COVID-19

By Christopher Nguyen
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

San Jose State University and Santa Clara County are continuing to update coronavirus pandemic protocols as the surge of COVID-19 cases begins to decline.

Interim President Steve Perez confirmed on a Tuesday campuswide email that classes being in-person. “We prepared staff to take over at least five to 800 tests a day, across the week,” Cantos said. “If you have symptoms, the antigen test will have greater accuracy.”

Cantos said she hopes SJSU booster shot clinics will be extended for the rest of the month. “While there might be some prevention of being able to catch it, the intention of vaccines and boosters is really about preventing people from getting so sick that they need to be hospitalized,” Cantos said.

SJSU, local pandemic policies evolve

Steve Perez
interim president

These tests detect antigens of the SARS-CoV-2 virus within samples taken from upper or lower respiratory tracts of test subjects, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“We’re excited to have people back. We’re still going to be as careful as we can and make sure that we’re making this healthy and safe,” Perez said in an interview. “We’re still going to make sure that we’re providing the safest atmosphere as we possibly can, “ he said. “We’ll reconsider and talk about what policy changes, according to the county’s health guidelines.”

“All other students registered for hybrid or in-person classes are required to upload a record of their booster shot as they become eligible, according to the same email.”

“These tests work as well as it’s a camera taking a snapshot of the presence in the moment,” Cantos said. “If you have symptoms, the antigen test will have a greater chance of the results to be confirmed as positive.”

Cantos said the university administered around 4,000 COVID-19 tests at the SJSU Event Center since Jan. 18, resulting in a 5% positivity rate, according to the Tuesday email.

The university partnered with Fulgent Genetics, a laboratory clinical to provide testing available at the center for all SJSU students, employees, volunteers, and auxiliary employees Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Mai Mai Cantos, executive director of the Student Wellness Center, said the university currently provides polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing.

“This vendor on campus says the tests, with those being PCR, takes somewhere between 36 – 48 hours to get results,” Cantos said. “PCR-based tests will have greater accuracy.”

Many people have relied on antigen-based tests, which are available to purchase at pharmacies and are provided by the U.S. government for free.

“We must continue to monitor outbreaks,” Perez said in the email. “Community members helps the university facilities, but individual campuses may set an earlier deadline.”

All faculty, staff and students accessing university facilities, but individual campuses may set an earlier deadline. SJSU announced a Jan. 31 deadline for all booster-eligible students in a Jan. 12 campuswide email. Perez said that the university will continue monitoring the state doesn’t require them. We may think it’s best to have them on.”

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Virtual worlds offer to expand reality

By Royvi Hernandez

Since Mark Zuckerberg rebranded Facebook as Meta, many people consider the metaverse the future; but how will it change day-to-day life?

Metaverse is the next evolution of social connections and 3D spaces created for people to socialize, learn, collaborate and play in ways that go beyond what we can imagine, according to Meta's webpage.

Phyllis West-Johnson, a San Jose State professor and director of SJU's School of Journalism and Mass Communications, who is also a virtual and augmented technologies researcher, said metaverse is universal.

"[Metaverse] isn't just one world, there's multiple virtual worlds out there and they all contribute to a larger metaverse," West-Johnson said in a Zoom call.

She said technology lends itself to "good and bad consequences" and people may question the metaverse because they fear technology, but the controversy isn't new.

"Most companies are experimenting with virtual reality. The 2D version was what Second Life was and then companies including Amazon introduced 3D," West-Johnson said. "People use these worlds to supplement their real life.

Second Life is an immersive digital platform introduced in 2003 where users build worlds, create art and sell digital goods including art pieces, clothing and cars. This isn't too different from metaverse, according to its webpage.

"From the learning perspective, you put on goggles and you are immersed in this simulated environment," Liu said in a Zoom call. "Augmented reality combines the digital and physical worlds, for example Pokémon Go, where you still see your surroundings but you see those digital avatars in your world."

"Pokémon Go is a free smartphone app that combines gaming with the real world. It uses location tracking and mapping technology to create augmented reality where players catch and train Pokémon characters in real locations, according to its webpage.

"[Art students] can paint in 3D and an augmented reality where players catch and train Pokémon characters in real locations, according to its webpage.

Liu said virtual reality can help students because there are applications using these immersive technologies in education. "Imagine medical students in a virtual environment where they can conduct safe science labs. Virtual reality creates a safe space and innovative way of learning," Liu said. "[Art students] can paint in 3D and engineering students can design and print their creation using a 3D printer. History students can tell stories and revolve scenarios in virtuality and put readers into the story scene. It's an experience for both the creator and the learners."

She said students can learn more by collaborating in virtual reality spaces rather than Zoom interactions in classes. "Students put on their headset or [they] can just web-based through a computer and interact with others in a more social friendly [manner]." Liu said. "[Students] may learn through visualization and this helps them navigate through their research on a topic.

West-Johnson also shared this sentiment and said people join these virtual spaces because it enhances teaching methods. "[Metaverse] is a cool way to teach and engage students; it's a better version of a Zoom lecture," West-Johnson said. "People create their routes and they engage better with others when they see similar avatars."

Digital Arts junior Sharon Tran, who interned for SuperWorld, said the metaverse seems futuristic and "something you see in movies" but it's an experience that people should try.

"I recommend [people] do their research…[the metaverse is] a gateway [for the future]," Tran said.

Follow Royvi on Twitter: @lesroyvi

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‘The Fallout’ shows complex grief

By Saunya Monça

In my last year of high school, a terrifying nightmare occurred. After a school shooting threat was written in the boys' bathroom and videos of a student holding a gun circulated on social media.

When I got to school that day, police officers surrounded the campus and teachers locked classroom doors. From outside my African American Literature class, someone was arrested and taken into custody.

We were simply moments away from our lives being altered forever by a teenager with an AR-15.

“The Fallout,” directed by Megan Park, Canadian actress, singer, and debut director, was released on HBO Max on Jan. 7. The film explores the emotional aftermath of a school shooting.

These tragedies aren't rare. After I graduated high school, there was a shooting at San Francisco State, the college I attended from 2018 to 2020. Once again, I remembered the moment of fear I felt during my senior year.

In 2021, there were approximately 199 school shootings at high school and college campuses around the United States, according to a study by Everytown, an independent research organization.

Media representation of school shootings has increased in recent years and most teen TV shows have episodes dedicated to such events, including 2005 teen drama "One Tree Hill" and Canadian 2016 teen drama "Degrassi: Next Class.”

Most shows don't depict the long-lasting trauma students face after a shooting. By the next episode, they've moved on to another plot point.

“The Fallout” fails focus on how students address grief.

by Maddie Ziegler, hiding in a bathroom as the sounds of shots ring throughout the school. Later on, Quinton, played by Niles Fitch, joins her and together they rush to the main area of the shooter.

Unlike other media portrayals the movie focuses less on the shooting itself and draws attention to the way students cope with the tragedy.

Although some characters are inspired to make a difference, the focus is on grief that is often not depicted in films. "I think the media wants to typically be shown on the big screen since impulsivity alone is common in young adults and can be exacerbated with drugs and alcohol, Papa said. "Anything that can give you this feel-good [to numb the pain]," he said.

After the shooting threat at my high school, most of us didn't talk about what could have happened.

‘Lock the doors. Stay away from windows. Turn off the lights. Be quiet. Play dead.’ These instructions were ingrained in us when we began elementary school.

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In that generation, there have always been one eight-hour school day away from a school shooting, we have normalized the event and the feelings of fear around it.

After the Columbine school shooting in 1999, there was an increased push for active shooter drills in schools all over the U.S., according to a Dec. 2019 Everytown report. "The Trace is a publication dedicated to reporting on gun violence in the U.S. according to its website.

Although the effectiveness of shooter drills can be argued, it's the practice of preparing for the event unites more fear in students, according to a 2020 report by Everytown.

There is a 99% increase in depression and a 42% increase in anxiety as a result of active shooter drills in schools according to the same research article.

In a generation that has always been one eight-hour school day away from a school shooting, we have normalized the event and the feelings of fear around it.

"There's going to be then another school shooting, it's the threat of a global pandemic," Papa said. "There'solutely no point to really go into detail how it is they feel because the other person was there." The director Megan Park explored the idea of collective trauma through the bond between Mia and Vada. They become extremely close despite their opposing personalities because of the shared fear they faced.

Collective trauma is the impact a shared traumatic event has on a group of people, according to a May 23, 2020 Psychology Today article. "This collective shared experience [helps] put them on a level footing in a lot of different ways where [they] both get each other in terms of how they have survived the same event at the same time," Papa said.

Many scenes between Mia and Vada have minimal dialogue.

‘The Fallout’ shows complex grief

In a generation that has always been one eight-hour school day away from a school shooting, we have normalized the event and the feelings of fear around it.

The film explores the emotional aftermath of a school shooting that began with Vada, played by Jenna Ortega, and classmate Mia, played by Maddie Ziegler, hiding in a bathroom as the sounds of shots ring throughout the school.

Later on, Quinton, played by Niles Fitch, joins them after witnessing the shooter escape her grief.

Mia is so terrified that she can't leave her house and Vada experiments with drugs and alcohol, Papa said. "Anything that can give you this feel-good [to numb the pain]," he said.

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‘Lock the doors. Stay away from windows. Turn off the lights. Be quiet. Play dead.’ These instructions were ingrained in us when we began elementary school.

The expectation is going to school is not going to always be an expected place of safety. This goes beyond just school shootings. After the Columbine school shooting occurred on college campuses between 2015 and 2019 according to a May 3, 2020 Everytown research report.

In November 2021, MSU faced a shooting after someone hacked a Discord account, according to a Spartan Daily reporting.

If it's not the threat of a school shooting, it's the threat of a global pandemic.

"The Fallout" is an exceptional film because rather than showing the courageous teens we have become too used to seeing, it focuses on the quiet moments of one girl's grief.

She isn't trying to change the world, she is simply trying to make sense of what is around her.

In 2021, life is fucking hard but at least we have each other.

I, once again, felt afraid.

Mia was surprised and they’re in a car together talking about love, or dancing in an empty parking lot.

It’s those moments of silence between them that say the most. The comfort is something that Vada and Mia both need which leads them to share an intimate moment because of unspoken camaraderie.

Papa said their friendship was likely since they shared such a significant traumatic moment with one another.

“They’re literally in the same place together,” so then there’s a lot of comfort that comes with that,” Papa said. "They don’t have to actually go through it. They don’t have to really go into detail how it is they feel because the other person was there.”

Towards the end of the film, we see Vada reconcile with her turbulent feelings of anger and sadness through therapy and learns to lean on her family.

Although she’s having a hard time feeling her emotions, Vada screams “I am scared to go to school every day” and “It’s fucking hard” as we finally see her process the emotions she’s kept bottled inside herself.

It’s a heartbreaking scene because it reflects the sentiments of young adults all over the world who don’t feel safe anywhere anymore.

If it’s not the threat of a school shooting, it’s the threat of a global pandemic.
Mitski navigates love & longing

By Christina Casillas

Vibrant ‘80s synth and dark, vulnerable lyrics about deep and heartfelt heartbreak beautifully fit Mitski’s mesmerizing and spunky voice on her latest studio album “Laurel Hell.”

The album is titled “Laurel Hell” and was released on February 4, 2022. The album is a collection of songs that explore the themes of love, longing, and heartbreak. Mitski’s unique voice and sound are intertwined throughout the album, creating a cohesive and emotionally charged listening experience.

The album opens with a delicate piano introduction on the first track, “I Used to Think I Would Get Eaten,” setting the tone for the rest of the album. Mitski’s voice is captivating as she sings about heartbreak and the pain it brings. The lyrics are deeply personal and relatable, making the listener feel as if they are experiencing the same emotions.


The third track, “There’s Nothing I Can Do,” is a slow-building song that features a dreamy synth and accented with whispered vocals. Mitski sings, “There’s nothing I can do. Not much I can change if I give up on you. I surrender, I can’t do this. I can’t do this.” The synth is haunting and powerful, adding to the sense of heartbreak and longing.

As Mitski’s voice betrays a delicate vulnerability, it’s almost as if one is thinking about the day-to-day life of a broken heart. Mitski’s lyrics are eloquent and heart-wrenching, capturing the essence of heartbreak and the pain it brings.

The album’s title track, “Laurel Hell,” is a standout track that features a dark and heavy synth beat. Mitski sings, “Laurel Hell,” adding to the sense of heartbreak and longing.

“Laurel Hell” is a beautiful and powerful album that explores the themes of love, longing, and heartbreak. Mitski’s voice and sound are a perfect fit for the album, making it a must-listen for anyone who has experienced the pain of heartbreak.