

**Bryanna Becerra, UCLA**

Hello all! I completed my first quarter at UCLA and wow, was it different. Different in a good way, it was one of the most drastic learning experiences I've had and can say I've definitely grown as a person and a student. I remember being so nervous and excited to start and thinking back it was both everything I thought it was going to be and everything I wasn't expecting. PACE was rough, but college was rough in many different ways. I have not read and written as extensively as I did in those 10 weeks, ever. There were many firsts in my first quarter, like getting an F on my first draft on my first paper (which I later got a B on), and taking the metro home by myself. Fortunately, PACE helped me prepare for the school aspect of college, using study habits that I knew worked for me because of PACE and I found myself in a familiar rhythm when doing school work. I knew how much I could handle in a given amount of time and knew how to manage my time accordingly. Yes, that helpful skill we all claim to learn because of PACE, it's real. I learned it and I'm positive you procrastinators have to, even if you don't realize it. The study habits that PACE taught me let me focus on learning and adapting to my new environment and not worry so much about the workload my classes gave me. This first quarter was amazing. I joined marching band and met so many wonderful people both in and outside of class. The band went to Northern California and I got to tour the bay area for the first time ever, surrounded by amazing human beings. It is only one of the many memories I have made here at UCLA. My classes this quarter were eye opening and interesting and I genuinely enjoyed going to class and what I learned in them. This new found independence is all new and exciting and I can't wait to get more involved in things I enjoy doing. I am grateful I went through the PACE program, and am extremely grateful for the teachers I had and Ms. Loggins for being the best counselor ever. PACE helped me prepare for this new part of my life. The Poly Chapter ended, but the UCLA Chapter has just begun.



PACE Parent Education

**Positives & Pitfalls of SchoolLoop**

A huge "Thank You" to our distinguished panel of speakers at our first parent education event this year on October 30, 2018. We had a great turn out to hear Samantha Lawrence (PACE Facilitator), Tracy Chaffee, MD (Psychiatrist & PACE parent), and PACE teachers Gloria Hernandez-Scipio and Ronald Rita talk about the "Positives & Pitfalls of SchoolLoop & More". The panel answered questions from parents regarding the differences between SchoolLoop and Google Docs, homework assignments, how to handle zeros, sleep deprivation, finding balance, finding joy and many other topics. It was a very informative evening with great dialogue between the panel and parents. Thanks to all that attended.



**Senior Scholarships**

Each year the PPSG awards college scholarships to deserving seniors, including ten PPSG scholarships and four Chavez scholarships. In light of a recent and very generous donation to our scholarship fund, we increased the PPSG scholarship amount from \$2,000 to \$5,000 each! **Every PACE senior should apply for these scholarships!** PPSG scholarships are awarded based upon academics; extracurricular, athletic and artistic activities; and unique or adverse circumstances. Recipients will be chosen through an anonymous process. Applications will open April 1 and are due to the PACE office by 3:00pm May 1. Further information will be sent via SchoolLoop regarding both scholarships.

**PACE Connections**

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Continuing with our theme of connection -- Ms. Loggins, a few parents, and some very generous students from several Westside middle schools have been developing a program we are calling **Poly Ambassadors**. This group is working with local middle school students to provide support and guidance on their path to high school. Our students are so excited to go back to their middle schools and work with the students there. Middle school students get a better idea of what life might be like for them in high school and how what they are doing today will affect the opportunities they have down the line. Again -- when students can see these connections, they can achieve a clearer perspective. I'm truly proud of our Poly PACE family going into this spring. The willingness and excitement from past, present, and future Jackrabbits to build and maintain connection will serve both the individuals and the whole for years to come.

Good job everyone!

**PACE Parent Support Group Board**

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**PACE Connections**

Samantha Lawrence, PACE Facilitator

It's been a busy winter in the PACE office and the projects we are most excited about have everything to do with connection -- between schools, between classes and individuals, between the past, the present, and the future.

One of my goals this year was to establish an easy and systematic way for Poly PACE alumni to participate and connect with the current programs and projects. We created a form to gather initial information, including what level of follow-up alumni were interested in, if they wanted to write a brief PACE bio, if they wanted to come back to the school as a guest speaker, etc. The response so far has been astonishing! We have had alumni from as far back as 1978 complete the survey. So far the vast majority (over 90%) of respondents are interested in giving back to the Poly PACE community in a meaningful way. We know that our students truly embody the motto -- "Enter to Learn, Go forth to serve" and this response makes that concrete for me. At the same time Poly PACE Parents have been organizing opportunities for alumni to connect and support the program as well. We look forward to strengthening the bonds of the Poly PACE community, regardless of the last time you followed the rabbit tracks in from the main entrance. If you are a Jackrabbit who wants to give back, or know a Jackrabbit who might be interested please feel free to fill out the form or pass it along to other alumni. When the students can see connections between what they are doing today and where they can be tomorrow, many things come into perspective. To access our Alumni Survey please go to <https://goo.pgl/forms/bAYnYeSbmRD41rT2> or simply scan the following code:



In addition to the alumni project we are also working with a few current PACE students to get a Big/Little system set up between seniors and freshman PACE students so that our incoming students feel like they have some reliable, sympathetic, and knowledgeable peers to go to when they have questions their first year at Poly. It's a big place with so many opportunities and it can definitely be overwhelming. We are hoping to match a senior with one or two freshman (by interest) and arrange a lunch meeting with time to connect as well as receive support. This program is still in development but more details on this are sure to follow. If any of our Junior Jackrabbits are interested in participating watch for an email from the PACE office on this.

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**PACE Fundraising Efforts**

Jalal Torabzadeh, PPSG Board Member

On behalf of PPSG's Fundraising and Parent/Alumni Relations Committee, I would like to thank all of you who have contributed and supported the program financially and in other ways to achieve its educational initiatives and objectives. Your support has supplemented the LBUSD's allocated resources to meet the basic needs of the program as well as providing Additional Curricular Experiences (Model United Nations, Robotics, etc.) beyond the classroom. Your financial support is critical for PACE to maintain the momentum and enhance its efforts to help students utilize their full potentials, thrive, excel, and demonstrate that Poly PACE is the Program of Choice for many high achievers, not only in Long Beach, but also in Southern California. Only with your support can the program enhance and expand its supplementary opportunities for students to help them achieve their educational and professional goals.

We would also like to remind those of you who have not had a chance to support the program yet, to please join us in these efforts. We are requesting your participation and involvement in this great cause. The PACE program needs your support at all levels, especially at this time of the academic year. There are many activities and plans initiated for students by dedicated PACE teachers that need parent and alumni support in order to be implemented and/or completed. Your help is needed more than ever at this time.

The PPSG is very pleased to inform you of some of its new fundraising plans include: a Poly Week at Local Restaurants (early April) in different neighborhoods in Long Beach (details TBA); a wine tasting event in May; possible Freshmen Picnic in August; and development of an alumni social medium for better connection and outreach (See Ms. Lawrence's article). We definitely need everyone's help in this regard. If interested in helping with this project, please let us know at [paceparent@gmail.com](mailto:paceparent@gmail.com).

The PACE Parent Support Group sincerely appreciates and thanks those who have donated this past year to fund the extraordinary education provided by the PACE program. This year's budget is about \$75,000 for supporting the PACE program. To date we have only received about \$16,000. This year we strive for 100% participation by our PACE families, so please donate what fits your family budget. Less than 20% of our PACE families have donated so far this year. To donate simply go to our website at [parentparent.org](http://parentparent.org) and click on the Donate button or you can mail a check in the enclosed envelope. It takes about \$150 per student per year to fund the annual budget. Some families donate less and some donate more. We are very thankful for your donation in ANY amount, and please remember coporate matching.

## Poly Model UN Competes in Boston

Sophia Hooper, PACE Senior



The Poly Model United Nations program flew 31 students to Boston this February to take part in Boston University's Model United Nations Conference. Led by advisor Patrick Gillogly and senior co-presidents Sophia Hooper and Jack Schwarz, our Model UN program has blossomed from a fledgling club of 13 to a class and after school program of over 80 members in the past year.

The topics that Poly's team debated in Boston included corruption in developing nations, the crisis in Yemen, the challenges of an aging population, nuclear non-proliferation, gender-based violence, and research for rare diseases. They also participated in historical committees regarding the Opium Wars, World War I, and the Soviet-Afghan War, as well as futuristic crises including a FEMA earthquake simulation and the US opioid epidemic.

Competing against elite East Coast preparatory schools, Long Beach Poly held our own, even taking home a few awards and commendations. Regardless of recognition, however, the chance to debate at a national level is invaluable for these students.



"I got to collaborate with other passionate teens from all over the world. Going to BosMUN not only gifted me an Instagram group chat of new international friends, but has armed with new knowledge and insights to take with me throughout my academic future," says junior Alex Lam, a first-year participant in the program.

PolyMUN will compete in two more conferences before the year is over, but their most ambitious endeavor will be hosting the first-ever conference on Poly's home turf: Jackrabbit MUN I. The program is still gaining its legs, but with strong leadership at the helm and promising, devoted underclassmen, its members are excited and optimistic for what the future has in store for them, and for the further opportunities to broaden their cultural and geopolitical perspectives.

## Poly Rabbotics Team Honored

Naveed Torabzadeh, PACE Senior



Poly's robotics team, Poly Rabbotics, is in the heart of its second year, having just concluded the preliminary construction of its robot that will be competing in regional competitions in March. Poly Rabbotics competes in the FIRST Robotics Competition, an international competition where teams of high school students raise funds, build a team "brand," and design, build, and program industrial-size robots to compete against other teams in an annual field game.

For the last two months, the members of the team have been working hard and putting in late hours at school to design, prototype, build, and program a robot that will be able to manipulate game pieces and even climb itself over a two-foot platform on the game field.

The team was recently honored at the annual Orange County Engineering Council (OCEC) Awards Banquet with an Outstanding STEM Program Award for its efforts in promoting STEM and engineering at Poly and its communities. The banquet was held on February 16, 2019, and honored engineering professionals and educators from across Southern California, including students and faculty from USC, UCI, CSULB, and CSUF. There was also a keynote address by NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory engineer Michael Staab, who serves as the Lead Systems Engineer for Dust-Storm Operations for the Mars Exploration Rover "Opportunity."

At the event, Poly Rabbotics was recognized for its accomplishments in building a team of 35-40 Poly students from several academies and for its role in school and city communities. Poly Rabbotics members work with special education students at Poly on hands-on STEM activities not normally available in their curriculums and also volunteer as mentors for the VEX Robotics team at Cubberley K-8 School. For their own team, experienced members host workshops on engineering skills and concepts including computer-aided design on SolidWorks, electrical wiring, and tool use in the workshop.

In its "rookie" season last year, Poly Rabbotics competed in the Los Angeles and Orange County Regional Competitions, taking home the "Rookie Inspiration Award" after impressing the judges and other teams with their performance and potential. This year, the team competed against other SoCal teams and won the Fall Classic offseason competition held at Valenciana High School in Placentia, CA. Now, they are preparing for the two regional competitions they will be competing in later this month. The team has steadily grown in members and offers roles for students interested in engineering, business, graphic design, marketing, and more. Consider joining!



## Ponderings by PACE 2018 Scholarship Winners

### Kayla Gibson, UC Davis

When I arrived at UC Davis, I had three days before instruction began, and those three days were filled with a strange sense of ennui. I kept returning to the same thoughts, all along the lines of "I just want school to start already!" Once instruction did begin however, I was jettisoned into a world I could never have imagined on my own. This is not to say that I found my first college courses any more difficult than my PACE ones; on the contrary, I think the style and 'pace' (pun intended) of my classes is much more aligned with my learning style. Being on the quarter system, UC Davis fits one quarter's worth of course material into ten weeks. I love the speed at which my classes are taught, but consequently it is expected that I learn much of the content on my own. Fortunately, PACE has prepared me to do just that; I am used to studying material outside of class meetings, and I am used to managing my time. This is where PACE has aided me most throughout my whole college experience! I have watched so many of my first year peers fall victim to procrastination this first quarter, but I am thankful I am armed with an understanding of how best to spend my energy and time.



Between all my academic engagements during my time in PACE, coupled with my extracurriculars and job(s), there was no room for me to do anything but WORK. I can wholeheartedly say that I do not feel this pressure anymore! I am a part of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra where I have already performed with world renowned soloists and performers, I joined a leadership organization called Aggie Ambassadors where I get to volunteer around the Davis community, I am now lifting free weights at the gym and wake up at 4:30 a.m. to do so, I am learning that no matter how hard I try I cannot bring myself to drink even one cup of coffee, and so much more. I am filled with gratitude as I look back at how my four years in PACE prepared me for my time in college, and I am eager to see how much more the world will open up for me these next four years at Davis!

### Frankie Huntley, UCLA

I thought I knew everything there was to know about college from the benefits of a large research university to a small school, about living in a dorm, and about how college classes differed from high school classes. The truth is that no matter how much you dream about college, you can't completely understand what it's like until you go. And let's just say this past quarter has been anything but what I expected.

My life at UCLA consists of living in a shoebox-sized dorm with two roommates, going to incredible classes in massive lecture halls taught by brilliant professors, and late-night chats or football games or adventures in LA. While from the outside it can look like the ideal college life, it has been an adjustment to say the least. At home I never shared a room and I have parents who trusted me and gave me a lot of independence and privacy, so I was not used living in such close quarters. Although I love my roommates, they have different sleep schedules, habits and ways of communicating. On a campus of 35,000 people it can often be difficult to find a private space to cry on rough days. I don't tell you all this to scare you because college is in fact awesome, but I want you to hear about the lesser-known side of college. These struggles have made me more of the person I am today. I care so much less about what people think of me because of the lack of privacy I have at school. I am so much more comfortable with confrontation because of my roommates. So yes, college is fun and parts of it are just like what you see on social media, but the hard stuff that goes on behind the Instagram picture is even greater because it forms you into your adult self.



Although I wasn't prepared for many parts of UCLA, the academic side has been an easy adjustment because of PACE. I found myself doing work and being surprised that I had done almost the same assignment in high school, from papers that were essentially DBQs to finals that were structured just like Mr. Meckna's 5x5. College is definitely a new experience, but you will all thrive because of everything you learn in PACE. So enjoy PACE while you are there because (I know you won't believe me) you'll miss it.

### Cléa Stammler, UC San Diego

Being a former Poly Pace student heading into college at UC San Diego, I felt confident and prepared to take on a new academic journey. My time at Poly was full of many wonderful memories and adventures that I will cherish forever, and helped motivate me to aim higher and achieve my goals and dreams. At UC San Diego I have met some incredible people from all over the world and bonded over our mutual love for free food and sleep. Besides classes, my friends and I love taking a fifteen minute walk from our dorm room to the ocean, where we watch the sunset. Every weekend we try to explore a new part of San Diego and try something new or out of our comfort zone. Whether it is visiting the seals and sea lions down at the cove, or going to a popular taco stand, or even heading downtown, we always find something fun to do. Life in college is always busy, which is why it is important to find time to go out and have fun. At the beginning, a lot of the classes you have to take are General Education classes, so you might find them tedious, but being in giant lecture halls of 400+ people can make it very entertaining. I had a successful first quarter at UCSD, and part of that is due to my experience in a rigorous academic program. I am forever grateful to Poly, its staff, and all the teachers who helped me be successful. Thank you to everyone at Poly who helped contribute to my attending UC San Diego and my future success, I am truly thankful. Always a Jackrabbit!



# Transformers not Conformers

Ms. Connie Loggins  
PACE Counselor



Over the years, without exception, parents, guardians and others have often asked “Why should my child enroll in PACE?” That question usually leads to further questions: “Is the rigor worth my student possibly earning a grade less than an “A” when they graduate? Can a student enroll in a different school or program and practically be guaranteed graduating with nothing less than an “A”? Will my child have a life? Will they have time for sports? Will they be overly stressed?” The questions are endless.

I have been approached by educators from other high schools who ask “How do the students in the PACE program continue to accomplish what they do, is the secret in the number of Advanced Placement courses students are required to take or in the amount of homework they are required to complete?” “Are only geniuses enrolled in the program?” Yes, even from counselors, in and out of this school district. College admission representatives have even gone so far as to ask me, “What is in the water of the PACE students?” They continue the conversation by expressing how much they love having PACE students attend their college or university.

When addressing these questions I respond in this fashion; the inception of PACE began in 1975 and it has been tried and tested over the course of time; PACE has a modus operandi that works. While the faces of students and teachers may change over the years, the mission and commitment to excellence does not alter. PACE is designed to foster a love of learning, it encourages students to step out of their “comfort zone” and gain knowledge to more than what’s within the classroom. Students are encouraged to discover who they are, as well as gain knowledge about the world around them. As many other schools have shown, course curriculum can be duplicated, however the passion and intellectual property of the PACE teacher cannot be mimicked. The students are exposed to teachers that are well versed within their fields. PACE teachers are seasoned and aware of how to scaffold and impart information to the young minds within the program.

It is understood that students are not all alike and will not necessarily take the same path. The PACE program encourages students to chart their own paths. Students leave PACE with a confidence in who they are, as well as a solid academic foundation that will afford them the opportunity to achieve whatever their heart desires. While more and more programs are becoming “singular” in their academic focus, PACE has chosen to remain true to its original formula by equipping the students with the necessary skill sets to reach singular and multiple goals.

Graduates of the PACE program are intellectually and ethically prepared to join a well-informed citizenry, comfortable with complexity and varying perspectives. PACE graduates are adept at using analytical skills for responsible decision-making. The PACE program encourages the growth of accomplished individuals by guiding the development of scholarly curiosity, compassionate ethics, and personal resilience through a coordinated, rigorous academic program. To paraphrase, I overheard a former colleague who stated, upon leaving PACE, students will be transformed into a different type of thinker; boredom at any educational level is a high price to pay. PACE teachers will not bore their students; they will stretch them and equip them to succeed in life. Students who embrace the learning process become driving forces not only on their high school campus, but on their college campuses and career environments as well. The PACE program is designed for the “whole” student, because students are much more than grades and test scores.

# Junior Parent Night

Tuesday, April 16 6:00-7:30pm  
in the Poly Library

Please save the date for one of the BEST college information sessions EVER! PACE will host Paul Kanarek, current CEO of Collegewise and co-founder of Princeton Review. His presentations vary from year to year, so please join us even if you have heard him in the past.

# Thank You!

The PPSG recently received a significant donation for the annual scholarship fund in memory of Bonnie Albin and Signe Riopelle, parents of five PACE graduates and enthusiastic supporters of the PACE Program since its inception in 1975. Many thanks to the generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous. In light of this donation, PPSG decided to increase its ten annual college scholarships of \$2,000 each to \$5,000.

Additional thanks to the continued generosity of the Chavez family that funds four annual college scholarships totalling \$20,000.

# How did we help?

The PACE program only works because donations from parents, alumni and friends continue to fund the Additional Curricular Experiences that are the ACE in PACE. In the past few months your donations have funded or supported the following items or events: **student planners** for all PACE students; **Model UN trip** to Boston; **teacher training**; **parent education** panel discussion; **textbooks**; and **classroom supplies**.

# PACE Parent Website

Be sure to check out the PACE Parent Group website:

[www.paceparent.org](http://www.paceparent.org)



# Lauren Calderon, Northwestern University

Greetings from Northwestern University! Although it’s a little chilly here, the beautiful Evanston campus has quickly become my oasis for learning, self-care, and personal growth. My first quarter at NU has made me fall in love with this place even more than I could have imagined. Whether it’s walking to class along Lake Michigan and looking out over the Chicago Skyline, watching Eberhard’s Halloween Show in Tech LR3, attending Big Ten football games with my fellow Wildcats, or hanging out with mini horses in Norris for student stress relief, Northwestern has it all! I still can’t believe that I’m at my dream school, and each day I feel lucky to be here with some pretty amazing people that challenge me to become the best version of myself.

I can say that, without a doubt, PACE was the best thing that I could have possibly done to prepare myself for college. Entering the program as a timid ninth grader, I knew that it was going to be tough, but I was in it for the long haul. The program’s rigor provided me with the tools to work hard and work smart in ways that I’d never expected. Although I learned early on that I wanted to study biology and chemistry in my undergraduate classes, I’m glad that PACE gave me the opportunity to engage in a curriculum that pushed me out of my comfort zone. I like to think that I graduated as a well-rounded student, and I credit my teachers for their impassioned lectures and genuine enthusiasm for my success (without them, I would never be where I am today!). Though at (most) times I stressed in excess, I know that I wouldn’t have developed the ability to appreciate the fruits of my academic labor or healthy ways to cope with stress, without the support of all the incredible PACE faculty. In the end, I learned that the key was giving myself grace. If I could offer any advice to whoever comes across these ramblings, it’s this: find ways to celebrate all of your little victories, and allow yourself the space to breathe when things get crazy. I like to believe that everything happens for a reason and that everyone will end up exactly where they need to be...I know I did!



# Marisa Imbroane, UCLA

My first quarter as a UCLA Bruin flew by. One day, I was moving into my dorm that I share with two other students, and the next I was taking my last final before winter break. At UCLA, I am studying Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology and am on a pre-med track. Even while taking some of my life science pre-requisite courses this past quarter in a lecture hall with 400 other students, the preparation PACE gave me for college was apparent. Many other students have never really had to study to get decent grades, so I was lucky to have the experience of working hard while at Poly. My Chemistry and Biology courses both had a decent amount of material that was covered in AP Chemistry and Biology, so taking those classes at Poly proved to be a great advantage. Even though I did have a nice background on these topics from high school, college requires you to put in hours of effort for the grade you want.



The quarter was not easy by any means, but the work ethic I learned in PACE allowed me to be prepared to tackle the challenges put before me. Aside from studying, I have been working part-time doing clinical lung cancer research for UCLA health—an opportunity I was able to get through doing the biomedical research class my senior year at Poly. I have also enjoyed attending football games (especially watching UCLA beat USC), meeting students from around the world, and enjoying the immense food options UCLA has for its students. I am looking forward to going back to school for winter quarter; I am taking a calculus course designed by a UCLA professor especially for life science majors, participating in service learning for elders in the Los Angeles community through a year-long GE course I am taking, and piloting a course for a new honors program at UCLA. I cannot wait to see what these next years have in store for me and am so grateful for the opportunities I had in PACE that prepared me for this journey.

# Sabrina Thiem, UC Irvine

My first year at UCI as a Computer Science and Engineering major so far has been a blast. It went from the event-filled Welcome Week, where we broke the world record for the biggest game of balloon tag, to attending lectures, studying for finals, and going home for winter break. One of the events that I went to at UCI was First Gen Day, where first generation students can learn about resources and where I took a picture with UCI’s mascot, Peter the Anteater. When I was first going into the fall quarter, I was worried that I would fall behind in my classes because college seemed like a vast distance away from high school. But I realized that I was well equipped for taking on the challenge of surviving college classes with my experiences in the PACE program. I am familiar with the college workload from taking AP classes that were required and optional. Classes in college consist of a lecture, where your professor teaches content, and a discussion, a lab or both, where you work on what you learned and further understand what was taught. But sometimes, it is still hard to wrap your mind around the content, so it is helpful to interact with your professors and TAs during office hours. I became comfortable with communicating with my instructors because of the interactions I had with the PACE teachers. They made me realize that teachers are open to questions and are there to help. I also learned how to email a professor using formal jargon and formatting, which is helpful when you have class during a teacher’s office hours. Through the final projects at the end of the school year and assignments in general, I learned how to manage my time and pass my classes.

Although academics are important in college, they are not solely about going to class and taking tests, it is about the people you can enjoy it with as well. I love hanging out with my friends, both new and old, either studying, playing games, or just hanging out. College can be stressful at times, but spending time with other people that are in the same boat can lessen the load. Overall, my first quarter at UCI was fun and enjoyable.

