



Dear campus community,

I'm reaching out following the tragic shooting this week at [Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas](#). As I thought about what to write to you, I couldn't think of what I could possibly say given all that we've already experienced in 2022 and over the last decade. I felt at a loss for words knowing that we are once again grieving the tremendous loss of innocent life.

In the wake of the recent tragedies in Buffalo, N.Y., and Laguna Woods, as an educator, leader and human, what happened in Texas on Tuesday rocks me to my core – and I know so many of you feel the same way. As parents and grandparents, uncles and aunts, we worry for the safety of the children in our lives. As educators – all of us – we can relate to what those in the K-12 classrooms and administrative offices are going through.

I must acknowledge that here at CSUSM we train future teachers, counselors, educational specialists, administrators and more. At the same time, we partner with numerous school districts across our region. It is a difficult time to be in education right now – their concerns are our concerns. Their calls for action are our calls for action. Today, and every day, we stand in solidarity with our teachers, educators, administrators and parents against the gun violence that has become far too common in our society and in our schools.

In this time of collective grief, I find it hard to find hope. So many are wondering, including me, where do we go from here? While I certainly do not have all the answers – nor do I want to offer false positivity – I do know that in higher education we must do our part. We must push back on the fatalism that says this is an unsolvable problem. Together, we will work to be the change we need to see in our world.

In this difficult time, please lean on one another. For our faculty and staff, the [Employee Assistance Program](#) is available to you. Students, please consult our [Student Health & Counseling Services center](#) or our many [mental health resources](#) if you need support. As I shared in my [last message](#), please prioritize your well-being, self-care and care for those around you.

In Cougar solidarity,

Ellen Neufeldt

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