-ending, my experience in college has been the complete opposite. My first quarter flew by in the blink of an eye, in a whirlwind of new experiences and fresh starts. A significant change that came with going to college was switching to the quarter system, which means that instead of taking seven classes for an entire year, I finished four courses in only three months! This system is very high-paced and can be difficult to keep up with, but luckily, the variety of classes that we took in the PACE program prepared me with diverse study skills that made my first quarter a lot easier to manage. For example, I was ready to effectively read and take notes on large portions of text from Mr. Gillogly and Mr. Meckna's



**Ethan Jenkins at the University of Virginia**

assigned readings (which really saved me in my chemistry class), and I learned the importance of participation and how to properly share my perspective through Ms. Leaney's interactive class discussions (which helped me stand out in my biology discussions and landed me my first job as a learning assistant!). Each unique class that I took in PACE taught me valuable habits that made my high school-to-college transition incredibly smooth.

In the hectic first weeks here, I also managed to get involved in a few extracurriculars. I'm a member of the MEMO (medical, educational missions and outreach) club, and I've continued swimming by trying out for our school's recre-



**Shiraz Rezaei at UC Irvine**

ational swim team! Getting the opportunity to live on my own has given me the chance to step out of my comfort zone and explore adulthood, and I'm beyond excited to see what else the next four years hold for me. I hope you guys are just as happy to see what PACE has in store for you!

Hang in there, Jackrabbits! —*Shiraz Rezaei, UC Irvine*

Hi Jackrabbits, I'm Victoria Quach and I currently attend UC Berkeley! Following my move-in day at Cal, I was ecstatic to explore the beautiful hidden gems of campus, the plant-based restaurants in the college town, the hiking trails down the street, and the convenient public transportation that takes us around the Bay Area. In the short time I've been here, I've been lucky enough to be surrounded by such a diverse student body. Given the number of people who have similar interests and goals as I do, it has been easy to find clubs and programs geared toward my interests, like environmental sustainability. I wouldn't have found my interest in environmental science so early in high school if it hadn't been for taking AP Environmental Science with Mr. Manack!

Most recently at Berkeley, I've become an intern for the Cal Housing and Dining Sustainability Program. Through student-led advocacy and peer education, we make sustainability accessible to the UC Berkeley community, improve housing and dining infrastructure, and work toward more ethical and environmentally sound practices.

With both online and in-person lectures, my first semester of college has been quite the experience. I won't lie, being in

courses with more than a thousand students—all of whom were at the top of their class—is very intimidating; however, during my years in the PACE program, I accumulated habits like time management between the intense workload from Gillogly's SMOs, Schol's vocabulary exams, swim practice, Model UN, and the Green School Campaign. So by the time classes began, the transition was manageable. I can definitely thank the PACE program and all the staff who have helped make this experience less overwhelming. With all the guidance I've received, it has pushed me to become better prepared for the future. —*Victoria Quach, UC Berkeley*



**Victoria Quach at UC Berkeley**

Greetings from South Los Angeles! Being a part of the Trojan family and immersing myself in the richness of L.A. culture has made my first semester at USC such an enlightening experience. However, looking back, I remember being a scared first-generation student thinking that a school such as USC was an unattainable dream for me. Yet it was in realizing that PACE prepared me to attend elite schools that I applied with confidence—not necessarily a confidence in my acceptance but a confidence in what I had to offer to the school.

I realized that PACE not only allowed me to meet the requirements that colleges ask for, but that the planned schedules for students also helped me exceed



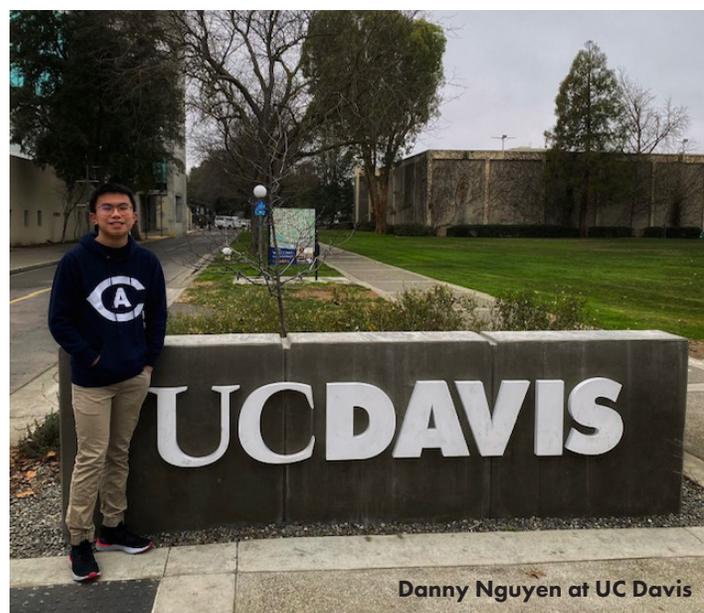
**Itzel Ibarra at USC**

the requirements. The PACE courses and workload mimic what is mandated by STEM classes here. In both my general biology and chemistry classes, the material we cover tends to be at a fast pace. I am forever indebted to the rigor of PACE classes that taught me the appropriate study habits that help me excel in these classes today. Studying nightly for AP Euro and AP biology ensured I was prepared for the test whenever it came and was not overwhelmed when I had multiple AP tests in a single week. Such a study habit has been useful for me at USC, especially during midterm season where quizzes and tests for various classes align on the same week.

PACE is a program that will prepare you for any college you attend. Take advantage of everything that PACE and Poly have to offer, and remember, fight on!! —*Itzel Ibarra, USC*

**H**ello Poly PACE families. I am happy to report that I have had an amazing fall quarter up here in Davis. It was great to return fully to in-person learning for my first quarter of college. Although we will likely spend all of winter quarter online, I still plan on returning to campus to spend time with new friends and focus on school. I've already met many genuinely nice and interesting people and checked out a few student organizations. I've been spending a lot of time in the brand-new campus gym, on runs and bike rides around campus and the scenic Arboretum, eating my heart out at the dining commons, and just goofing around with friends. My school work has been manageable, and most important, my sleep schedule isn't any worse than in high school. Looking forward I will likely be applying for potential research positions or other professional opportunities as I settle into college life.

I believe the Poly community and the PACE program has contributed to a lot of my personal growth and prepared me in many ways for the next step. Throughout high school I became more social and heavily involved in extracurricular activities. This has definitely carried over to college, and I'm still looking to participate in clubs and become more involved in



Danny Nguyen at UC Davis

the UC Davis community. Academically, I don't think PACE did as much for me as it may have for others. I never struggled to get the grades I wanted and as a result didn't form great study habits in high school. I don't think this takes away from the PACE experience; however, it is just a big jump from high school to college. PACE has still introduced me to the best teachers I'll likely ever have, and amazing friends I hope to stay in contact with for the rest of my life.

—*Danny Nguyen, UC Davis*



Dana Kriebel at American University

**A**fter a senior year spent mostly online, I was both excited and nervous to be starting back in person for my freshman year at American University. However, driving onto campus for my day of move-in, I was mostly excited for some return to normalcy. American University did not disappoint. I'm back in the classroom and have had the opportunity to get involved with campus organizations where I can meet with people in person safely.

I know at the beginning I said I was both excited AND nervous, so let me tell you a little about my nerves. The first class I attended was my AUx course, which is essentially a "How to Survive College" course. We talked about time management, using a planner, and other academic skills that I had already learned through PACE. With the rigorous courses and time management I was accustomed to because of PACE, I left that class feeling confident I would be able to take on what college had coming for me. I've been well equipped to read philosophical texts thanks to the phenomenal PACE English department, and I can keep up with all the historical references in my international studies classes thanks to AP U.S. and European History.

PACE goes beyond just academics and truly takes on Poly's mission to shape students into both scholars and champions. Through PACE I learned how to enrich my educational experience with extracurriculars and still be academically successful. I am a member of the cheerleading team here at American University, as well as AU's nationally renowned Model United Nations program. Now, I'm still very excited for what is coming, but I'm a lot less nervous for the struggles along the way. —*Dana Kriebel, American University*

# Green School Campaign Brings Clean Energy Projects to Poly

Hello PACE Families,

One of my favorite things about my job is the ability it affords me to support students in projects that they take on. Our scholars are constantly developing ideas—from business plans and youth outreach to social and environmental campaigns. With that in mind, I wanted to share with you a project one of our students has been working on for about two years.

Diana Michaelson is currently an AP Research student in my 4th period class, and in addition to her incredible academic resume, she has helped to develop the Long Beach Green School Campaign, a student-led initiative working to transition LBUSD off of fossil fuels. She is a part of a group of about 50 kids districtwide (more than half of them being Poly students) who have met with the Facilities Department at LBUSD, Superintendent Jill Baker, and school board members Megan Kerr, Diana Craighead, and Juan Benitez. They have also been reaching out to the Long Beach City Council through Al Austin, Mary Zendejas, and Rex Richardson, as well as involving community organizations and businesses such as Sunrise Movement of Long Beach, Grid Alternatives, Long Beach Council PTA, and International Green Schools Campaign. One of the goals of this campaign is to partner with companies involved in green energy and on-campus clean energy projects to provide real-world, project-based learning opportunities for classes in science, technology, engineering, and math.



The Long Beach Green School Campaign is a student-led initiative working to transition the Long Beach Unified School District off of fossil fuels.

If you'd like to support this project as an LBUSD parent, please feel free to sign on to our Parent Sign-on Letter via the QR code at right.

Bigger picture, we have had students establish, continue, and collaborate on programs and projects of all kinds—philanthropic, commercial, and community-focused. If any of your students have projects or organizations that they are interested in developing further, we might be able to help them and get more of the community involved at the same time. Please encourage them to talk with their teachers or come visit me in Room 250 in the science building.

If you are interested in learning more about the Long Beach Green



School Campaign and getting further involved, you can check out their website, [polygsc.com](http://polygsc.com), or their social media:

Instagram: @polygsc

Twitter: @GscPoly

Facebook: @LBUSD.GSC

—Ms. Samantha Lawrence,  
PACE Lead Teacher

PACE Parent Group (PPG) is a non-profit board consisting of PACE parent volunteers who raise and manage donations in order to provide additional support to the PACE academic and scholarship program.

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You can donate online at [www.paceparent.org](http://www.paceparent.org), use the enclosed envelope, or simply scan here.



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