

Subject: Welcome to the 2026-27 Academic Year

Date: Monday, August 31, 2026 at 12:41:19 PM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Office of the President

To: Christine Paik



California State University
SAN MARCOS

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT

Dear CSUSM faculty and staff,

Welcome to the first day of the fall semester!

Today, our campus comes alive once again as 17,500 students return to classrooms, labs, studios, offices and gathering spaces across campus. Whether you spent the summer preparing courses, supporting orientation, welcoming students to housing, maintaining our beautiful campus, advancing research or working behind the scenes to make this day possible, thank you. Every one of you plays an important role in creating the experience our students have at Cal State San Marcos.

At last week's Employee Convocation, I reflected on the extraordinary momentum we are building together. From the opening of Black Oak Hall and Kwíla Dining, which added 555 student beds and expanded access to affordable housing, to the continued progress on Hunter Hall of Science and Engineering and our future wellness and recreation center, our campus continues to grow in ways that strengthen student success and belonging.

I also shared that our Blueprint for the Future campaign has now surpassed \$173 million toward its \$200 million goal, reflecting the tremendous confidence our community has in the transformative impact of a CSUSM education. Together, philanthropy and research are helping us create new opportunities for students, expand innovation and strengthen our region.

This year also brings important recognition of who we are as a university. We earned reaffirmation of our accreditation and continue to be recognized nationally for social mobility and community engagement. Those accomplishments are a testament to you, our faculty and staff, and your unwavering commitment to student success. The WSCUC review affirmed what we already know: CSUSM's people are deeply dedicated to our mission and clear about who we are and whom we serve.

Our mission does not come to life on its own. It is lived every day through you, our faculty and staff who show up for our students, our campus and one another. That is why this year we are focusing intentionally on the employee experience and the support systems that help all of you do this important work. We will build on feedback from our World Cafés, including our employee life cycle work and a more coordinated

ecosystem of care. These efforts are grounded in a simple belief: how we support the human beings who make this university possible matters.

You'll be hearing more about these initiatives in the days ahead. [You can also watch the video of my remarks.](#)

As we begin the semester, I remain as optimistic as ever about our future. Our mission of student success and social mobility continues to be our north star, guiding our strategic plan, our investments and our work every day. Whether through new and innovative academic programs or the countless acts of care that happen across campus, we are helping define where higher education needs to go and what it must become.

Thank you for everything you do for our students, our university and our region.

I wish you a wonderful semester filled with purpose, connection and the unshakable belief in the Power of Us.

Warmly,

Ellen J. Neufeldt
President
