California State University SAN MARCOS | OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Standing Together in a Culture of Care and Free Expression

Dear campus community,

Here at CSUSM, we are deeply committed to an environment of learning where our community can express who they are and what they believe. We also acknowledge that freedom of speech can both be an expression of pain as well as the cause of it, whether rooted in one's personal identity, experiences on campus or the impact of events unfolding in our larger world. As I have met with various faculty, staff and student groups, many of you have directly shared your hurt with me. While I do not pretend to have all the answers or solutions, what I do know is we must continue to collectively work toward creating a space where everyone feels welcome and heard.

One action step is to offer care and support. Dr. Rocio Terry **(OCC@csusm.edu)**, a licensed clinical social worker here on campus, is available in an interim role to anyone who needs assistance navigating experiences that are disruptive to their living, learning, or working (what we call "Other Conduct of Concern"). Additionally, with designated funds from the Chancellor's Office, we will launch a search for a permanent Director of Community Support and Conflict Resolution. The new position will implement strategies to address "Other Conduct of Concern" and also care for and support campus community members experiencing harm outside of the definitions of the Nondiscrimination and Title IX Policy.

Please remember there are many other resources for support, including:
Cougar Care Network
Employee Assistance Program
Campus mental health & counseling services

This is just one step on the journey. While the path forward is not always easy or perfectly clear, we are committed to protecting free speech while also working to ensure CSUSM is a place for everyone. I promise to continue listening, supporting and taking action to ensure that every single one of you knows that you matter and that you belong here.

I ask that we walk this imperfect path with compassion and resolve. And together, as a campus that deeply values care, inclusivity and belonging, we will continue to uphold and strengthen the humanity and respect that defines who we are at CSUSM.

In Cougar Solidarity,

Ellen Neufeldt

President