

# CSUSM STAFF CENTER COMMITTEE MAY 2021 REPORT

## **Mission**

To foster a community that inspires belonging, encourages personal and professional development and connects staff to holistic services and support.

## **Vision**

To create an environment where all staff feel valued and supported and are given the tools to thrive in their personal and professional lives contributing to the culture of care embraced by the entire campus.

## **Values**

### *Inclusive*

We are committed to fostering a sense of belonging where each member of our diverse staff feels valued, respected, and encouraged to bring their authentic selves to work.

### *Caring*

We are committed to nurturing a compassionate atmosphere where we look out for one another in support of personal and professional success and well-being for all staff.

### *Collaborative*

We are committed to building meaningful partnerships that connect our staff to the many resources available on and off our campus.

### *Empowering*

We are committed to supporting our staff, creating a space where their voices are heard, and providing the resources and encouragement for them to advocate for themselves.



## HISTORY

CSUSM staff have requested and emphasized the need for greater support through a staff center for many years. As a result of her 2019 Listening and Learning Tour, conversations with students, faculty, staff, and administrators, President Neufeldt announced the CSUSM Staff Center ("Center") as a campus care initiative to address that need. The Center is a key component in the campus's efforts to ensure staff have access to peer support, opportunities for professional development and advancement, and referrals to on- and off-campus resources.

After establishing an interim director and organizing a committee, the Center entered its soft opening phase on September 1, 2020.

## STAFF CENTER COMMITTEE



The Staff Center Committee (SCC) meets on a monthly basis to report on progress toward specific goals; to review and approve suggestions for programming and events; and to report on any feedback received from the campus community on past events and/or future needs. (Previously, the committee met bi-weekly.)

Committee members are ambassadors for the Center, listening to, advocating for, and sharing concerns, needs, and feedback from staff. The SCC then uses this feedback to suggest events and programming to support staff. Additional feedback is received through campus surveys and data received by Human Resources and the President.

The Center and SCC also encourage feedback from our staff in several ways. We encourage those who have attended Center events to complete our after-event survey. Feedback received helps us improve our current programming and provides additional ideas for future events. We also constantly communicate to staff that we are here to help and encourage their feedback and comments by contacting the Center directly or reaching out to SCC members.

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The SCC includes representation from each of the campus staff unions, faculty and staff associations, and divisions (including CSUSM Corporation). The Staff Appreciation and Development (SAND) president and an Office of Human Resources staff member also serve on the SCC along with the interim Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Payroll Services (AVP, HRPS).

Representing	Name	Title
Staff Center	Susan O'Connor	Interim Director
SAND	Ahmbra Austin	Chair
CSUSM Corporation Representative		
Human Resources	Marcia Agnew	Human Resources Generalist
Division Representatives		
Academic Affairs	Kris Roberts	Administrative Support Coordinator, Planning and Academic Resources
Finance & Administrative Services	Lesley Rankin	Executive Assistant to the Vice President, Administrative Policy Analyst
Office of the President	Cheryl Landin	Decision Support Analyst Community Engagement
Student Affairs	Rachel Wilson	Assistant Athletic Trainer, Athletics
University Advancement	Lauren Moreno	Event Planner
FSA Representatives		
BFSA	Talisha St. John	President
LAFS	Perla Rivas	Secretary
JFSA	TBD	
APIDA	Christine Lee	President
LGBTQA FSA	TBD	
Staff Union Representatives		
CSUEU	Vanessa Vincent	President
	Mike Geck	Vice President & Chief Steward
APC	Valerie Zambrano Ramirez	Chapter Steward
Teamsters	Jayce Yardley	Shop Steward
SUPA	Timothy Dow	President
Human Resources		
Human Resources and CSUSM Wellness Programs	Courtney Tamone	HR Analyst
AVP, HRPS	Kent Porter	Interim AVP, HRPS

## AREAS OF FOCUS

With the creation of the Center's mission and vision, the SCC has turned its focus on recommending services and resources to help meet the current needs of our staff.

Analysis of committee feedback and results from the 2020 Staff Needs Survey uncovered three primary themes or areas of focus the SCC used to develop the Center's mission and vision. These three themes will help inform future programming and events.

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### PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This theme highlights staff's desire for increased resources and programming focused on professional growth.

Examples: Staff Onboarding Program and suggested ideas for future events such as a Staff Professional Development Conference

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## HOLISTIC WELLNESS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

This theme highlights staff's need for resources that focus on mental health wellness, networking, and events that build a sense of community.

Examples: New Hire Meet and Greet and Gettin' Artsy with Marilyn Huerta

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## SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESOURCES

This theme highlights staff requests for access to centralized resources and other areas of support. The SCC drew on this theme to suggest resources for the Staff Center website and additional future programming.

Example: Staff Center Website

## SUBCOMMITTEES

Because the size of the SCC can prohibit timely, effective action on the many goals of the Center, subcommittees are utilized to advance specific charges or tasks. Subcommittees report back to the full committee to solicit feedback and approval as they complete their charges and on an ongoing basis for long-term tasks. Official requests for subcommittee volunteers are made during SCC meetings. A member list for each subcommittee is given at the end of the report.

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## THEMED SUBCOMMITTEES

Three themed subcommittees have been created to further develop the Staff Center's areas of focus. These subcommittees also include members outside the SCC.

**Charge:** Brainstorm ideas for events, resources, and programming that fit within each theme.

### *Professional and Career Development (PCD)*

**Progress:** Many of the PCD subcommittee's events and programming overlap with other areas on campus, including the Office of Human Resources and the Investing in You (IY) program. Thus, many of the ideas discussed during subcommittee meetings are forwarded for development to other areas (e.g., the *Coping with the Unknown* event hosted by IY).

**Future Plans:** The subcommittee will continue to explore events, programming, and potential collaborations with other areas on campus. In collaboration with IY, the subcommittee is in the early stages of planning an event that will provide tips on having difficult conversations with supervisors.

### *Holistic Wellness and Community Building (HWCB)*

**Progress:** The HWCB subcommittee held several successful community building events during Spring 2021. On April 1, Mike Geck and Criselda Yee hosted Gettin' Dirty: Innovative Hands-on Gardening Tips for Beginners. Gettin' Artsy with Marilyn Huerta was held on May 13. Both events were extremely successful and received positive feedback through the after-event survey with attendance ranging from 10-25.

**Future Plans:** The subcommittee is in the process of collaborating on an event with The CSU Shiley Institute for Palliative Care @ CSUSM revolving around grief.



Mike Geck presenting from his garden during the Gettin' Dirty event held on April 1, 2021

### Support Services and Resources (SS&R)

**Progress:** The SS&R subcommittee is working to completely revamp the Center’s website, streamlining data and ensuring resources are easy to find and remain timely.

**Future Plans:** To keep the Center’s website relevant, the subcommittee will provide timely information on the homepage and other select website pages. This could include providing details on important upcoming events, campus updates, or documents on topics such as the g/8o program.

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### MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS



The Staff Center is here for you!

So who are we?  
The Center is here to support you. Our mission is to foster a community that inspires belonging, encourages personal and professional growth, and connects our staff to holistic services and support.  
We are focused on creating an environment where all of our staff feel valued and supported and we give the tools to thrive in their personal and professional lives, contributing to the culture of care embraced by the entire campus.

3/18/21- Center’s first newsletter

**Charge:** Develop and publish the Center newsletter, manage communication outlets such as Teams and other platforms, and ensure communications sent on behalf of the SCC align with the Center’s mission.

**Progress:** The Center’s [first newsletter](#) was published on March 18, 2021. Staff have shown an interest in Center publications. The first newsletter received a 60% open rate and our [April issue](#) received 50%. Newsletters will be published every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, often with a theme, such as the April 2021 issue focusing on self-care and the May issue focusing on non-MPP staff who have received a degree or certificate in 20/21.

**Future Plans:** There are plans to expand the Center’s engagement with staff by creating a Teams site and LinkedIn profile.

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### BUDDY PROGRAM

**Charge:** Develop a plan for non-MPP staff that includes a process for recruiting, locating, assigning, and cataloging buddy volunteers and a list of desirable buddy attributes.



The Center’s first event: CSUSM Climb Afterparty Event held on September

**Progress:** The subcommittee reviewed the buddy onboarding tool kit and provided suggestions to the interim director based on feedback from the full committee.

**Future Plans:** Subcommittee will continue to advise on how to improve the Buddy and onboarding program.

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### MISSION AND VISION

**Charge:** Develop draft mission and vision statements that reflect the priorities and values of the committee and the Center; provide updates and seek feedback from the committee to finalize drafts.

**Progress:** The subcommittee developed and received approval from the SCC for the Center’s mission and vision statements. The subcommittee also developed Center values.

**Future Plans:** The subcommittee completed its charge and has been disbanded.

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### COMMITTEE REPORT

**Charge:** Identify key areas to be included in committee reports due to the President; develop an outline; gather information; pull the report together and ensure it is accurate, clear, and concise; provide monthly reports and receive full committee approval when needed.

**Progress:** The subcommittee received approval from the SCC and submitted the draft and final committee reports to the president.

**Future Plans:** This subcommittee completed its charge and has been disbanded.

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## NEW HIRE MEET & GREET

**Charge:** Support and handle all logistics for the event, send special invitations to recent new hires, rotate attendance to help facilitate the event, and recruit members from the SCC to attend.

**Progress:** On February 12, 2021, the subcommittee hosted an event for SCC members to welcome and answer questions from staff who have joined CSUSM within the past six months. In addition to the subcommittee members, there were 10 new employees who attended virtually.

**Future Plans:** Depending on the rate of future hiring, these events will be held once a quarter. The subcommittee will need to explore how to transition this to an in-person event.

## STAFF RECOGNITION



Current Cougar Spotlights (Left to Right): Perla Rivas, Student Affairs/CSUSM Corporation; Sonia Perez, Academic Affairs; and Angela Sanchez, FAS

In Fall 2020, the Center implemented two new programs to recognize staff: Cougar Wins and Cougar Spotlight.

The Cougar Wins program celebrates educational milestones, awards, promotions, presentations, successful projects and other exciting news. Announcements are shared on the Staff Center website.

The Cougar Spotlight highlights one staff member via an interview shared on the Staff Center website. Questions vary for each participant, but common topics include their best memory of CSUSM, their role on campus, and advice they have for other staff. Interviews are posted on the Center website and highlighted in monthly newsletter publications.

## STAFF CENTER AND COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since September 1, 2020, the Center has hosted several events in collaboration with campus partners such as SAND (CSUSM Climb After Party), Mindful CSUSM, and Student Health and Counseling Services (Mental Health First Aid Course for staff).

The **New Hire Meet & Greet Event**, held on February 12, 2021, was held virtually with 10 new hires participating. It was a very casual space for new employees to ask questions and meet new people.

On March 18, 2021, the Staff Center published its very first newsletter. The first campaign received a 62% open rate, or 488 staff, and the April issue had a nearly 50% open rate. The Center has published a total of four newsletters, including two special editions in collaboration with the CSU Shiley Institute for Palliative Care @CSUSM revolving around COVID-19 and Institutional Planning & Analysis focused on the Viewfinder Campus Climate Survey. All previous publications can be found [here](#).



New Hire Meet & Greet Event

The HWCB subcommittee's **Gettin' Series** has been a great success pulling together staff for a chance to try something new whether that is gardening or finding your artistic self.

On May 3, 2021, the Office of Human Resources, Staff Center and the four staff unions (CSUEU, APC, Teamsters and SUPA) held Labor Management 101. Campus employees were invited to learn more about the evolution of labor management at CSUSM, union governance and the collective bargaining agreements. More than 40 staff attended the virtual event.

As the three groups helping encourage the culture of care on campus, the Staff Center, Cougar Care Network, and FACES collaborated to form the Council of Care (COC). The COC's goal is to combine resources to support and care for students, staff, faculty, and administrators in ways each group is unable to accomplish separately. The COC shares the concerns and challenges faced by the campus and finds ways to address them. One successful event series created through this collaboration is **OurSpace**, which provides an ongoing space for CSUSM faculty, administrators and staff to drop-in, connect with others, and share how to best support students while managing their own challenges.

## FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The Center's collaborations have been very well received, especially during a time when many staff are working from home. Feedback on these events have expressed staff appreciation for opportunities to gather with others outside of their offices and anticipation for future events.

MindfulCSUSM:

*"Looking forward to more events like this just for staff."*

*"It was really nice to just unwind at the end of the day."*

New Hire Meet & Greet

*"I loved the opportunity to connect with other staff"*

*"I wish it was go minutes! An hour didn't feel long enough! :)"*

*Getting' Dirty*

*"The authenticity!! Outdoors, mix of in person and educational with inspiring photos! Included family! Great tips and uplifting! This could be an ongoing tv series. Great job!!!"*



Criselda Yee presenting a photo of Michael Yee in their butterfly house during the Getting' Dirty event.

## FUTURE AREAS OF FOCUS

Themed subcommittees will continue their charge of suggesting future events, programming, services and resources for the Center and determine what is needed to make each idea successful (e.g. funding, people power, collaborations, etc.).

As the Center continues to gain momentum across campus, the SCC will utilize more formal methods (e.g., surveys and focus groups) of soliciting feedback on Center events, programming, and resources to direct more long-term programming and provide benchmarks for measuring success on a larger scale.



Getting' Artsy with Marilyn Huerta – May 13, 2021

The Viewfinder Campus Climate Survey for staff included three questions directly related to the Center and our mission: 1) The Staff Center is helping foster a sense of community and belonging among staff; 2) I feel that my work at CSUSM is valued; and 3) I am satisfied with the support I receive from CSUSM. The responses from this year's survey provide a starting point to benchmark the performance of the Center and how successful we are at engaging with and supporting our staff.

Another major shift for the Center comes this Fall as staff begin to transition back to campus. Not only will many Center events shift from virtual to in-person, but it will become even more important for the Center and the SCC to take a more active role in engaging with staff.

The SCC will be tasked with exploring additional support services to be offered by the Center, such as resume and cover letter critiques. The interim director will also take a more direct approach by building relationships with individual staff across campus and sharing what the Center has to offer.



Staff sharing how they practice self-care in our April 2021. issue.

Designating a physical location for the Center is a top priority, especially with many staff transitioning back to campus. With our staff returning, many future events will be held in-person. Receiving funds specifically designated for the Center is critical to the future planning of events, services, and programming.

## SUBCOMMITTEE ROSTERS

Professional and Career Development (PCD)	Holistic Wellness and Community Building (HWCB)	Support Services and Resources (SSR)
Perla Rivas, chair Vanessa Vincent Ahmbra Austin Susan O'Connor Bhavisha Talsania Alejandra Sanchez	Lesley Rankin Gonzalez, chair Michael Geck Susan O'Connor Marilyn Huerta Noella Richer Jillian Dunn	Michael Geck, chair Susan O'Connor Natalie O'Hara Jessica Wilson
Buddy Program	Committee Reports	Communications
Lauren Moreno, chair Marcia Agnew Courtney Tamone	Susan O'Connor, chair Lesley Rankin Gonzalez Vanessa Vincent	Ahmbra Austin, chair Rachel Wilson Lesley Rankin Gonzalez Susan O'Connor
New Hire Meet and Greet	Mission and Vision	
Lauren Moreno, chair Valerie Ramirez Kris Roberts Christine Lee Talisha St. John	Ahmbra Austin, chair Michael Geck Perla Rivas Cheryl Landin Susan O'Connor	