

ASB president Lyla Pool shares her goals for the upcoming year

BY SCARLET HANNA
STAFF WRITER

Senior Lyla Pool steps into her role as Costa's 2025-2026 associated student body (ASB) president determined to strengthen school culture and create opportunities for students to feel connected and heard.

Her decision to run came after spending three years in ASB. Pool sees the presidency as a chance to continue the legacy of the senior class before her.

"When the topic presented itself for running for president, I saw it as a chance to lead and build ASB into the best program it could possi-

bly be," Pool said.

During her time in ASB, Pool has developed the skills she needs to be successful as president. She has learned the importance of teamwork and adaptability, and plans to focus on making sure students feel represented and proud of what they accomplish throughout the year.

"My main goals this school year as the student body president is to contribute to and facilitate our school's culture," Pool said. "We have such a strong and capable body and I want to accentuate that."

Pool plans to use her strengths in communication



SADDLE UP: SENIOR Lyla POOL IN COSTA GEAR. PHOTO COURTESY OF SCARLET HANNA

to achieve this goal, and believes listening to different perspectives is the best way to make students feel val-

ued.

"Listening and being able to approach a situation with multiple perspectives is one of the most important skills in life," Pool said. "Working as a team towards a goal is all about mutual respect and open communication."

But she's aware the year won't be without challenges. Pool recognizes the pressure her classmates are under, from college applications to personal commitments.

"I feel that the biggest challenge facing the students right now is balance," said Pool.

As she looks forward to her senior year, her main priority is to remain grounded.

Pool hopes to enjoy every moment while making sure her peers feel supported.

"I would like my classmates to remember me for being present," Pool said. "It can be easy to get lost when you think about your future, but senior year is something that I will be 100 percent present for."

For future leaders, Pool stresses that approachability is of utmost importance. She hopes those who follow her respect making space for other voices.

"Being a meaningful leader does not always mean being right, but allowing everyone to voice their own opinions," Pool said.

Costa students prepare for college through nation-wide summer programs

BY VANESSA MASTERSON
EXECUTIVE FEATURES EDITOR

This past summer, Costa students travelled across the nation to top universities to take prestigious pre-college programs.

Junior Emma Gordon attended a three-week digital filmmaking program at Columbia University in New York City, and specifically appreciated the program's approach on teaching.

"We made and studied short films and gave each other critiques. On the last week, we all produced and directed our own individual short film," Gordon said.

Gordon is part of Costa's Mustang Morning News, and wanted to try a different side of media making this summer.

"This program, combined with being in broadcast journalism, is making it clear that I want to study film in college," Gordon said.

Columbia is one of Gordon's dream schools, and she learned a lot about the campus in her three weeks staying in the Columbia

dorms.

"They're some of the best dorms I've ever seen. I got to live in a single but made a ton of friends on my floor," Gordon said.

On the other side of the country, senior Riley Marsh participated in a pediatric health and surgery pre-college program held at UCLA called Outset. This program introduces high school students to pre-med and offers courses on applying to medical school, different medical tracks, and general knowledge of the field.

"I listened to lectures and took notes on them, and did a practice M-CAT. We also did interactive, immersion based classes, like when we went to Cedars-Sinai and used their simulation center," Marsh said.

The program prepared students for real world medical emergencies, and gave opportunities to train students in the same way those in pre-medical school do.

"One day, they had actors in rooms who pretended they were sick or hurt, and we got to play the part of doctor

and really help them," Marsh said.

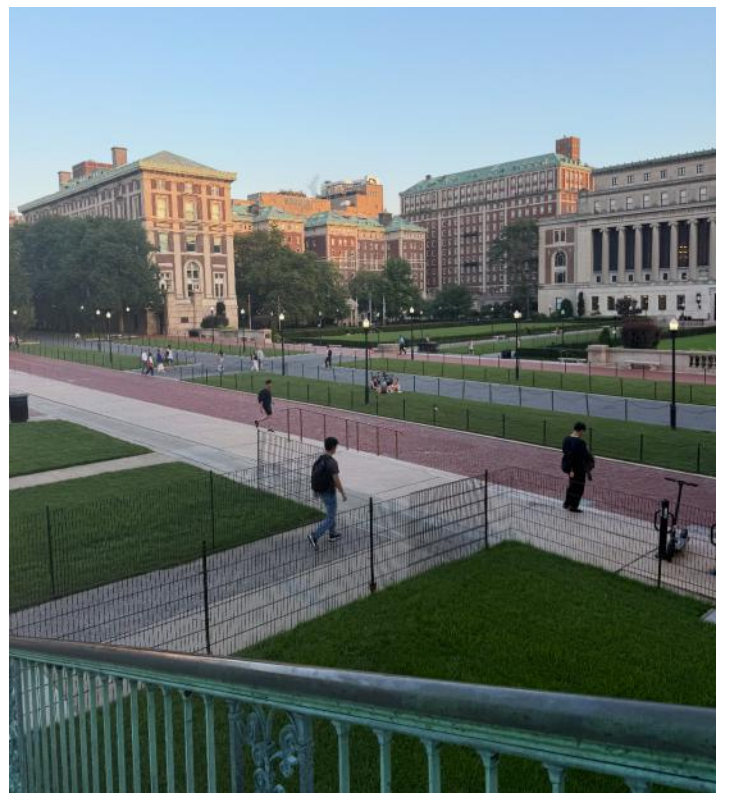
Marsh is applying to colleges this fall and is grateful to this program for how much new information and insight the program has brought her. She feels prepared to go into pre-med applications given her new knowledge and experiences.

"We learned every detail about applying to med school, down to study habits for each specific specialty," Marsh said. "This program caters to anyone thinking about any field of medical study, and has helped me narrow down which one I want to pursue."

Marsh said her favorite part of the program was working with and have conversations with real doctors.

"There were professionals from tons of different medical fields: surgery, anesthesiology, OB/GYN, pediatric, and more, who came to talk to us about how be successful in that specific field and answer questions we had about it," Marsh said.

Summer programs are great ways for students to



EVENING RUSH: STUDENTS WALK ACROSS COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S CAMPUS AT SUNSET. PHOTO COURTESY OF EMMA GORDON

immerse themselves in an educational environment during summer break and give them insights into careers they may want to pursue.

"I'm so glad I got the chance to spend summer in New York. I feel so much more clarity for my future," said Gordon.

Media Arts program welcomes Leopard as new teacher

BY MCKINLEE RAINEY
THEME EDITOR

As of this new school year, Dr. Dan Leopard is officially the new Media Arts teacher after being the long term substitute for the classes last year, now teaching Broadcast Journalism, Cinematic Arts, Graphic Design, and

Photography.

Although he is new to teaching high school full time, students have taken a liking and comfortability to his structured and thorough teaching style in how he balances the creativity that comes within the subjects.

"Leopard is a very organized teacher, and the class can always tell he is passionate and knows what

he's talking about. He's very smart and has taught us a lot of good information so far this year about journalism, media, and film," said junior broadcast journalism student Reese Bronson.

Leopard's classes are seen as creative and interactive electives that students enjoy taking. Many students at Costa value his commitment to working with students,

and his virtue of the importance of empowering students through media. Overall he is a welcome addition to the Costa family.

"The world is renewed through young people. And if I can do anything possible in my power to help this group of people obtain the skills to use the media to make it a better world, I will," Leopard said.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: MEDIA ARTS WELCOMES DR. LEOPARD. PHOTO COURTESY OF DANA SPRENKLE

Junior Davila scores role in “Freakier Friday” **Nerd Alert!**

By KATIE ANDERSON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

When junior Kylah Davila stepped into cheer camp practice in the summer of 2024, she had no idea how an upcoming call from Hollywood would flip her world upside down.

Fast forward a few weeks

“I LITERALLY COULDN’T BELIEVE MY EARS”

later, to when Davila received the call that she was cast as Athena, Lindsey Lohan’s daughter’s best friend in Disney’s production of Freakier Friday.

Davila had originally auditioned to play Harper Coleman, Lindsey Lohan’s daughter in the film.

“It was wild,” Davila said. “I sent in a video audition and didn’t hear anything for a month or two, and I was like, ‘Honestly, I get it. I don’t look like Lindsay Lohan.’”

But then, her agent received a call asking to have Davila audition for the role of her daughter’s best friend.

“I sent in another tape, didn’t hear anything for two weeks.

and then they called me right after cheer camp.” Davila

explained.

Filming took place before the end of summer, which conveniently allowed her to not miss any school. Davila quickly dove headfirst into the script.

“We went through the full script just to understand the timeline,” Davila shared. “There was a lot of improv too, which made it feel like we were just regular friends hanging out.”

Davila still remains in contact with her cast mates, specifically Julia Butters, who portrayed Harper Coleman in the film. She shared that the two actresses not only played best friends, but were able to get very close during the filming process.

“We became super comfortable with each other super quickly,” Davila said. “It was literally just like talking to my good friend.”

The young actress is no stranger to the big screen. Before she appeared in



SELF TAPE: KYLAH DAVILA RECITES LINES FROM THE MOVIE IN HOPES OF GETTING CAST IN “FREAKIER FRIDAY”. IN THIS SPECIFIC TAPE, SHE INITIALLY AUDITIONED FOR THE ROLE OF HARPER COLEMAN. PHOTO COURTESY OF KYLAH DAVILA.

Freakier Friday, Davila was in “The Underdogs”, “Gordita Chronicles”, and a short film, “Brownies”, that was submitted to Oscar Critics.

“I’ve always wanted to act, since I was a baby,” Davila said. “I started around ten, and it was a slow start. But by sixth grade, I landed my first project.”

Because of Disney’s stu-

dio rules, Davila had to keep her role a secret, even from her closest friends. She filmed it summer 2024, but it didn’t come out until last month. She was able to break the news to them by hosting her very own premiere night.

“They all came to the theater, it was my favorite moment ever,” she shared.

With college on the horizon, Davila is hoping to attend acting school in the future. However, she takes interest in other creative endeavors, such as dreams of launching her very own fashion business in the future.

“It’s totally unrelated,” Davila said, “but I want to do both, and am looking forward to what the future holds”



BEHIND THE SCENES: DAVILA AND HER CAST MATES CRACKING JOKES ON SET. SPENDING MOST OF THEIR SUMMER TOGETHER, THE TEENS HAD A TIGHT BOND. PHOTO COURTESY OF KYLAH DAVILA.

Former Pali dolphins remain at Costa

By CASSIDY KRAUCH
STAFF WRITER

When the fires spread throughout the Pacific Palisades, Mira Costa High School opened its doors to approximately 150 affected students. While the smoke has cleared and Palisades Charter Charter High School has reopened, only roughly 60% of transfer students have chosen to remain at Mira Costa.

For many, the initial transition to Costa was a necessary and temporary solution to an unpredictable crisis. However, for some, Costa’s welcoming environment and numerous opportunities have turned their transfer into a long term commitment. As students and their families settled into their new surroundings, some began to discover unexpected advantages.

“In the beginning, my family and I moved here to get back a sense of normalcy,” says junior Jack Fair. “But after we moved into a nice house and my siblings and I

started at Costa, we realized that we wanted to continue our lives here.”

Although Costa welcomed and accommodated the Palisades students, adjusting to a new community and navigating a new school so suddenly was not seamless, and brought its own set of challenges. Some Costa and Pali classes differ extremely from one another, in things like curriculum and teaching style. For anyone, diverging from normal routines and familiar environment and friendships can be particularly hard.

“IT WAS A TOUGH TRANSITION, AT FIRST.”

“I missed my friends back at Pali, and it took some time adjusting to the different academic expectations and new surroundings,” Says Junior Izzy Tobin, “but the students and staff at Costa helped make the transition easier, welcoming all of us Pali students with grace and compassion.”

In January, Mira Costa teachers and coaches made the gracious decision to let any transfer students join the sports team or elective level that they were already a part of at Pali, so they didn’t have to completely start over, and could continue doing what they love. This choice immediately gave many transfer students a sense of belonging, and played a large role in their decision to continue attending Mira Costa. “Costa’s volleyball team is amazing and I am honored to be a part of it,” says sophomore Hutch Larson, “They are a much more competitive and advanced team than Pali’s volleyball team; being on the team was a big factor in why I decided to stay at Costa.”

In addition to extracurriculars and academics, many students have found that Mira Costa’s supportive community has made a significant impact in their experience and their decisions. Costa’s dedicated staff, including counselors, teachers and coaches, have com-

mitted themselves to integrating Pali students into their classrooms. Counselors helped create almost identical schedules to their Pali ones, down to the period. This sense of normalcy, after such trauma, gave Pali students support and has encouraged many of them to continue attending Costa.

“I was nervous about switching schools midway through the year, but Costa’s teachers and staff went above and beyond to help me both in and outside of academics.” Said Mazz Larson.

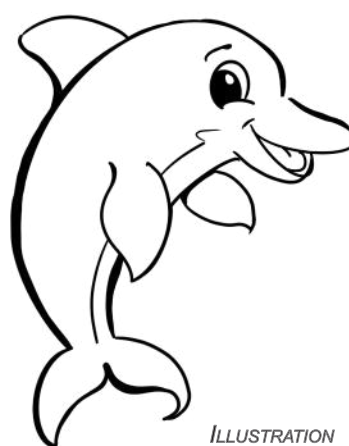


ILLUSTRATION BY AMIA TSAI

A STEM COLUMN

By LUCY HANSEN
MANAGING EDITOR

It’s back-to-school season, and as our tans fade and our summer highlights darken, there’s one thing everyone fears the most: *School air*.

Why is it that I look normal all the time, but as soon as I step into school boundaries, I look like I’ve been hit by a bus? Did you know there’s an actual reason behind that?

While “school air” is a popular term that people use to describe why they look bad after school, there are scientifically supported facts as to why you look the way you do after sitting in class for seven hours.

INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

First, there is the indoor school environment. When you’re sitting in a classroom, you have to understand that the building you’re in is mostly old, and that means that it has poor circulation and ventilation. This can lead to a build-up of pollutants like dust, bacteria, and other irritants that can easily lead to dry skin and lips. Another factor is humidity fluctuations. Since you’re moving from class to class all day, changes in humidity can also factor into your skin. Temperature changes can cause makeup to melt, or appear “crusty”, and can also cause hair to go limp or frizzy.

STRESS

Another important factor is the physical effects of stress. For example, hormones like cortisol can cause skin to produce oil and sebum, leading to inflamed acne and a shiny complexion. Research studies from trusted medical sources like Healthline have also proved that chronic stress can contribute to dull skin, dark circles under your eyes, and an overall worn-out appearance.

UNHEALTHY HABITS

Furthermore, back to school brings about many unhealthy habits. Like inconsistent sleep when you have to finish homework, unhealthy eating habits like irregular snacking or cafeteria food, neglecting your self-care routines, and even touching your face when you’re bored or nervous in class.

CHOPPED?

All of these things together can cause major effects on your overall appearance, especially on your face, like redness, dryness/puffiness, acne, under eye bags, and frizzy hair. I promise you, you’re not “chopped”, “unc”, or ugly; it genuinely is just the school air.