

## Brief History of the Tradition of “Blunite”

**Blunite.** Blunite is an abbreviation with a double meaning: “blue night” and “bl-unite” (with emphasis on “unite”). “It is a community effort based in Isla Vista, California to stand together for the month of May. Uniting as a community, we are ‘glowing blue’ by lighting blue LEDs throughout Isla Vista and beyond, showing unity by placing tea lights in windows, changing bulbs to blue ones, rope outlining buildings etc... Local business, campus buildings and individual households are invited to participate in illuminating the area, helping to guide our entire community to come together, heal and move forward.” Blunite was initiated by UCSB students who were participating in IV OpenLab together with Art Professor, Kim Yasuda, who brainstormed ways to bridge the connection between UCSB and Isla Vista through light. “Their ideas not only connected the campus and IV, but spread beyond the boundaries of the local community by inviting everyone to participate in a movement that envisions solidarity and a bright future. As a symbol inspired by the LED blue light invented by Nobel-winning UCSB Professor, Shuji Nakamura, Blunite IV illuminates the memories of those who were lost and injured by bringing our communities together to create something hopeful, beautiful and powerful.”

– UCSB Memorial Archive



### Isla Vista Tragedy One-Year Memorial

Blunite organized a blue LED “candle” vigil for the victim of the 2014 tragedy. Among others, Chancellor Yang and of some of parents of the deceased students spoke.

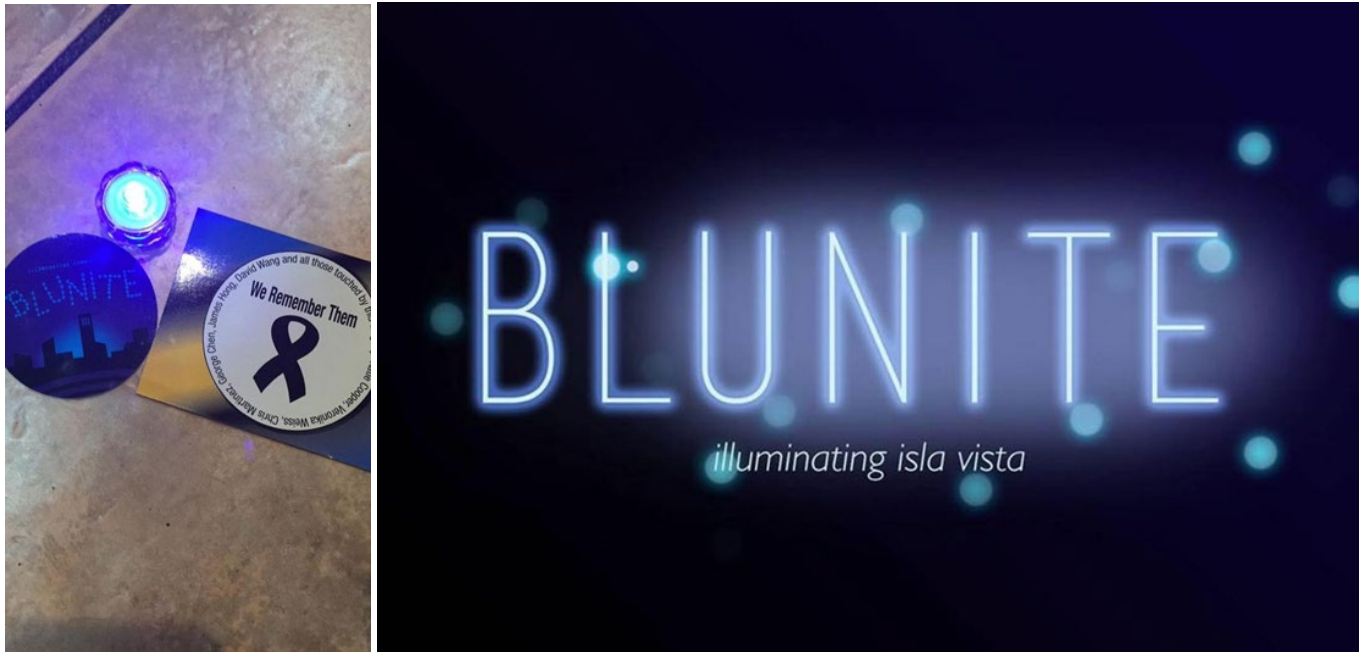
<https://www.facebook.com/bluniteiv/>

Blunite IV is a community effort aimed at illuminating the path between UCSB and Isla Vista in light of the darkness that fell over our community in 2014. With Professor Shuji Nakamura's now famous blue LED light as its symbol, community members are now working to bridge the gap between the award-winning discoveries made on the UCSB campus and the hardships that Isla Vista has faced in recent years. Blunite aims to break down the barriers that separate UCSB from the Isla Vista community, allowing for all of its community members to heal and to move forward by using the symbolic blue LED lights to link together the university with the entire Isla Vista community.



### **Isla Vista Tragedy 3rd Anniversary**

Luminarias made by UCSB students, as well as 16,000 blue LED bulbs illuminate the Isla Vista Memorial Garden.



## Excerpt from the DAILY NEXUS May 25, 2017

### Blue Lights Unite Isla Vista Community

May 25, 2017 at 6:00 pm by [Stephanie Pernet](#)

Since the tragedy that took place May 23, 2014, a common thing to see once May comes are blue lights. These blue lights that illuminate Isla Vista have come to symbolize solidarity through the student-led organization Blunite.

Initially these lights were set up by UCSB art students in order to pay tribute to the victims lost in the spring of 2015. These students were enrolled in the I.V. OpenLab course taught by professor Kim Yasuda.

Yasuda brought up the idea to her students in the fall of 2015 after noticing the lack of lighting in I.V. She was also influenced by media arts professor Marcos Novak's LED lighting in Pardall Tunnel.

The goal behind a lighting project was for it to serve as an illuminated bridge between the campus and the community.

Using art as a way to connect has been a long-time passion for Yasuda, but it was only the aftermath of a tragedy that ignited the project and gave her the idea to unify by light.

Through this project, Blunite, was formed by Yasuda's students in response to the Isla Vista tragedy. Blunite creates community art installations and events centered around blue light as a symbol of unity and community healing. They focus on encouraging unity and hope in Isla Vista and beyond.

Using the blue LED as a symbol, which was inspired by the blue LED invented by Nobel Laureate and UCSB professor Shuji Nakamura, Blunite focuses its efforts on getting the community involved in enacting a visual representation of shared love and support. The movement caught on quickly, with various levels of the community participating and showing support.

On May 23, 2015, UCSB held its first memorial service honoring the victims of the tragedy by adopting Blunite's blue LED tea lights instead of the traditional candles. The picturesque pathway from UCSB's Storke



Tower to Isla Vista's People's Park was illuminated by more than 3,000 students and 5,000 tea lights. The success and recognition from the memorial event established Blunite as the symbol for healing and uniting the community through bright hope. The community response to Blunite in its first year was so overwhelmingly positive that it has now become a tradition.



### Blunite Memorial and Light-Art Festival: Using Light to Unite.

As a UCSB student, I served as the Production Manager and Lighting Director for Blunite, an organization that sought to heal the Isla Vista and UCSB communities in the wake of the 2014 mass-shooting. We used the blue LED light (an invention of UCSB's own Professor Shuji Nakamura, and one of our school's colors) as a symbol of unity, peace, and togetherness.

-Mitchell Jakubka







