Last Wednesday, January 24th, members of UCLA’s Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter volunteered their time to aid efforts in improving Los Angeles’ rising number of homeless veterans and individuals. The 2018 Los Angeles Homeless Count embodied the core values of the UCLA Veteran community: service to others, compassion for humanity, and dedication to the community. This year, veterans Jamie Mersola, Bryan Dean, and Jesse Flores upheld these principles through volunteering at the Mar Vista Recreation Center on January 24th. During the event, which lasted approximately two and a half hours (8:00pm – 10:30pm), volunteers partook in surveying various blocks throughout the community to account for homeless individuals. “Many members of the West Los Angeles community attended to bolster efforts,” Bryan Dean, a senior at UCLA, described the event. “It was really heartwarming to witness.” Given that last year’s homeless count revealed a staggering increase in homeless veterans (57%), the statistics for 2018 are crucial to implement future policy initiatives and direct Measure HHH funding to combat veteran homelessness. “Overall, it was a sobering experience that made clear why continual efforts to help the homeless must be a concentrated effort among community partners,” Bryan says.