

2024 ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE

April 6, 2024



TRIO
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES



AGENDA



8:30-9:00

Registration

9:00-9:20

Networking
Activity

9:20-9:30

Welcome
Remarks

9:30-10:30

*Keynote – Sonia
Gutierrez,
MiraCosta
College*

10:30-10:40

Break

10:40-11:40

*Session I – Preparing
Your Pitch to
Successfully Network –
Alexa Diaz, CSUSM*

11:40-11:50

Break

11:50-12:50

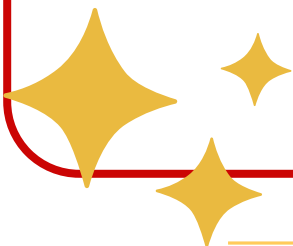
*Session II – Build Your
Voice to Find the Right
Internship – Meredith
Mendez, UCSD*

12:50-1:00

Final
Remarks/Evalu
ation

Networking
Lunch

12:50-1:50



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Sonia Gutierrez

The author of *Spider Woman / La Mujer Araña* and the recipient of the Tomás Rivera Book Award 2021 and the International Latino Book Awards 2022 for her novel, *Dreaming with Mariposas* (FlowerSong Press, 2020) and also the winner of the ILBA Book into Movie Awards 2023. She teaches composition, critical thinking and writing, and creative writing. Her bilingual poetry collection, *Paper Birds: Feather by Feather / Pájaros de papel: Pluma por pluma* is forthcoming with El Martillo Press this Spring 2024. She is currently working on her first illustrated book, *The Adventures of a Burrito Flying Saucer* and *Sana Sana Colita de Rana: Poems to Not Perish / Sana sana colita de rana: Poemas para no morir*, a bilingual poetry collection.



GUEST SPEAKER



Alexa Diaz

Alexa Diaz currently serves as the Associate Director of Academic Connections (AC) within the Office of Undergraduate Studies. In addition to her administrative role, she holds a lecturer position for First Year & University Programs (FYUP). She is a proud alumna of CSUSM, where she earned her BA in Human Development and Spanish. During her undergraduate years, she held several leadership roles in organizations including First-Year Programs, Student Life and Involvement Center, ASI board of reps, COMPACT, and the Tukwut Leadership Circle certificate program. Within TRIO SSS, Alexa served as a Peer Mentor for our program and as a Peer Educator for our First-Year seminar course that supports our first-year TRIO SSS students. Furthering her educational journey, Alexa completed her master's degree in educational counseling at SDSU in 2022. Beyond her roles within Academic Connections and as a lecturer, Alexa is serving as the vice president for the Latino Association of Faculty and Staff (LAFS)CSUSM chapter. She also plays an active role on the annual planning committee for CSUSM's Cesar Chavez Day of Service and the Women's Leadership Symposium. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outdoors, visiting her dad and family in Mexico, and traveling to tropical places.



GUEST SPEAKER



Meredith Mendez

(She/her/ella) is a Latina first-generation college graduate; she holds a BA in Human Development from CSU San Marcos and an MA in Higher Education Leadership from the University of San Diego (USD). During her time at CSU San Marcos, Meredith was a student assistant at the Office of Internships, where she supported students, faculty, and community partners in creating valuable internship opportunities for students. Her experience sparked her interest in higher education as a career. She went on to pursue a graduate program at USD, where she contributed to the growth and success of the Military and Veterans program. Passionate about advocating for experiential learning opportunities, Meredith is deeply committed to supporting students, particularly those who are first-generation or underrepresented. Meredith is currently a coordinator and counselor at the Academic Internship Program at UC San Diego. She supports students with STEM majors and coordinates the Biology Research Internship Program.



STUDENT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ashley Gamez



Ashley is a first-generation student and transfer from Palomar College. Currently she is a junior majoring in Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing. She is the Chief Marketing Officer for The Latino Business Student Association, a COBA student organization. Adding on, she currently works as the Student Assistant to the Director of Student Success. Furthermore, she enjoys helping peers with their professional development. Ashley hopes to work at a binational biotech company after graduating from CSUSM.

Bethany Nicholls



Bethany is a senior finishing her double majors in sociology as well as in criminology and justice studies. She is passionate about helping students with disabilities navigate the system in order to obtain services. For this reason, she is hoping to get into San Diego State University's Postsecondary Educational Leadership and Student Affairs program for the 2025-26 academic year.

Karina Ramirez



Karina is a first generation student currently in her third year at CSUSM studying Criminal Justice with a minor in Writing and Literature Studies. She is involved on campus through ASI, works as a JusticeCorps intern, and likes to read at the beach in her spare time. Karina hopes to go to law school after graduating from CSUSM





TRIO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES



Offers academic, personal, and professional support through services that empower and encourage undergraduate students from first-generation, low income, and/or disability backgrounds to persist and graduate. TRIO SSS is committed to the CSUSM mission, provides an array of holistic cultural enrichment opportunities and social mobility programming that aligns with regional needs to enhance student life after graduation.

CONNECT



csusm_trioss



TRIO SSS



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