



Dear CSUSM Community,

I had hoped my first message to you of 2021 would be of a different nature; but I'm compelled to write to you today to address the attack on our democracy and disparate response that occurred yesterday at our nation's Capitol building. Like so many of you, I watched the violent disruptions to the certification of the presidential election unfold on the news with disbelief, anger and sorrow. I was appalled to see rioters fly Confederate flags, display anti-Semitic symbols, illegally occupy legislators' offices, vandalize Federal property, and so much more.

Today, I send my thoughts and support to all of us who are grieving, traumatized, and deeply unsettled by the current state of our fragile democracy. I understand that what leaders say makes a profound difference as does how we respond and care, so I want to be clear: This is a time for us to dig deep in our commitment to social justice, inclusion and civic engagement to create a better future for our nation and our world. This is not about politics or partisanship – it is about how we come together through our mission of higher education to nurture the health of our democracy and stopping the spread of misinformation, hate and white supremacy.

Each generation faces social, political, and economic challenges that provoke a reexamining of democracy and our shared values. This is yet another watershed moment. Each of us must be actively engaged in strengthening civic life locally and beyond to address our society's most pressing challenges. And that's where efforts come in related to preparing our students to be active and informed participants in our democracy, including our [Civic Learning Initiative](#) with programs like [American Democracy Project](#) and [Democracy in Action](#); efforts in our [University Library](#) to teach information literacy and how to navigate our complex contemporary information landscape; and focus areas such as our [Civility Campaign](#), which helps build skills and tools for civil discourse. Coupled with our commitments and ongoing work to be more anti-racist as both individuals and an inclusive learning organization, I know that we will help members of our university to be effective leaders and agents of change for a better tomorrow. Education is truly the key to a better shared future, and I am filled with hope and optimism when I think of the far-reaching impact this work has on our world.

As we write the next chapter of Cal State San Marcos through a strategic planning process, let's continue to take care of ourselves and each other. The following resources, services and spaces for community building are available:

- [Student Health and Counseling Services](#) – primary care, preventative services, wellness education and mental health services for students.
- [Cougar Care Network](#) – information, resources and support for students dealing with personal, academic, financial or other challenges.
- [Faculty/Staff Associations](#) – for meaningful connection and community.
- [Employee Assistance Program](#) – professional counseling and services for a wide range of concerns for employees.
- [FACES](#) – supportive services, resources, coaching and professional training and development for faculty.
- [Faculty Center](#) – offers programming, events and other faculty resources.
- [Mindful CSUSM](#) – links to research on the physical and social benefits of mindfulness along with tips on establishing your own practice.
- [Office of Inclusive Excellence](#) – resources and support for students and employees centered on CSUSM's commitment to inclusive excellence.
- [Office of University Ombuds](#) – confidential, neutral, independent support to resolve university-related conflicts or complaints on an informal basis for students and employees.
- [Staff Center](#) – resource referral, support and care for staff.
- Various student centers provide supportive student spaces for programming, dialogue and community support, including the [Black Student Center](#), [Cross-Cultural Center](#), [Gender Equity Center](#), [Latinx Center](#), [LGBTQA Pride Center](#) and [Veterans Center](#).

Finally, Interim Chief Diversity Officer Ranjeeta Basu and I will share an update in the spring semester on the August 2020 anti-racism commitments we made as a campus last August. Thanks to each of you who are contributing to make our campus a more equitable and inclusive place.

Take care,

Ellen Neufeldt
President

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333 South Twin Oaks Valley
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