



Update on Inclusive Excellence at CSUSM

Over the course of the last four months, I have personally met and talked with many members of our campus community who have brought to me great ideas about how we can continue to move our inclusive excellence initiatives forward. I want to take just a moment to highlight some of these ongoing efforts.

First, I'd like to share that members of Executive Council and I attended our first cultural competency training by the DREAMer Resource Office in October. We also received a full day of education on implicit bias from the American Leadership Forum in November. These trainings are adding to our collective understanding and helping us grow. As we look forward to additional campus cultural competency trainings over the course of this academic year, I want to encourage everyone who is part of our campus community to engage in them as well.

I've been pleased to receive so many innovative ideas. One of those is a new proposal to create a "one-stop shop" for faculty information and resources modeled similarly to the Cougar Care Network for students. As we think about how we can further extend our culture of care, Drs. Fredi Avalos and Laurie Stowell are currently leading a faculty learning community to explore and develop this initiative.

In addition, Dr. Avalos brought to me an innovative proposal titled, "Beloved Campus Community," which looks to create a framework for how we nurture positive and meaningful connections throughout our campus community. I'm looking forward to seeing this work unfold. I have also received input related to the hiring and retention of faculty of color. I know that a diverse faculty is critical to creating and maintaining a culture of inclusion on campus, and you have my commitment that we will be looking at how we can improve the recruitment, onboarding and retaining of faculty of color.

As we continue to work on these initiatives, Drs. Marisol Clark-Ibáñez and Patricia Prado-Olmos are leading three workgroups focused on inclusive excellence topics. We've created a new [webpage](#) on the Office of the President website related to these workgroups, and I hope you will take a moment to explore and provide feedback to us on them. I want to thank both Drs. Clark-Ibáñez and Prado-Olmos for their leadership and commitment to these efforts.

One of the workgroups is focused on staffing and resources for the Office of Inclusive Excellence and will make recommendations on where we go next with leadership for the office. We are gathering further input about future staffing in the office, including the position of chief diversity officer. In the interim, and based on recommendations from faculty, we have launched a call for a faculty fellow who will provide day-to-day support on projects and initiatives in the Office of Inclusive Excellence. I want to assure you, this is a priority for me and an interim step so that the campus has time to provide full input on Office of Inclusive Excellence resource and staffing needs. We expect our new faculty fellow to be in place in spring semester.

It has been heartening to discover so many people who are invested in ensuring that our campus is a welcoming place where all individuals can thrive in their academic, personal and professional endeavors. As I saw firsthand at the All Peoples Luncheon in October, this is a campus deeply committed to the principles of diversity and inclusive excellence. This is why, for the sixth straight year, CSUSM received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. This award is strong validation of the hard work of so many as we continue to maintain our focus on diversity, educational equity and social justice.

Thank you to all members of our campus community, including our dedicated Office of Inclusive Excellence staff, Marilyn McWilliams and Ariel Stevenson, who continue to lead from where they are. I share your commitment and am impressed by the continuous work underway. Thank you to all those who are showing their leadership through collaboration, courageous conversations, prioritizing our students and advocating for positive change.

I invite your ideas, support and questions. It's critical to me that all voices are heard. Please use the [webform](#) or email pres@csusm.edu if you have additional thoughts or would like to lend your ideas to any of our inclusive excellence initiatives or workgroups.

Sincerely,
Ellen J. Neufeldt, Ed.D.
President