

ELEVATE



FORMER FOSTER YOUTH THRIVE AT CSUSM

CSUSM business major Beronica Obney became a ward of the State of California when she was only six months old. When she crosses the stage at commencement, she will be the first person in her family to graduate with a college degree.

Former foster youth find support to follow their academic dreams at CSUSM through a one-of-a-kind program called ACE Scholars Services. Since 2007 the number of students served annually has grown from nine to nearly 50, making CSUSM the university with the highest number of former foster youth per capita of any other in the United States.

ACE Scholars Services seeks to help students acclimate to life as a student, offering both personal and academic support and counseling. Statistics show that students with strong campus connections have higher graduation rates. "We have a saying: we don't look at where you came from – we look at where you are going," said program director Jim Mickelson.

And that's what means the most to Obney: "At CSUSM I'm not known as a former foster youth. I'm known as a college student."

NEW REPORT CALLS FOR IMPROVING AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

A report made possible through a generous donation from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and released by the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center (CICSC) at CSUSM reveals alarming data about the decline of educational attainment for Native American students in the state. "My hope is that this document will help inform educational leaders and legislators so that we can create better policies and programs to do something about this," said Joely Proudfit, CSUSM Native studies professor and director of the CICSC. The University is proud to work with regional tribal communities to help prepare their youth for higher education. Currently CSUSM has the fastest growing Native American student population within the California State University system.

To learn more about the CICSC at CSUSM, visit www.csusm.edu/air/cicsc



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