

Subject: Welcoming Peter A. Lien, Chief Enrollment Officer
Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 2:01:44 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Office of the President
To: Christine Paik



California State University
SAN MARCOS

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT

Dear CSUSM community,

As many of you know, over the past year we have been engaged in a national search for our next chief enrollment officer. Today, I am pleased to share with you that I have appointed Peter A. Lien to serve in this important role.

Pete joins CSUSM from the University of Northern Colorado, where he has served as associate vice president for Enrollment Management since 2021. In that role, he leads a 100-person enrollment division encompassing admissions, financial aid, the registrar, bursar operations and extended campus programs. He also co-chairs the university's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, working across campus to align recruitment, affordability and retention strategies.

Pete brings more than 15 years of experience in enrollment management and admissions across public and private higher education institutions. Throughout his career, he has developed a broad understanding of the many factors that shape a student's decision to enroll and their ability to succeed once they arrive. His experience includes developing access initiatives, strengthening community and school partnerships, using data to inform enrollment strategies, and working collaboratively across academic and administrative units.

In selecting our next chief enrollment officer, it was important to me that we find a leader who could build on the tremendous momentum already underway in Enrollment Management Services while helping us navigate the changing landscape of higher education. Pete brings both the strategic expertise and collaborative leadership needed to advance our enrollment priorities and ensure we continue creating pathways for students to choose CSUSM, succeed here and achieve their goals.

His experience also aligns closely with CSUSM's commitment to access, affordability and social mobility. At the University of Northern Colorado, Pete helped launch the UNC Tuition Promise to expand access for Colorado students with significant financial need and played a key role in enrollment strategies that contributed to the university becoming the newest Hispanic-Serving Institution in Colorado. He has also helped strengthen retention and student success through a combination of data-informed strategies and cross-campus collaboration.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding work of our Enrollment Management Services team. Through their dedication, creativity and sustained focus on our students, EMS has helped CSUSM sustain and grow enrollment. This fall, we welcomed a record 17,500 students to our university — an extraordinary milestone that reflects the hard work of colleagues across EMS and throughout the university who have contributed to this success.

I also want to express my sincere appreciation to Interim Chief Enrollment Officer Ed Mills for his leadership and service to CSUSM over the past year. Ed stepped into this role at an important time for the university and brought his considerable experience and expertise to help guide our enrollment efforts. I am so grateful for his partnership and for the stability and leadership he provided during this transition.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who participated in the search process and shared their perspectives along the way. I am especially grateful to Provost Carl Kemnitz and the members of our search committee for their thoughtful engagement and commitment to identifying the right leader for this important role.

Pete will arrive on campus Nov. 1. Please join me in welcoming him to CSUSM and the Cougar family. I look forward to introducing him to our campus community and working together to build on the momentum we have created and expand the opportunities ahead for our students.

Sincerely,

Ellen J. Neufeldt
President
