

# Let's Reminisce: Isla Vista Firsts

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**OFTEN THE SILENCE** on campus surprises me. The profound silence I only discovered recently as a senior at UCSB reflects how the laid-back beach attitude has finally penetrated my soul. I look back at who I was before. Full of energy, dreams, and ambitions. I look at who I am now: tired, mildly malnourished, and excited for the next chapter. Yet this vague fear also lies in the pit of my stomach at the thought of postgraduate life.

Punctuality is something I'll need to rediscover after graduation. I remember my first days at UCSB, arriving early to find my classes and mapping the most efficient routes. Now, I'm invariably five minutes late. But in those five minutes, I found something unexpected: the beauty of silence. A silence full of the sounds I love—the rustling trees, the calls of birds, the hum of bikes, the distant ocean waves, and footsteps on familiar paths.

I've had so many firsts here. Soon, the lasts will come.

Here, we reflect on the stories of our first. May we remember our firsts fondly: a dip in the sea, a failed exam, an off-key band show, and a (not-so) fire burrito.



**Baden Rosales, Second-Year**  
**First Swim in the Ocean**

Rosales doesn't consider himself much of a swimmer. And yet one afternoon, just before the start of his first year at UCSB, Rosales brought a book to read on the shore and unexpectedly felt drawn to gently lapping waves. Deciding to christen the start of his new chapter in Isla Vista, Rosales went for his first swim in Santa Barbara. Despite the surprising appearance of "black coal" tar remnants on his feet—a rite of passage in IV—he couldn't help but appreciate the ocean's healing power. "The ocean is like a religious experience," said Rosales. "You go in and just feel revived."





### Kira Latimer, Fourth-Year First Failed Exam

Latimer was a straight-A student upon arriving at UCSB. Yet, like so many before her, this all came crashing down in everyone's favorite class: chemistry. Her first failed exam was, in her words, a "humbling experience." She recalled standing atop the education building, staring towards the horizon and wondering whether college was right for her. But in a plot twist familiar to many, she soon learned that everyone else had failed the exam too. "I woke up the next day and just thought, well, it's not the end of the world," said Latimer.

Following this experience, Latimer failed other exams as well. Remarkably, she's fine and is looking forward to graduating this Spring.



### Margaret Eleanor Gray, Third-Year First Band Show

Gray, who uses they/them pronouns, considers their first band show as marking not only the beginning of their time at UCSB, but also impenetrable friendship. During their first weekend in college, Gray met a couple of strangers in the dining hall and, after managing to acquire some alcohol, they decided to attend the ubiquitous "band show." The rest, as they say, is history. Dancing around to the music, Gray and their companions couldn't help but laugh at the fact that they were the only people in attendance. Flash-forward three years later, and the three of them are still best friends. After all, nothing brings people closer quite like mediocre indie covers and the need to act as a lookout while the others relieve themselves behind a bush. "It was just a good, lighthearted, and joyous time," Gray recalled.



### Josh Hylak, Third-Year First Freebirds Burrito

With its legendary reputation, Hylak expected Freebirds to deliver one of the best burritos of his life. During his first visit to the iconic restaurant, he ordered the monster burrito. Yet, despite being appreciative of the generous portion size, he couldn't help but feel underwhelmed. In fact, most restaurants in Isla Vista have left him disappointed, and he probably won't look back fondly on the food scene after graduation. "I'd always just rather go to Chipotle," he admitted. **W**