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2023

The Campanile

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
PALO ALTO HIGH SCHOOL
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Palo Alto High School, 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto, CA 94301

SENIORS SWEEP SPIRIT WEEK

Seniors score 18800, Juniors 16300, Sophomores 14500, Freshmen 10600 in 2023 Spirit Week

DAY 1

Spirit Week officially commenced on Oct. 2 with grade-level theme day, competitions for best dressed at brunch, and a tug-of-war competition at lunch.

Sophomore ASB President David Wu said it took tons of time to prepare for the day. "It took a lot of planning from the end of last year to the start of this year," Wu said. "All the way, everything had been planned meticulously."

DAY 2

On Day 2 of Spirit Week, the main events were the Human Ring Toss and Balloon Pop Relay.

ASB Freshman Senator Paul Wang said he still has high hopes the freshmen can manage a comeback, despite the odds against them.

"Although we placed last, I think that we're still able to make a comeback this week," Wang said. "I'm excited for the homecoming football game."

DAY 3

On Day 3 of Spirit Week, the main events were "Name that Tune" and "Giant Cornhole," which took place in the football stadium.

Student Activities Director Steven Gallagher said it was nice to see positive spirit.

"Everyone's coming together, and it's just the floats, it's (the rallies), it's the homecoming dance coming up and you know, everyone's just working really hard, and it's really nice to see it coming together."

DAY 4

During Day 4 of Spirit Week, the vents were the Teacher's Dance and the Bubble Ball relay.

Senior Lorenzo Lisi said that all the different elements of Spirit Week have come together to make it fun and enjoyable.

"I think Spirit Week has been going great," Lisi said. "I love float building, I love the rallies and I love dressing up."

ASB Senior Representative Austin Eng said his favorite part of Spirit Week was seeing the senior class rally together to show spirit.

DAY 5

On the final day of Spirit Week, students from each grade had class dances and showcased their dazzling floats, concluding the week with unforgettable performances.

Sophomore Jonathan Bakhsh said that despite doubts, his class was able to pull through, outperforming the juniors and freshmen in the class dance.

Bakhsh said: "It was the most spirit we've ever shown."

Alex Isayama & Naveen Narayanaswami
Staff Writers



PHOTOS BY ALEX ISAYAMA, NAVEEN NARAYANASWAMI AND TYLER WONG

Class of 2029 onward required to take Ethnic Studies class

Starting with the class of 2029 – the current seventh grade class – all PAUSD students will be required to take one semester of Ethnic Studies during their freshman year to fulfill new graduation requirements under California Assembly Bill 101.

In 2021, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the bill into law, which requires all California public school students to complete at least one semester of Ethnic Studies to graduate.

The bill also says the course has to be offered by the 2025–26 academic year and must take effect starting with students completing high school in 2030.

However, the Bill does allow some flexibility for what school year the course is taken in and the curriculum used.

Social Science Instructional Lead Mary Sano was a member of the district's Ethnic Studies committee and said the district's Ethnic Studies class will replace a semester of the current World History requirement.

"In our district, World History is offered in three semesters, two in ninth grade and one in 10th grade. It will (now) become a two semester course," Sano said.

While Paly already offers Ethnic Studies as an elective, Social Science teacher Justin Cronin, who has taught the course in the past, said the new version of the class will be different.

"It is going to be for ninth grade first semester, but (it's) not simply plug and play — the two courses are very different," Cronin said.

Sano also said the existing elective will remain optional for juniors and seniors.

"We're going to keep Ethnic Studies (elective) as an upper-class elective," Sano said. "By that time, students will have had United States History, which just allows more depth and exploration of different groups of people."

While the elective allows for depth, the mandatory course will also be flexible, Sano said.

"We've designed it with a lot of student choice," Sano said. "There needs to be opportunities for kids to go into more depth and look more into identity or just what they are interested in. It should be designed so that students are looking at themselves and their local community."

Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education Guillermo Lopez said the district also plans to adjust the course based on student feedback and is even soliciting student feedback during PRIME for how the course should be developed.

Senior and President of the Black Scholars United Chase Cobb said she is happy the state is mandating an Ethnic Studies course because she said it will help promote inclusion.

"The change will be really helpful for making students who have a different background

feel more comfortable," Cobb said. "(BSU has) a couple of events we want to host on campus, and if Ethnic Studies is required for all students to take, I feel like it will further push those events we want to have."

Senior Ella Bishop said the course should help students push their boundaries.

"It's important you're exposed to groups you're not aware of, branching out of what you're comfortable with," Bishop said.

Furthermore, senior Mariam Tayebi said she hopes the course helps break down stereotypes.

"There's so much misrepresentation and stereotypes, and that's the main problem," Tayebi said. "It's important to start deconstructing stereotypes for when (students) first enter high school."

But Cobb said she hopes the course doesn't just portray African American history in a pessimistic manner, which is unfortunately, more normalized than it should be.

"Most of the time when we do learn about African American history, it's in more of a negative way," Cobb said. "Making it more positive to talk about accomplishments, or

people who have made change in a good way, I feel like that's really important."

Cobb also said the course will help deconstruct the idea that Palo Alto is free of injustice.

"People look at Palo Alto all the time as a place (where) racism doesn't exist, which isn't true at all," Cobb said. "Having this class as mandatory will relieve some of those feelings."

As far as why the district chose the class of 2029 to start the requirement, Lopez said it was to strike a balance between being swift and being thorough.

"We felt that in order to better meet the needs of our students and get community input, and also allow our teachers to be properly trained and review the curriculum, it is probably best for us to begin (with) them," Lopez said.

As for why it's a freshman requirement, Sano said taking the course during their first year of high school will allow students to use what they learn over the next three years.

"As students enter high school and start the four-year process of classes in high school, they're given an opportunity to explore identity and think about the diversity of our community," Sano said. "We worked all summer on building the outline of this curriculum, the details are yet to come, but we've laid down a proposed outline."

Rohan Bhatia
Sports Editor

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Mary Sano