

## Editors Column

## Internship Experience at Irvine Valley College



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The IVC internship has taught me a valuable experience, which has helped me in managing classes, setting up lab procedures, and collaborating with peers and students. I would like to further detail my experience with the IVC internship and the benefits of such an instructional employment opportunity.

However, to detail the benefits of this IVC internship, I'd also like to go over the IVC classes that were the prerequisites for achieving this opportunity. Starting in the summer of my freshman year, I've worked towards completing most of the biotechnology-related courses taught at IVC. It was during these that I was taught the basics of lab tech and developed a core understanding of biotechnology. Despite the fascinating lectures and engaging lab experiments and practices, I found myself slightly dissatisfied with my familiarity with the laboratory setting. We were expected to follow the lab procedures with the given items, but after a couple of years of following these, I felt I had grown too reliant on them, especially when lab technicians



Every week, students in the Biotechnology Lab Techniques course at IVC gather in this classroom to hone their lab skills, where I would help them as their lab technician.  
[Source: Author, Yejoon Choi]

are expected to know them by memory. So, I decided to reach out to the professor of the class I last took and inquired about the internship opportunity that he was offering.

The job, specifically, was to be a teacher's assistant and lab technician for one of the biotechnology

classes, a class focusing on mastering lab techniques and fundamental formulas commonly used in the field. As I had already taken this class, I went into this course expecting only minor differences from what I had learned before. However, the responsibility that was placed on me and the activities I had to do truly surprised me.

Although I was preparing solutions and doing lab work the same as before, I was expected to complete them efficiently and with extreme precision. If I had messed up a stock solution to be used by the entire class, their grades would suffer even if they had done everything right. Hence, I was pushed to fully master these techniques and familiarize myself with the classroom and the lab to meet those time and accuracy expectations. After just a few weeks of working under these conditions, I felt myself learning things that couldn't be taught in the classes I took: authentic work experience.

I was fortunate to be given such a wonderful internship opportunity that allowed me to have a taste of what it feels like to work in a lab setting, and I highly recommend taking and actively pursuing internship opportunities in subjects or topics that pique your interest. As an internship is a job opportunity designed to be an educational experience for those who take it, I would say the essential skills learned in these programs are amazing preparation for the real world.

## Student Reporter

## My Science Olympiad Experience at Antelope Valley College



**Charis Kim**  
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Caption A: My school's Science Olympiad Team together at the Antelope Valley College regional competition.  
[Source: Author, Charis Kim]

This year on Valentine's Day, I attended a regional competition for the Science Olympiad at Antelope Valley College. The annual regional competition is an event I look forward to every year, and I'm excited to share my experience competing.

Science Olympiad is an organization that hosts academic competitions based on different events. These events are usually done in pairs, and there are a variety that you can choose from:

study events, building events, and even lab-based events. At the beginning of the year, you choose which events you would like to participate in and get paired with a partner. Some examples of events are Tower (building event), Crime Busters (Forensics/ study event), and Chemistry Lab (lab event). Throughout the months before regionals, students compete in online competitions such as High Desert, continuing to study and practice along the way.

Waking up at 5:30 AM on the day of the competition, I put on my school's hoodie and headed to school to catch the bus. Everyone was huddled together, sniffing due to the cold weather, with all of the hard work they had prepared for the competition in their hands. Upon arriving at the event, we were greeted with a large field of grass, surrounded by students from different schools settling in. It was packed with tents, camping chairs, tables, students, and parents. Throughout the day, my partner and I walked to different classrooms, taking tests for our events. After our final event, we retreated to our school's site, melting into the camping chairs.

Every year, I look forward to this annual regional competition because of the combination of taking tests and eating delicious snacks with friends. During competitions, parents bring tables, chairs, and food to encourage competitors. Our team is always grateful for the parents who bring foods like ramen, pizza, hot dogs, and chips.

It's a fulfilling experience: work hard for an hour taking a test, then come back to enjoy friends and snacks. Conversing with other schools and students, we're able to learn more about other learning environments. It's so interesting to watch events such as Helicopter, where single-stick models are tossed from the air. Watching different models function and fall, I realize there are so many students passionate about STEM.

On the bus ride back, everyone was bustling, anticipating the results. As the presidents announced these, there were cheers from students congratulating one another. For our hard work, my mom treated my friend and me to Boba. The whole day had flown by, and upon arriving home, I knocked out.

My experience at the Regional Competition for Science Olympiad was fulfilling and productive. I am truly excited to experience this competition again and encourage younger students to join the Science Olympiad club.

## Student Reporter

## Integrated Arts Showcase Displays Student Talent and Dedication



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Every year, the Orange County School of the Arts' Integrated Arts conservatory puts on a show to display the students' talents. Unlike other conservatories, Integrated Arts (IA) focuses on all aspects of art rather than just one, meaning there is a variety of acts in the performance. Ranging from musical theatre, instrumental music, visual arts, and creative writing, it is an amazing opportunity to connect with others and learn from experience.

With over 130 students participating this year, ranging from seventh to twelfth grade, the process leading up to the actual shows took dedication and hard work. To begin with, students who wanted to be part of the event attended a dance and singing audition for evaluation by the conservatory directors during early December. Once everyone was selected for at least one number plus the group finale, the final cast list was emailed out to all, marking the beginning of rehearsals. For a little over two months, students attended practices multiple days a week after school, learning lyrics and choreography with much commitment.

Next, after much preparation,

dress rehearsals began. While students got into their costumes and makeup, the amazing Production and Design conservatory volunteers helped with stage lighting and microphones. With this collaboration and persistence, after four dress rehearsals the cast was finally ready for opening night.

Since the first show was on a Thursday, all members attended school as usual and then walked over to the nearby theatre where the performance was taking place. With the energy and excitement high, the students ate dinner and then headed towards the dressing rooms to prepare for the exciting night.

For me, the thrill of the opening performance was the highlight of the IA Showcase. I had never experienced anything like it before, since it was such a big production and my first ever show at the Orange County School of the Arts. The level of enthusiasm and support backstage helped to overcome any nervousness, and everyone made sure all the students felt included and supported, which boosted my confidence.

In the end, all of the perfor-



The cast of the 2026 Integrated Arts Showcase takes their final bow on stage for the audience after a night filled with fun and performances.  
[Source: Author, Ava Je]

mances went smoothly for everyone, and the energy from the audience was incredible. Closing night was an extra special experience for both the cast and the crowd, since we got to celebrate the hard work from all of our directors and IA staff, as well as all of the twelfth graders who had just finished their very last IA Showcase.

From this event, I learned many valuable lessons and made

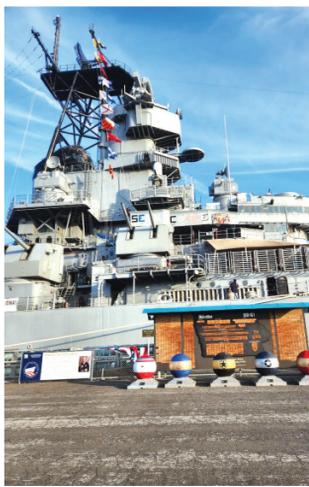
many connections with new people outside of my grade. It taught me to be grateful that I was given the opportunity to be a part of the Integrated Arts community and to participate in the showcase. Despite the late and long hours of rehearsal, I found that all the hard work paid off when I got to celebrate with others on stage. In the end, although the performance only recently ended, I am already looking forward to auditions for next year.

Student Reporter

## My Experience at the Battleship USS Iowa Museum



**Jisu Wi**  
Grade 9  
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The USS Iowa is docked in San Pedro, California, and is displayed as a museum for visitors to explore. [Source: Author, Jisu Wi]



The room for officers inside the USS Iowa shows how they stayed and lived on the ship. [Source: Author, Jisu Wi]

The IOWA battleship, or “The Big Stick,” set sail on August 27, 1942. It had been in many notable conflicts, including but not limited to World War II and the Korean War. I recently visited the Battleship USS Iowa Museum, located in San Pedro, California. The structure of this museum was unique, as it employs the original ship by having turned it into a museum ship. Be-

ing able to walk on the ship’s deck was an interesting experience since I got to physically interact with it and explore each part of the battleship.

The museum has five levels, each of which is portrayed with detailed information. It consists of rooms for the soldiers, control rooms, engine rooms, a caf-

eteria, a bridge, a mess deck, and more. The captain’s room was especially interesting since there were lots of controls that looked alike. I learned how impressive it is that the captains are able to steer the ship while managing so many complex systems. There was also a coffee machine, bakery space, and a big cafeteria with delicious-looking food. It was unexpected to learn that people on the ship had good quality meals, despite living on a battleship. Along with all of these things, the museum had an area that was designated for the crew members who had lost their lives. A picture of each one of them with their age, when they had died, and their role on the ship was displayed on the wall.

The most surprising thing I found in this museum was that a dog lived on that battleship. The dog, named Vicky, is the mascot of this battleship and only lived for three years. Dogs typically live for ten to twenty years, so Vicky’s short-lived life of just three was quite sad and unexpected. That wasn’t the only shocking thing; I was also surprised at how tight the beds of lower-ranked soldiers were. The beds were three-floor beds and very uncomforta-

ble-looking. It was surprising that they were living in such a poor quality environment while still working hard.

The historians played a crucial role in the development of this museum by researching the USS Iowa and the lives of the people aboard it. Through careful examination, they are able to preserve the ship and record their findings in the museum. For example, the marine WWII winter service uniform that was on display was not the original one, but a replica that historians made based on historical research, so that visitors could have an idea of what a marine looked like. With the help of historians, the museum was able to be made with accurate information and artifacts.

From the Battleship USS Iowa museum, I had a chance to know and understand the lives of individuals on the battleship. Seeing this environment helped me realize how hard it was for them on the ship. As I explored the ship, it helped me to honor the soldiers and appreciate their work, dedication, and sacrifices. Visiting this museum was such a wonderful experience and an activity I would definitely recommend!

Student Reporter

## The Soul of LA Koreatown: A Multicultural Community



**Yale Lee**  
Grade 9  
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Walking through the streets of Koreatown feels like traveling across borders without ever leaving Los Angeles. On one block, you can see signs written in Hangul with people conversing in Korean, while on the next, you can smell the scent of grilling al pastor with people chattering in both Spanish and English. And with multiple cultures and ethnicities all residing within one community, vibrant traditional celebrations and diverse cuisine shine through the streets of Koreatown.

One of Koreatown’s most prevalent festivals is Jangtuh, commonly known in the area as The Los Angeles Korean Festival. Held annually every October, it spreads Korean culture to the residents of Los Angeles through food, music, and performances.

Vendors selling Korean street food such as tteokbokki and twigim (deep-fried dishes), along with traditional performances like taekwondo, musical acts like K-pop, and live contemporary music, create an energetic atmosphere for attendees to learn about the Korean culture.

Korean cuisine and restaurants are extremely common throughout the neighborhood; however, all



Koreatown Gateway, located on Olympic Boulevard, is a symbolic marker of the Korean identity in Los Angeles. [Source: Author, Yale Lee]

of them serve different foods from the cuisine, with some adding their own unique features to the dishes. For example, many Korean barbecue places don’t just serve grilled meats but also common Korean dishes like kimchi-jigae (also known as kimchi stew), doenjang-guk (soybean paste soup), and naengmyeon (noodle dish served in broth or spicy sauce). Other restaurants serve dishes

that aren’t commonly known, such as samgyetang (ginseng chicken soup), cheonggukjang (extra-fermented soybean paste soup), and gul bossam (broiled pork belly served with raw oysters). The wide-ranging menu of foods reflects the depth and diversity of the types of Korean cuisine spread throughout Koreatown.

Beyond the heavy presence of Korean cultures of food and festi-

vals, the presence of individuals from Mexico and Central/Latin America is equally significant and common. If you’ve ever driven down any street in Koreatown, you’ve probably seen at least one Mexican food stall serving aromatic tacos with sweet agua frescas on the sidewalks. There are also lots of Mexican bakeries serving pan dulces or tres leche cakes, and local markets like El Super that sell traditional ingredients, all located on the busy streets of Koreatown. Murals celebrating the heritage of Latin Americans decorate walls not just in Koreatown but throughout Los Angeles. However, these vendors, businesses, and art are more than just a quick place to grab a bite or to see, as they represent the diaspora of the Hispanic and Latino population that helped shape Koreatown into the culturally diverse neighborhood it is today.

From block to block, the various amounts of languages, cultures, and ancestries of multiple ethnic communities in Koreatown blend to not just create a culturally-rich community but reflect the broader immigrant stories and diverse spirit that shapes Los Angeles today.

Student Reporter

## How Find My and AI Reunited Me with My Stolen iPhone



**Irene Kim**  
Grade 11  
University Laboratory  
High School

On my mother’s birthday weekend, my family traveled to Chicago to watch The Phantom of the Opera. We arrived at the parking lot an hour early, so we decided to grab dinner nearby and walk to the theatre after. It seemed we were off to a smooth start... until the food was served 30 minutes later. We rushed to finish, and running to find our seats was a blur. As we sat down, I reached into my pocket to turn off my phone—only, it wasn’t there. My father opened Find My, the app preinstalled on Apple devices that can locate connected devices. As the Wifi signal was weak in the theatre, he quickly left the building to check where my phone had gone.

Luckily, my father was able to return to the theater in time for much of the remaining first act. He said he checked the restaurant and the nearby area, as well as where Find My pointed to, but couldn’t find my phone anywhere. I began losing hope.

When my father opened Find

My again after the show, the app showed a different location than before. We ran out and looked all over the detected location, but couldn’t find anything. I soon realized that the map on Find My was two-dimensional—and right above us was a Chicago Transit Authority rail station. When we reached the top, Find My stopped showing new track records, and nothing was found at the station. It was later, during the car ride to the hotel, that I learned that Find My operates by nearby Apple devices detecting Bluetooth signals from the missing device.

In addition to enabling Find My, I used a data protection technique allowing me to set a passcode and Face ID to unlock my phone. To protect it further, my father turned “lost mode” on for my device through Find My, which locks the device and alerts the next time the lost device gets powered on.

At the hotel, I checked the app again to find that my phone was now in the southern part of Chica-

go, half an hour from the theatre. Given that it was powered off and traveling elsewhere, my phone was definitely stolen. I sought ChatGPT for help. It suggested utilizing “lost mode’s” custom message screen function to persuade the thief: “Lost iPhone. Locked. Reward if found, no trouble. Call/text this number. [My father’s number.]”

The next morning, I woke up to find my father gone. My mother said he’d received a text earlier about having “found” my phone and asking about the reward. He’d left to retrieve it. Thankfully, he returned an hour later with my phone intact and working. Relieved, we continued with our family getaway weekend.

Never had I imagined myself losing my phone. This was the scariest reflective experience for me as a phone user. I suggest that every device is locked, that every Apple device has Find My enabled, and I encourage backing up important data for the worst-case scenario.



The screen the phone thief would have seen when they powered my phone back on has system messages in Korean, which I had my phone set to. After I found my phone, I quickly changed it to English. I also advise that devices are set to the language understood where it is at physically. [Source: Gyeong Mi Doh]