

# THE SAGE

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MARCH 5, 2010

## TRiO/SSS grant not renewed, will end in Fall 2010

by Sandy Coronilla  
Sage staff writer

Miramar College's TRiO/Student Support Services (SSS) will shut its doors for at least the next five years this fall. Renewal of the TRiO/SSS grant was due to the Department of Education on December 14, 2009 but was not submitted due to staff salary funding issues.

In a letter to TRiO students dated January 25, Dean of Student Affairs Adela Jacobson wrote, "As you might know, the TRiO/SSS grant will end on August 31, 2010." There is no reason given in the letter as to why the grant is ending and Jacobson was unavailable for comment. Students were informed that counseling services will end on March 31 but the computer lab in D-203 will still be available until May 31, 2010.

Student Services Assistant for TRiO Johanna Bodnar stated that the decision was made by the college administration that it could not economically maintain the program because staff salaries would soon exceed the federal government's grant allocation. She said, "I get

that times are hard in California but the federal government isn't cutting funds for education."

Miramar College President Patricia Hsieh confirmed that it was her decision not to renew the \$250,000 per year TRiO/SSS grant. She explained that the issue is complicated and outside of her control. She stated that federal government guidelines for staffing requirements (which for this grant includes three full-time positions: program director, administrative assistant and counselor) are non-negotiable. "We would also need to have other services available that are part of the operational budget. Ideally, when you have a grant such as this, the salary and benefits part would be no more than 75% so that you have 25% flexibility to provide services to students. When the grant was approved, nobody could have predicted what the salary and benefits would cost. So in this case, the salary and benefits cost was close to 99.9% of the grant money" said Hsieh.

Yet Vice President of Student Services Peter Fong ac-

knowledged that the salaries of the TRiO/SSS director and student services assistant will be absorbed into the district's budget. Only the salary for the counseling position held by Tacey Hosley, which was funded by "soft" money will cease to exist.

The announcement has raised questions and concerns regarding shared governance on campus. According to the San Diego Miramar College Governance Handbook, May, 2008, the guiding principles of shared governance is meant to facilitate decision-making. It upholds San Diego Community College District's (SDCCD) Policy 0003, which mandates that issues involving standards for student preparation and success will rely on the advice of the Academic Senate.

President of the Academic Senate Daphne Figueroa learned about the decision too late to advise Hsieh, Jacobson or Fong. "The first information that I received about the loss of TRiO was after the grant renewal deadline had passed," said Figueroa.

The Associated Student

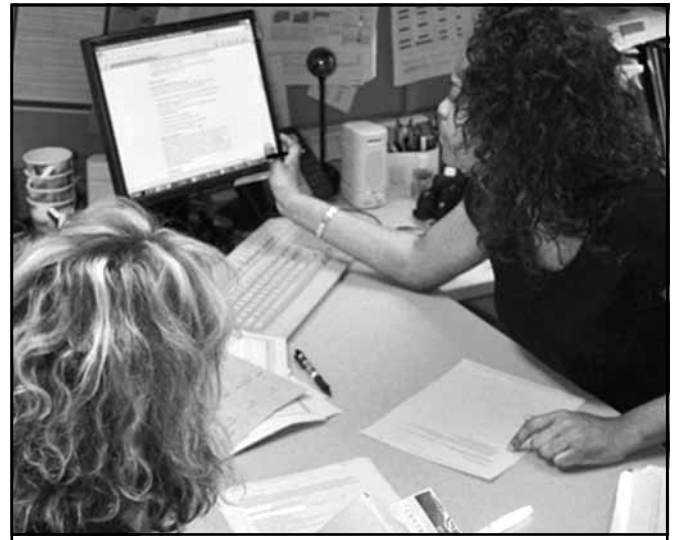


Photo by Nick Moone

Tacey Hosley assists a student in the TRiO office.

Council, another leg of the shared governance process, also learned about the decision when it was too late.

"The issue of shared governance with the TRiO grant is a very good example of broad versus narrow interpretation of statute. If one thinks in a very legalistic, black and white manner, then, because the fiscal responsibility of the institution rests with the President, it was within her authority to decide not to re-

new the grant. However, if one uses a broader interpretation of the spirit and intent of shared governance, then consider that TRiO was a student support service, with the loss of this program having a direct impact on students, faculty and classified staff," offered Figueroa.

Hsieh, on the other hand, maintains that the issue was handled properly. She stated

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## Enrollment down for spring

by Stephanie Sargent  
Sage staff writer

Enrollment for spring semester 2010 has dropped by 1.6% since spring 2009 said Vice President of Instruction Kathy Werle.

Late last summer the University of California and California State University system received a 3.3% workload reduction, leaving Miramar with little time to react as the fall schedule was already in place. Because the fall semester schedule had been finalized months before the reduction occurred, "the entire burden of workload reduction fell on spring," said Werle. The budget reduction has impacted community colleges all over California.

Using a formula called Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES), "The state reimburses colleges based on how much enrollment they have had over time. This year (because of the workload reduction) funding was cut from our base number of FTES." Put simply, Miramar cannot support the same number of students as in Spring 2009. As a result, classes have been cut by more than 6%.

"The deans are charged with making reductions that will have the least impact on students, with trying to preserve courses that students need to finish a program or to transfer," said Werle.

"Students [have] to be really flexible in terms of their scheduling," said Werle, commenting on the impact of dropped classes. "The faculty chairs and administration are mindful of [this] and are working to ensure that students have [the] access they need to complete a degree, certificate or transfer pattern."

A strategy developed by Student Services was put before the Chancellor's Cabinet in June 2009 to cope with the budget reduction and provide the best possible service for students. The plan is called Budget Reduction Strategies for State Fiscal Emergency. This plan has been put into effect for the spring. The plan consists of nine proposals designed to be cost saving, efficient and serve as many students as possible.

Vice President of Student Services Peter Fong explains, "Before this went into play, students [with a B average or higher] could ask for 20 units. You could actually ask for 25 units. Now... that's not fair because that cuts off access to a lot of people." The plan limits all students to a maximum of 16 units "so more people have shots at the classes that are remaining." For the same reason, concurrently enrolled high school students are now limited to one class.

The plan includes a proposal to enforce existing policy and not allow any late adds or drops. According to Fong, this is to prevent students from crashing multiple courses for the add codes and "shopping" around for the classes they want. By enforcing this policy Miramar can ensure that the students who get the add codes will be more likely to benefit from them.

There are some downsides to the new strategy. "The negative could be that you don't have [as much] convenience because we're not open as many hours. The negative could be that you really do need those 20 units," said Fong.

When asked if he had any advice for students, Fong said, "My best advice to students would be when you get your appointment to register and it's the first day at the first time and you grab your classes, stay in them. Because that's a very precious thing to have."

## Contention regarding stipend distribution inspires changes

by Nick Moone  
Sage staff writer

The Associated Student Council (ASC) is in the process of revising their stipend distribution system and requirements after several issues were raised with the fall semester distribution.

During the December 11th weekly ASC meeting, the council voted to approve 13 stipend distributions for clubs and organizations on campus in the amount of \$100 each.

Prior to beginning the voting, ASC President Franchesca Gade announced that the final requirement for clubs to participate in the majority of ASC events would be amended to a minimum of three events to allow for more groups to be considered. Of the 13 clubs who were placed on the agenda as a voting item, five of them did not submit a letter of request or did so incorrectly and one was postponed to re-submit their letter in the proper format. The remaining seven clubs were approved for their stipends after some deliberation during the meeting.

At times, there were club representatives who were present throughout the semester during the ASC meetings that also held a voting

position as a member of the ASC. Currently, there is no bylaw or section written in the ASC constitution that stipulates whether an officer may hold dual roles during meetings. This was discussed briefly during the meeting as being an issue of concern and continues to be a point of contention amongst club representatives. "Not only does it bring into question ethics but it harms the clubs. They're each issued one vote. When their representative is voting as a senator they waive that vote," said Gade.

A number of the councilmembers who were in these

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## The Miramar College Diversity/International Education Committee condemns racist events at UCSD

by Miramar College Diversity/International Education Committee

Guest writers

The San Diego Miramar College Diversity/International Education Committee met and discussed the media coverage of current events taking place at UCSD.

The UCSD controversy began on February 16 when the invitation for the "Compton Cookout" began to be publicized. The invitation told partygoers to wear cheap baggy clothes, chains and other clothing stereotypically thought to be worn by rappers and black males.

The invitation also told invitees to talk loudly and for women to act like "ghetto chicks. Ghetto chicks usually have gold teeth, start fights and drama, and wear cheap clothes..." the wording from the invitation was circulated by offended students and verified by UCSD officials

Tensions have been mounting on campus due to the decision of administrators not to punish the fraternity members responsible for the party.

On February 19, 2010, students participated in a protest led by the Black Student Union (BSU). That same day, the controversy reached Sacramento where Assemblyperson Isadore Hall, (D-Compton), issued a statement: "These acts of racism and sexism will not be tolerated in California or anywhere in the United States. I stand with fellow legislative leaders in publicly condemning those responsible for this act of hate and demanding full accountability for their actions."

In light of the recent racist events at UCSD, the Miramar College Diversity/International Education Committee would like to make the following statement: "We condemn any kind of offensive, derogatory, racist language and actions committed against any person(s) based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, etc. We are committed to making all institutions of higher learning a safe place for everyone."

UCSD is trying to do as much damage control as possible. Over the past weekend the university created the website [battlehate.ucsd.edu](http://battlehate.ucsd.edu) <<http://battlehate.ucsd.edu/>>. Please take a few moments to look at the website and learn more about joining the battle against hate.

Source used for this article:

Casas, Lily (February 24, 2010). *Compton Cookout at UCSD Stirs up Controversy*. *San Diego Entertainer Magazine*, <http://www.sdentertainer.com/category/features/neighborhood/>

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that it is not subject to the shared governance process because of privacy issues, "When we talk about shared governance, we don't say shared governance for everything. Personnel is not part of it."

With the TRiO grant deadline a distant memory, those who it used to serve, 70% both low income and first generation college students, will be without a resource with a proven track record of success. Information included in the 2004 Accreditation Self Study: Standard Two B for Student Support Services claim that 97% of TRiO students persisted towards completion of the academic programs in which they were enrolled and 86% were in good academic standing. Bodnar adds that TRiO students have gone on to be accepted at such highly regarded institutions as Stanford and Johns Hopkins.

Former Miramar and TRiO student Dustin Barfield was recently accepted at three University of California institutions, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is now attending Stanford University. He said "Being a TRiO student meant having a place to go on campus where I felt like I belonged and could stay informed about everything from campus deadlines to university programs. Because TRiO's staff were supportive, encouraging me to get involved and showing me the way. TRiO may have been a significant factor in edging out tough competition for the top schools."

TRiO/SSS Program Manager Star Rivera offered, "I'm really sad for the students and staff. As a product of educational equity programs, I know the difference that these programs can make. I look forward to a positive outcome." Figueroa said, "I am still in shock that we are losing a program that had been thriving on our campus for many years and which had served some of our most disadvantaged students. My hope is that our campus community will learn from this unfortunate experience and will make every effort to keep this from happening to any other programs in the future."

### San Diego Miramar College Mission Statement:

*Our mission is to prepare students to succeed in a changing world within an environment that values excellence in learning, teaching, innovation and diversity.*

## Amnesty International returns to Miramar

by Khanh Nguyen  
Sage staff writer

After a two year hiatus, the Miramar College Chapter of Amnesty International returns to campus. Club President Nick Moore, along with six executive officers and around 20 club members, are rejuvenating the club. This chapter works with Amnesty International, a grass roots movement founded in the 1960s. Amnesty International works to preserve and protect human rights worldwide. Amnesty International is founded on the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, founded by the United Nations in 1942. It seeks to preserve human rights regardless of ethnicity, gender, beliefs and sexual orientation. It keeps in direct contact with Amnesty International constantly seeking to help aid their efforts and ideals.

During meetings the members discuss, orga-

nize and plan for upcoming events. Examples of events included a membership drive on January 28th. On March 17th, an event for Bridges of Hope will be held from 2 -7 pm. Bridges of Hope supports battered women, HIV prevention and education to help Africa break the cycle of poverty and violence. Although the organization focuses on international affairs, domestic issues such as stopping United States torture like water boarding are also major issues on their agenda. Water boarding is a practice where a person is immobilized and has water poured on their face to simulate drowning.

Methods of accomplishing their tasks are varied and include everything from protesting, writing letters, making phone calls and organizing concerts and drives. Many of the upcom-

ing events are still being planned and finalized dates and locations will be announced later.

You can join by visiting their Facebook page <http://tinyurl.com/miramaramnesty> or emailing [miramaramnesty@gmail.com](mailto:miramaramnesty@gmail.com). Moore invites anyone interested to attend a meeting. When asked why people should join, Moore says "not only does global voluntarism and charity work look fantastic on a college transcript, it is also a great opportunity to touch someone's life other than your own.... We go about our day to day lives without interacting with anyone on a global scale. This allows you to touch others in a way that you wouldn't otherwise be able to." Their meetings occur the first and third Friday of every month from 11 am - 12 pm in the S-100 quad.

## Associated Student Council fills semester calendar early

by Nick Moore  
Sage staff writer

The Associated Student Council (ASC) has scheduled a number of events with varying goals. These include a trip to Sacramento and community service projects.

With the Martin Luther King Day parade held on January 16th and the Welcome Back event held on January 28, the ASC already has a couple of events under their belt early in the semester. During Welcome Back the ASC distributed water bottles and granola bars to students.

The next event, Spring-Fest/Club Rush was held on Wednesday, February 24. This was a last minute change from the previously scheduled date of February 10. "We just [didn't] have the time needed to plan for the event," said Dean of Student Services Adela Jacobson. This event is scheduled to showcase a number of clubs and groups on campus, vendors from local businesses and radio station entertainment. "This was be our toughest event. We've minimized everything to meet budgetary requirements," said ASC President Franchesca Gade.

For their community service projects the ASC is planning to attend the San Diego Race for Autism on Saturday, March

27. This will benefit the National Foundation for Autism Research (NAFR). This semester the ASC is also adopting Girl Scout Troop #8478 and assisting in their sales of cookies.

The ASC is planning to continue their leadership training when they attend the Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC) to be held in Los Angeles. For further leadership and student government training, ASC officers are planning their annual Spring Retreat. During the retreat, members can work together through a number of team-building exercises and training seminars.

Maintaining their advocacy efforts from the previous semester, the ASC is planning a trip to Sacramento scheduled for March 22. The trip is to attend the "March in March" advocacy push on the capital. "This is a part of everything we have fought for and done in regards to advocacy and will be rolled into one day," said Gade. Students are planning to march on the capital building to demand further emphasis on education throughout the state and within their budget. Many of the students involved with the ASC expressed their concern that this is not where

the most good could be accomplished. "I would much rather see us attend something where it will have a bigger impact on us and the college," said ASC Secretary Faria Akhundzadeh. The annual trip to Washington D.C. was canceled this year due to budget constraints passed down by the district in favor of attending the event in Sacramento. "The other schools in the region will not be attending the conference in D.C., so the district has requested that we not go either," said Gade.

ASC elections for those interested in serving for the Fall 2010 semester, will be held this April as well. All students who are interested in any executive officer position or senator position must submit their application to the Student Services office by April 1st to be considered for travel requirements. Applications may still be submitted after this date but may not qualify for the aforementioned purposes.

Those interested in joining the ASC or inquiring further about any of the above events, should stop by S-101 for more information. All students and faculty are welcome to attend the ASC weekly meetings, held every Friday in S-102 from 9-11 am.

## THE SAGE

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## Welcome Back event kicks off semester

by Elizabeth Orr  
Sage staff writer



Photo by Elizabeth Orr

A view of the booths in the S-100 quad during Spring Fest.

Miramar held its annual Welcome Back event the first Thursday of this semester. Nine student clubs and vendors passed out information and occupied booths on the S-100 quad from 11 am to 1 pm.

Representatives from the Associated Student Council (ASC), Asian American Student Association (AASA), Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), Miramar Chapter of Amnesty International and the Parent Student Advisory Board (PSAB) were in attendance. A table near the front of the walkway was piled with information about Miramar's scholarship opportunities. Outside organizations sent representatives from Bank of America, Wells Fargo and the San Diego Veterans Hospital.

Two women from Bank of America offered prizes to anyone who could win their board game that was set up at the front of their booth. Students were asked to identify the benefits of using particular forms of payment—for example, if the spinning wheel landed on "debit card" a contestant would choose "don't have to carry cash" from the list of advantages. Awards included mini iPod speakers and vouchers for three free song downloads.

Bank of America representative Dolly Meas revealed that only two college students signed up with Bank of America and Wells Far-

go Personal Banker Steven Nguyen revealed that no one opened an account with him.

Nguyen explained that he and his colleague came to Miramar in hopes of "teaching college students good banking habits" and they will continue to do so as they travel to more local colleges.

The booth next to Nguyen appeared to be vacant because its occupant Elizabeth Floto was busy passing out pamphlets about a study regarding Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The service is conducted through the San Diego Veterans Hospital and is entitled "Veterans Telemedicine Outreach for PTSD" (VTOPS).

Veterans suffering from PTSD receive twelve free treatments and are tested to see if therapeutic psychological treatment would work through a television screen as well as an in-person consultation might. If telemedicine is successful, they hope that it would "start with vets and branch out to more common sufferers." Any eligible veterans who have PTSD are encouraged to partake in the study.

Representatives from the PSAB provided information about the Child Development Center (CDC). Sally El-Mazin explained that the program serves as a "good way to connect with others who are interested in the same

field of study" and it also "helps the student parents get to know each other."

Parents with two through five year olds, who are enrolled in at least six college units, are encouraged to participate.

The PSAB plans to have an art show in April and will have various fundraisers at local restaurants to raise money for the CDC. Volunteers are welcome to help in the center.

The Miramar Chapter of Amnesty International handed out flyers and informative booklets about current international civil rights issues. Representatives answered questions about the organization and what Miramar students can do to help out. A total of twelve new members signed up for the club.

The Asian American Student Association and the Associated Student Council recruited a handful of new members as well. Newly enrolled freshman Mustafa Ainab said that "[the event] was useful and effective."

The ASC wore matching t-shirts and roamed the campus to hand out free lunch bags with a water bottle and granola bar inside. ASC President Francesca Gade feels that "overall the event was a success. We really got a chance to engage, interact with and meet new students."

## Campus club aids Christie's Place

by Stephanie Sargent  
Sage staff writer

Last December 4, the Child Development Professionals (CDP) held a workshop to raise money for Christie's Place, a charity that benefits women and children with HIV/AIDS. The workshop was organized by Faculty Adviser Dawn Burgess.

Called "Reggio Workshop," the guest speaker was Professor Katie Zolezzi. Zolezzi has over 40 years experience in child education and development. Zolezzi spoke on the Reggio Approach, a philosophy of child education that emphasizes values, respect and responsibility between young students and teachers and promotes a unique atmosphere of learning. Over 80 CDP members attended and \$200 was raised. Art supplies were also donated.

"The reason we donated art supplies to Christie's Place is because they provide support for women, children and families dealing with HIV/AIDS," said CDP President Carrie Green. "And we feel that by giving the children gifts of art supplies we are providing a valuable... outlet with which they can express themselves."

A big barrel is usually placed outside the Child Development Center to collect donations. During the Reggio Workshop, members were encouraged to bring donations in exchange for an extra raffle ticket for an opportunity drawing. Green commented, "We give out great prizes, so we had lots of donations. The barrel was overflowing!"

The CDP is a non-profit organization to promote careers in child development by providing members with access to education in the field. To this end, the CDP offers scholarships for those planning to work in the field of child development. One annual scholarship is worth \$200. Their website also has links to other child development sites and charities they support. More information on charities can be found at their monthly meetings. During their February meeting, the CDP discussed charities such as Treasures for Teachers and Growing Up Wild. "We are a very active club on campus which seeks to provide learning and professional growth opportunities for our members through free or low cost workshops," said Green.

The CDP also participates in campus projects. One of the CDP's current projects involves an organic garden. The purpose of the garden is to teach preschoolers about the ecosystem. The garden is located behind the cafeteria and the CDP holds garden parties to work on the project. The largest upcoming event is the annual Spring Conference, set to take place on March 20th. There will be vendors, a continental breakfast will be served and there will be four speakers. The cost to attend is \$15 for non-members and \$10 for members. The CDP also participates in fundraisers, children's art shows and holds an annual art drive.

Upcoming events are usually announced during club meetings. Meetings take place on the second Wednesday of every month at the Miramar Child Development Center in F-212. Anyone is welcome to attend. Membership is \$5 per semester.

For more information on the CDP, visit their website at <http://childdevelopmentprofessionals.synthasite.com/>.



Photo by unknown

CDP members deliver art supplies and money to Christie's Place.

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dual role positions, were voting to approve their own stipend requests within authority as council members. In addition, they were given an opportunity, as all clubs were, to fight for their club's voting measure. "We would have been there to fight for ourselves and our participation if it hadn't been held during finals week," said student Ariela Mercedes.

Miramar Art Association (MMAA), Child Development Professionals (CDP) and the Miramar Paralegal Club met the two requirements regarding events, meetings and participation. However, only the Paralegal Club turned in a request with the proper formatting, allowing them to receive their stipend. In contrast, Philanthropy Club, Filipino American Student Association (FASA), Food and Culture Club and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) did not meet the meeting or event participation requirements as per the ASC constitution and

Stipend Request Requirement document, yet still received a stipend.

Manual 3200, which outlines the procedures and operating guidelines for student clubs/organizations was last updated in 2008. The manual states that "One source for funding on campus is the Associated Students." It does not however go into detail regarding the amount to be awarded. That information is solely located in the ASC constitution and bylaws. There are some who feel that the current award merits review. "The current stipend amount is archaic. Other schools allot a percentage of their budget towards clubs and reward them based on their participation," said MMAA Representative PJ McDaniel.

While the ASC doesn't utilize a shifting scale to disperse stipends to their clubs, they do feel that the process is far easier here. "There's a whole lot of bureaucracy that the other campuses have to deal with

regarding their stipends. Clubs have to prove themselves and even then they must submit requests based on individual events," said Gade.

According to the Stipend Request Requirement document, put together by the executive officers during their summer break, each group must provide a written letter to the executive officers requesting a stipend. The document also required a representative be sent to the weekly ASC meetings from each club and that they be present for 75% of the meetings. In addition, the document states that clubs "must attend a majority of ASC events" throughout the semester. The requirements for stipend distribution were delivered to the clubs during club orientation held on two separate dates during the fall semester.

A few club representatives felt as though the requirements were vague in their description. "We had no knowledge of the requirements and we've

been on campus since 2007. We need to have full knowledge of something to decide whether to acquiesce or to do something about it," said McDaniel. A representative who wished to remain anonymous stated that the "requirements for a \$100 stipend are a bit ridiculous. Why should we hinder our own club involvement for a minimal reward?" In response, Gade made the statement that, "The stipend is not only an incentive for active participation in campus events but it gives the clubs further opportunity to be seen on campus."

As a result of these situations, the ASC is analyzing their stipend request process. "I've done things differently this year and I would like to see them fine-tuned and made right," said Gade. They plan to create a detailed list of requirements that must be adhered to in order to receive a stipend. Some of the changes being discussed will include an ad-

dendum to mandate adherence to a "constitutional requirement that no ASC officer or senator will represent a club or organization during meetings or events." Another representative will need to be assigned from that club. Also, according to Gade, they will be providing a list of events to the clubs that they will be able to participate in that will contribute to their stipend requirements. Gade also plans to "improve communication" between the clubs and the student council on their part but asks that the clubs take a more active role as well.

For more information regarding the stipend distribution requirements or outcomes, the minutes of previous meetings are a matter of public record and are available for viewing at the ASC office located in S-101. All students are also welcome to voice their opinion during the weekly meetings, held in the S-102 conference room on Fridays, from 9-11 am.

# Crowd cheers as Jets whip Mesa 86 – 61

by Khanh Nguyen  
Sage staff writer



Photo by Khanh Nguyen

Both teams watch as the Jets score 2 points.

On February 6, inside the campus gymnasium, the Miramar Jets men's basketball team rocketed through the Mesa Olympians to victory. The crowd showed their appreciation halfway through the game, chanting and cheering "Go Jets! Go Jets!" In the beginning of the first period, both teams kept neck in neck. But as the Jets began to pick up the pace, Mesa found itself outmatched. After taking a sizable 18 – 8 lead, the Jets maintained the score gap,

keeping one step ahead of the opposition. The first period ended with a score of 40 – 25 and with a final score of 86 – 61.

Jets Head Coach Nick Gehler attributed the win to the team's "focus on team basketball." According to Gehler, the team has been spending extra time refining the Jet's ability to "work as a team." Their record so far 14 – 9 seems to reflect the focus on teamwork.

Commenting on the crowd's support, Gehler said



Photo by Khanh Nguyen

A potential score for Mesa denied by Jets defense.

with a grin, "It was absolutely great. I wish more games were like this." When asked about critical players in the game, Gehler listed numerous names. Carl Hauke, Bryant Taylor and Steve Jones were only a few he mentioned. Hauke played an especially

critical role in the first period, scoring 10 points. That was key in gaining the lead the team maintained until victory.

Gehler said that it was really a team effort and he was pleased that their training was paying off. Jets number 43,

Cody Coppernoll agreed, saying their "preparation" and "in-game intensity" led them to win. The coaches and entire team showed gratitude for the support they received from the fans, especially against their big rivals.

## Movie Review: *Dear John* – A little too real

by TJ Dunnivant  
Sage staff writer



*Dear John* is wartime romance set during

the post 9/11 war. Directed by Lasse Halstrom, the film is based on a book written by best-selling author Nicolas Sparks. The movie stars Channing Tatum who plays John Tyree and Amanda Seyfried who plays Savannah Curtis.

John and Savannah meet on the beach one sunny afternoon when Savannah carelessly drops her purse from the pier into the water. John, already in his swimming trunks, happens to be on the pier when it happens. John heroically jumps 20 feet into the water to recover Savannah's precious belongings. Upon handing the purse back to her there is an instant attraction. This is the start of a passionate two weeks of romantic bliss, before John has to return to his duty and Savannah has to return to college.

Knowing that John has another year to finish his duty, Savannah makes John promise to stay with her by writing down everything that happens to him and sending it to her in letters. As his tour of duty ends, 9/11 sparks up his unit to re-enlist to avenge our country. When John flies home to explain it to Savannah, she is devastated that he would make such a decision without consulting her.

As the years go by, Sa-

vannah gives up hope of his return and decides to accept a proposal of marriage from another man. This ends up in John receiving a "Dear John" letter from Savannah. John is so devastated that he continues to fight in the war until his dad falls ill and the military sends him home.

There is a touching moment when John shows remorse for the years of not maintaining a loving relationship with his father. As he watches his dad's condition get worse, John deals with heavy emotions of losing the two people he loves most in life.

This heart wrenching film has you in tears just about the whole time you are in the theater. It did seem to be a little long and slow but to me it was a dose of pure reality. Sometimes you get tired of seeing movies where people come by "happily-ever-after" so easily and you always make note that it doesn't quite happen that way in real life. *Dear John* keeps it real in that aspect. Happily-ever-after continued to be interrupted by the daily responsibilities and the duties of life. Just when you think there isn't any hope of the two being rejoined, the movie gives you a light at the end of the tunnel, as life always does.

*Dear John* ran 1 hour and 45 minutes and is rated PG-13. On a scale of 1-5 stars, I would give the film four stars.

## Belly Dance Club to form on campus

by Beheshta Najeed  
Sage staff writer



Photo by Sandy Coronilla

Belly Dance Club founders Faria Akhundzadeh and Beheshta Najeed demonstrate during Spring Fest.

The newest club on campus is being formed around cultural dance. The Belly Dance Club (BDC) has just gotten a faculty adviser and is planning its coming meetings.

The founders of the Belly Dance Club are Faria Akhundzadeh and Beheshta Najeed. "We have so much passion for this dance and we are sure that there are many people who may be interested. We're bringing a different flavor to the Miramar Campus," said Akhundzadeh. Another reason for this club is that there are many ethnicities on campus. "This club will hopefully unite both males and females in the art of belly dance." Club adviser Nick Gehler says, "It's a Miramar campus first—a women's belly dance club. [This is] a cardiovascular and muscular form of exercise and moreover a great opportunity for students to get together and develop a positive activity on campus." There are many styles of

belly dance. These styles include Egyptian, Goddess, Oriental, Gypsy, Persian, Tribal and Turkish. The clothing worn while belly dancing is varied. One generally wears a bedleh (Arabic for "suit"). The bedleh style includes a fitted top or bra (usually with a fringe of beads or coins), a fitted hip belt (again with a fringe of beads or coins) and a skirt or harem pants. The bra and belt may be richly decorated with beads, sequins, braids and embroidery. The belt may be a separate piece or sewn on to a skirt. Because of cultural dictates, some choose not to wear the exact bedleh—instead they customize the costume to cover up. There are many props used in belly dancing and they include finger cymbals (zills or sagats), cane, veil, sword, candelabra headdress, fire sticks, tambourine, fan and snakes (usually either pythons or boa constrictors).

Belly Dance Club participated in Spring Fest/Club

Rush on February 24. Both Akhundzadeh and Najeed performed while the BDC's music mixer DeeJay Al provided music. DeeJay Al himself was occasionally seen accompanying the dancers. While demonstrating the dance, some people, as they walked by would stop and dance themselves. One of them was Franchesca Gade—Associated Student Council President. Along with music and dancing, many other club members participated in a group dance. As both founders danced along with the cultural beats, it caught the attention of fellow students. Several onlookers joined in. They asked questions such as, how a male can join, when and where meetings will be held and who was the club advisor? Club Representative Phoebe Tran answered all questions and encouraged others to join.

"In Belly Dance Club we will be using props and different types of music to explore the rich culture of the Middle East," said Akhundzadeh. "With music mixes by DeeJay Al, different dance styles and field trips, both Beheshta and I are very excited to be starting this club! The question now is, 'Got Belly Dance?' If you've answered, 'Yes' then Belly Dance Club is for you. We encourage both males and females to join in the fun and dance away."

For more information, please contact the BDC at: [mmbellydanceclub@yahoo.com](mailto:mmbellydanceclub@yahoo.com).