

# Voices

*Inclusive Excellence:  
Transformation Through  
Collective Commitment*

*Inspiring Collegiality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at CSU Channel Islands*

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**MULTICULTURAL  
ENGAGEMENT**

C H A N N E L  
I S L A N D S

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY DIRECTOR

They say that hindsight is 20/20. But no one could have predicted what was going to happen last year. Every day felt like *Groundhog Day*.

We were hit by a global pandemic, and expected to quickly respond to immediate changes—distance learning/teaching, homeschooling our kids, and working from home due to COVID-19. I experienced a whirlwind of emotions from shock and denial to anger, bargaining, and depression—finally accepting that this just might be the new normal. It felt like Kubler Ross’ stages of grief. Days turned into weeks; weeks turned into months; and the uncertainty of when this will end or what will come next has caused anxiety and stress, trying to stay safe while fearing that we or a loved one will get COVID-19. At times I felt so lonely and sad, wondering if I would ever see my elderly parents and loved ones again.

The pandemic also called attention to so many inequities and disparities in our world as we were mandated to shelter in place, glued to our screens for the latest news, distance learning, working, and social networking. The heinous killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks, Kevin Peterson Jr., and countless others have enraged our communities, sparking tremendous efforts to fight social and racial injustice, police brutality, and advocating for action for change through the Black Lives Matter movement. CSU Channel Islands developed a pledge for [Racial Justice - A Commitment to Action](#) and the [7-Point Framework for Realizing Racial Justice](#) with the aim of advancing and promoting *inclusive excellence* and dismantling historical racism embedded in university policies, practices, and structures.

Although everything is constantly moving, shifting and growing, we tend to want to view ourselves and others as static and unchanging. We categorize people, having them check one box, creating labels for gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, age, etc. We hold opinions of others based on our preconceptions, stereotypes, and biases. We become judgmental and critical of others as well as ourselves, fueling our own internalized oppression as we express bias, hatred, and prejudice towards the groups to which we belong. This further perpetuates systematic oppression, undermining, limiting, and obstructing the power and success of minoritized groups.

All of this starts from an early age. Preschoolers are seen as smart, sweet, and adorable with unlimited possibilities for what they can do or who they can grow up to be. Sadly, as they enter middle school, parents often begin to worry that their children’s intellectual capabilities are not up to par, and teachers may start to track students into college-bound versus a vocational track, focusing more attention to those they believe have a greater potential for success. These inequities often continue on through the educational pipeline into college and beyond.

It is important to realize that *inclusive excellence* must start with the individual—with You and Me. We cannot limit ourselves, or limit who we have the potential to be. We need to give ourselves the space, time and freedom to change. We are resilient, and can respond to any challenges we are confronted with as long as we keep an open mind, allowing ourselves to embrace different ways of knowing, being, and living while valuing diversity.

We need to take collective action, stepping up when necessary to fight social and racial injustice. However, we also need to know when to step back and create space others to rise up, to be noticed, and to have a voice.

When I was little, my grandfather taught me a great lesson on what it means to be “excellent.” He said, “You don’t always want to be #1. If you are always first, you will always be looking back, worried about the person behind you trying to pass you up.” He told me it is important to be the person looking forward, striving to always improve—to become a better person. That is all that matters.

This is what epitomizes *inclusive excellence*—building on our own strengths to be the best person we can be. This also means we need to support others to do the same. That way everyone can rise up to reach their own potentials and attain success within their own standards of excellence. We can each contribute to fostering a more diverse, equitable, inclusive world.

Christy Teranishi Martinez, Ph.D.  
Faculty Director of the Center for Multicultural Engagement  
Professor of Psychology  
Editor of the CME Voices Magazine



## A MESSAGE FROM THE STUDENT AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

*Our goal is to create a **beloved community** and this will require a qualitative change in our souls, as well as a quantitative change in our lives.*

~Martin Luther King Jr.

Welcome to 2021 CSUCI community! I am not certain that words can express the tumultuous nature of 2020. I however send prayers and good thoughts to all those whose lives have been impacted by unwarranted violence, social injustice, family and relationship challenges, economic troubles, inequality, unfairness and COVID-19. I have personally been impacted by all of these issues this past year. I have lost family and friends this year to the virus, unwarranted police and community violence, felt the pains of inequality, injustice, ignorance and the failure of well-meaning people of good will to live up to the values they espouse about fairness and inclusion. Despite these experiences, I remain filled with hope. The most unexpected impact on my life this past year, and indeed the world, was COVID-19. Here again, I don't have the words to express the impact it has had in our world. I do, however, have hope that 2021 will be better as we all face this viral pandemic and the pandemic of self-righteousness that has caused many of us to disregard efforts to treat each other with kindness, love and respect for human dignity.

I have hopes that as this year unfolds, we all can experience many blessings and joys ahead, despite the tragedies that have engulf our lives in 2020. Let's maintain an audacious sense of hope that the upcoming year and future will be brighter and better despite mounting evidence to the contrary. We can together make life better for one another and for future generations. However, we must be willing to cut against the grain of how we have lived, loved, mistreated and judged one another. We can be better and do better. We can reignite our concerns for our families, for each other and our greater humanity. We can live in a world where we see each other's humanity with empathy and kindness before we judge who we are politically, ethnically, sexually, religiously and otherwise. We can love each other not regardless of who we each are but because of who we are. We can understand that we are not reduced by our emotions in situations that call for human emotions, but we are uplifted by the expressions of our joys and our pains, when we having a caring beloved community to support us.

As described by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "a beloved community is inclusiveness, both economic and social. The notion that all can share in earth's bounty describes a society in which the social product is shared far more equally than it is in today's world. The beloved community also describes a society in which all are embraced and none discriminated against." We can create this beloved community if we are bold and courageous. It may be the only solution to preventing the ills that befell us in 2020, to gain momentum in 2021.

No pandemic of hate, injustice, inequality or virus can conquer a beloved community. If inclusion means anything, it means we create the communal opportunities to acknowledge, respect, love, honor and support one another. We must lovingly demand the best in ourselves and each other to face the many expected and unexpected obstacles ahead. This is in a sense the greatest opportunity that 2020 has afforded us, the opportunity to recommit ourselves to what truly matters—each other.

Charles E. Osiris, Ph.D.  
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs  
Retention, Outreach & Inclusive Student Services  
Student Affairs Director of the Center for Multicultural  
Engagement



## SHARED DEFINITIONS BY PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

[inclusiveexcellence@csuci.edu](mailto:inclusiveexcellence@csuci.edu)

*Approved by CSUCI President, Academic Senate  
and Staff Council*

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE is a journey requiring collective values, engagement, and practices that support equity, diversity, and inclusion among students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni and the community. Through our commitment to this journey, we recognize that our institution's success in all areas of endeavors is dependent on the collective community's work of making excellence inclusive.

Operationalizing inclusive excellence requires intentional, active, present and future engagement for integrating and sustaining a wide spectrum of diversity within the campus community through a welcoming and safe campus climate, where the cultivation of inclusiveness in every aspect of campus life is every member's responsibility. For someone to work towards becoming excellent at inclusion means many things, for example, advancing the demographic diversity of our institution, working to surface and address our biases, and acting with the intention of fostering inclusivity by ensuring that all voices, perspectives, and opinions are being heard.



# Student-Alumni-Faculty-Staff Voices

## What Inclusive Excellence Means to Me



### **Christabelle Angeles**

'20 B.A. Psychology and Sociology

Inclusive excellence is not limited to race and ethnicity, but culture, sexualities, religion, languages, folklore, body types, and abilities. It is anything and everything under the sun, and each and every one of us all walk under the same sun, moon, and stars. For me, inclusive excellence means learning about history, which includes the good, bad, and the ugly. I strongly believe in the importance of diversity and inclusivity in education not only for underrepresented groups to be represented, but for other groups to understand and learn about one another so they can heal from generational and historical trauma. I identify as Southeast Asian-American and Filipina-American, as a daughter of Filipino immigrants. I believe that there are other stories similar to my own for others who have yet to share their story at the table. Inclusive excellence stems beyond the classroom and into our everyday lives where we learn, understand and support one another. We can help each other heal from the generational scars in safe spaces in our communities, universities, and student organizations. I have been fortunate and grateful to have a network of friends, faculty and staff at CSU Channel Islands who have supported my personal and academic journey every step of the way, reminding me that my story and experience is valid and worthy of being told.



*Christabelle was an active leader at CSUCI, working as a Career Peer Mentor, Events Coordinator for the Empowered Womxn of Color Club (EWOC), and Historian of Psi Chi, the International Honors Society in Psychology.*

*We recognize our students, faculty, and staff come to us with a variety of experiences that are assets... we find ways to help them leverage those rich assets to support their overall success. ~Dr. Frank Tuitt*

### **William Burse**

'19 B.A. Psychology

The first day I stepped onto the CI campus, I felt the whole spectrum of emotions going through my body. I was eager to learn, excited for new experiences, but more importantly nervous and anxious for this new path. I wondered... Is this really going to benefit my life? I imagined professors that all looked alike, talked at students, and took the approach of "It's my way or the highway." And I imagined staff who were counting the hours until they were off work, shying away from students who appeared to need assistance---you know, like any Hollywood college movie. I couldn't have been more wrong. The faculty and staff was filled with a diverse group of individuals with a keen sense to students in need. The campus littered with different flags and events celebrating the different cultures represented at CI. It was a welcoming environment. It was an environment that properly represented the world we live in. The focus on inclusive excellence is a lesson that can drive a student to success throughout their lives. My friends, classmates and professors at CI formed a little community that felt like family. What could be better than that, having people around you that can shed a light on a situation that you may not have experienced before and help you overcome an obstacle you may have struggled with in life. I will forever be thankful to the CI community for focusing on an agenda that makes sure every face is seen, every voice is heard, and every idea examined. This is the way to build a well-rounded individual, and in doing that a better community for us all.

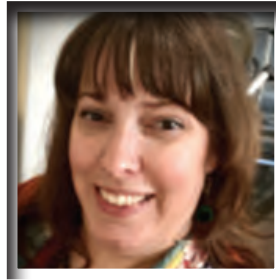


*William is a loving father of two. His undergraduate research in the field of Positive Psychology has led him to pursue a Master's degree in Educational Psychology.*



**Amanda Frazier Timpson**

*Administrative Analyst, Teaching & Learning Innovations,  
Academic Affairs*



Discussing inclusion often involves a minefield of buzzwords mixed with deeply ingrained assumptions and misconceptions about exactly how and to whom the concept applies. As a writer, I'm super nerdy about word choice, but as an advocate, I understand that people can't have open conversations if they're worried about saying the wrong thing. There has to be room for grace and education for effective change to take root.

That's why I'm passionate about Inclusive Excellence. Excellence is an elusive goal at the pinnacle of a lot of trial and error. It can't be attained without sustained cooperation, and

never happens instantly, and never on the first try.

The choice to consciously incorporate the term Inclusive Excellence into our cultural vocabulary at CSUCI tells me the University is committed to the sustained effort of creating an inclusive environment for all students, staff and faculty members.

*Amanda is a passionate advocate for disability rights and awareness, particularly in the realm of gainful, fulfilling employment.*

**José Alamillo, Ph.D.**

*Program Chair and Professor of Chicana/o Studies*



Inclusive excellence is more than photoshopped images on campus flags and banners that proclaim a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The term was introduced by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AA&CU) in 2005 as a guiding principle to include and engage diversity,

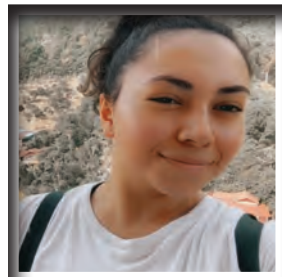
equity, and inclusion as critical to the overall success of the university. I view "Inclusive Excellence" as an ongoing daily practice that cannot be done by a select few but requires collaboration and engagement across campus. It means that we engage with the historical roots of exclusive forms of "excellence" that have produced present-day social inequities. Tackling inequities requires an understanding of data at the institutional, department and classroom level to eliminate barriers that inhibit student success. To ensure these inequities are not reproduced, we must critically examine and transform institutional policies, processes and practices. For example, helping all students belong in your classroom helps build a sense of community where they feel they are truly part of the university. Another best practice for inclusive excellence is creating equitable and inclusive work environments by engaging with diverse perspectives, reducing implicit biases, working with others from different backgrounds, and fostering a climate where every member has an opportunity to thrive and succeed. Consequently, inclusive excellence is a journey of discovery and transformation where we challenge ourselves and others to start building a community with diversity, equity and inclusion as the norms.

*As co-chair of the President's Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence, José helped develop shared definitions for the campus to adopt, create an equity framework to review policies and practices, organize campus conversations around the climate survey, and make recommendations to the President on how to make CSUCI a more equitable and inclusive campus.*

**Juliane Martinez**

*Psychology and Business double major*

Inclusive Excellence at CI has provided me with a supportive and engaging community, giving me the opportunity to learn more and grow as a person. I have done things that I would have never done without the encouragement and support of CI faculty and staff. The year 2020 has brought many challenges. However, I am thankful that this year has allowed me to reflect and participate in many activities, helping me determine that I want to pursue a career in research after graduation. Thanks to Psychology Professor Christy Teranishi Martinez, I was able to present at the Fall 2020 Western Psychological Association (WPA) conference with my classmates our findings from the Growing Works Project: A New Leaf in Life. In our longitudinal mixed-method study we found that clients at the Turning Point Foundation working at Growing Works, a non-profit wholesale nursery, reported that growing plants out in nature and working in this program contributed to developing a stronger sense of purpose, motivation, and optimism to keep moving forward in life. Through this study I gained much knowledge about nature, while also gaining important research experience. Inclusive Excellence at CI gave me the chance to explore resources that our campus offers, and to expand my knowledge, helping me realize my own future dreams...a career in research.



*After graduating, Juliane plans to go to graduate school to continue doing research in the field of Positive Psychology and mental health.*

## “BUT ALL THE CRIMINALS ARE BLACK”: TWO BAKERS ON BLACK LIVES MATTER

By Raquel Baker, Ph.D.

Because Black Lives Matter is about the next generation taking up and transforming a shared historical experience, here I listen to my baby brother, Khalid's, thoughts on Black Lives Matter:



Khalid Baker with sister Raquel Baker

### What does Black Lives Matter (BLM) mean to you?

**Khalid:** BLM to me is a mantra against institutionalized white supremacy. It is the first mental defense that any person of African descent needs to embrace to counteract 90% of the built-in racism that surrounds them in education, health care, housing & upward social mobility. BLM is the foundational principal in a healthy Black psyche when living in a colonized social structure. When you live, breath & think Black, you value your life and the life of black ppl around you! Your decisions are based in the purpose of protecting and multiplying blackness. The BLM movement is just the latest manifestation in the power struggle of Africans: Marcus Garvey, El Haj Malik Shabazz, MLK, Dick Gregory & more have all in various words and different shades stated Black Lives Matter.

**Raquel:** I like how you talk about it as a knowledge and part of historical movements for Black liberation.

**Khalid:** When the Black Panther Party for self-defense started free breakfast programs for children and free health-care screening, they were saying BLM. They were showing these Black lives how to nurture and take care of life.

**Raquel:** A mode of knowledge that is developed in community.

**Khalid:** Black Lives Matter didn't start when the organizations started; it began with the first Black life that came into existence, and it was amplified when people invaded Africa.

**Raquel:** “Slow down, you're losin' 'em, Dre!” Is that the Flavor Flav line?

**Khalid:** So Black Lives Matter is a necessary thought process to grow up with self confidence in a non-Black society.

**Raquel:** Not simply non-Black but anti-Black. When you say, “when the first Black life came into existence,” what do you mean?

**Khalid:** I'm saying the first person in human existence was Black.

**Raquel:** Yes. This idea—or this kind of obvious knowledge that becomes a necessary knowledge in order to be in an actively anti-Black culture—is about grounding our humanity. In my own work—the ideas I explore in my art, scholarship, and teaching—I think about how it is necessary to affirm the value of Black life to transform basic ideological beliefs, daily practices, institutions, policies of our (USA and contemporary global market) culture. You discussed a historical genealogy: “Marcus Garvey, El Haj Malik Shabazz, MLK, Dick Gregory.” For me, an intellectual genealogy includes Frantz Fanon, an anti-colonial



Khalid Baker

thinker and psychologist who theorizes “internalized inferiority”—colonized peoples come to internalize the lack of value that marks their subjective experiences, as well as the material experiences of being targets of appropriative economic institutions and practices. For Fanon, Black non-value or negation is an integral part of settler colonial ideology, social

*Life doesn't make any sense without interdependence. We need each other, and the sooner we learn that, the better for all of us. ~Erik Erikson*

practices, and economic institutions—and what is at stake is exactly what kind of sense of self is materially possible or even imaginable.

**To try to illustrate the connection you and Fanon make between white supremacy and Black subjectivity, let me ask you to share an example of how you have experienced “institutionalized white supremacy”.**

**Khalid:** I think if you have ever gone to a school in America and you open up the books you experience white supremacy. Jesus is white. Santa Clause is white. The Keebler elf is white 😊😊😊. But all the criminals are Black. The evil witch in the fairytale is in Black. Black history is overlooked and begins in slavery in most school textbooks. TV shows provide images of white excellence and Black underachievement.

**Raquel:** My example of this Fanonian experience of racialized, anti-Black space/subjectivity is the first time I was called nigger as a 1<sup>st</sup> grader at a Catholic school in Oakland. I didn’t know what it meant when the older student leaned in and whispered it to me but I knew it was bad—about me not belonging in that space. At my current institution, all-white departments may be more collegial but tell me about how much I still do not belong all the same.

**What could institutions like CI do to foster inclusion? What do you suggest needs to change? Is it attitude adjustments, behaviors, policies or a code of conduct that can help foster inclusivity, a sense of belonging and a better work environment?**



Raquel Baker

**Khalid:** It would take over 400 years to dismantle like it took to perfect! We must first decolonize the minds of blacks and whites! Review history in its proper light, educate on the great accomplishments of POC and NON POC without a slanted bias, redistribute not only material wealth but also emotional wealth! The emotional stability for POC specifically ADOS that they have full access to the benefits of society unobstructed by systematic racism. We must heal as a society and address our division mentalities — i.e., black vs white , man vs woman etc. — we must come together to embrace a unity that defies these socially constructed divisions.

**Raquel:** OK, school me. What is ADOS?

**Khalid:** African Descendants of Slaves. I don’t know if I like or agree with term, but I’ve seen it used a lot.

**Raquel:** Yes. Very good!

**Khalid:** It might be another example of colonized language like we discussed.

**Raquel:** I like because it troubles the whole “we are all descendants of kings and queens” rhetoric.

**Khalid:** But it makes it seem like we are all descendants of slaves tho, right? ADOD is better 😊😊. African descendants of the diaspora! I just made that up 😊😊😊

**Raquel:** Yes! Yes, there are many experiences of freedom, migration, forced migration, exploration, and enslavement in African diasporic and continental lived and historical experiences. The more we can understand the complexity of planetary (human in relation to non-human) experience and trouble, as you say, simple binaries—a key tenet or tool of deconstructive creative and literary methodologies — I think the closer we get to creating the conditions of possibility for inclusion.

*Khalid Baker is a writer, producer, documentary series writer with Steadfaster Media, and Bay Area small-business owner.*

*Raquel Baker is an Assistant Professor of English at CSUCI. She teaches creative writing and contemporary Black literature. In Spring 2021, she is teaching a course on reparations and reconciliations in Black and Indigenous literatures.*

*Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance. ~ Brené Brown*

## INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AND HUMAN DIGNITY

By Charles Osiris, Ph.D.

*“No, no, we are not satisfied and will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.”*

It has been 66 years since Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren conveyed the unanimous opinion in the landmark civil rights case *Oliver Brown, et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, et al.* U.S. 483 (that state sanctioned segregation of public schools was a violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, thus stating that “separate but equal was inherently unequal”). The Supreme Court’s decision finally called into legal question the pernicious conventional American ethos of separate but equal, however, the Supreme Court abdicated any responsibility to provide the states any reasonable methods by which they would overcome their diabolical ideologies in order to end segregation with particular regard to African Americans in public spaces and institutions of learning. The only efforts made by the highest court in the land to inspire the states to live up to the law of the land was in its second decision where the states were ordered to desegregate “with all deliberate speed.”

Today, 2021, educational institutions, governments and government sponsored corporations continue to move “with all deliberate speed” to desegregate. In fact, one might say American disaggregation is the current state of affairs. Research affirms that nonwhite children, particularly African American and Latinx children, are more likely to attend segregated schools today than they were 60 years ago. Similarly, California’s 1996 anti-affirmative action proposition 209 cleverly titled California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI) has had a deleterious impact on underrepresented students’ access to California’s public universities. The voters of the state of California had an opportunity for redemption and to reclaim a righteous commitment to inclusion, equity and diversity by reversing Proposition 209 in this past November 2020 election with Proposition 16. Proposition 16 which would have ended the 24 year impact of Proposition 209. However, Californians decided inclusion, equity and diversity in higher education was not necessarily a high priority and voted against Proposition 16. In many ways making a clear statement about the position of one of the most liberal states in this republic (ranked 7th according to World Population Review). There are certainly many rationales and complexities as to why California Proposition 16 failed to pass, however in the final analysis the greatest impact is being felt by the most historically marginalized underrepresented communities in California.

This is a small but critical exemplar of the of the cultural/political state of affairs by which California institutions of higher education address the challenges of being committed to inclusive excellence in theory and taking practical bold



and collective action to make authentic inclusion common practice. How do American educational institutions fight against their own history of bureaucratic justifications for exclusion to truly become transformational leaders in the authentic work of placing the humanity dignity of students, staff, faculty and communities as a central priority? This should be a principal goal of higher education. This goal of centering people’s human dignity should not be addressed with “all deliberate speed”, but with all the energy, resources and emotional intelligence brought to bear upon an urgent crisis. This is, in many ways, the only meaningful task for any American institution that claims to promote inclusive excellence for all. We have work to do.

- *How do we honor the human dignity of others and ourselves in very intentional ways ?*
- *How do faculty/staff commit to placing equal value on inclusive pedagogy and academic freedom in order to offer a truly transformative educational experience?*
- *How do we choose to deeply question our values to make them to malleable to transformation as oppose to further solidifying our unexamined beliefs about our world that inhibits authentic inclusion and respect for human dignity?*

These are a few questions that if answered with great clarity can transform how higher education institutions go about the business of being inclusive and honoring the human dignity of all.

Our current method of inclusive excellence must include the space for disagreement and transformative reflective time to critically examine our assumptions and our pleasantries that hinder true inclusion and optimal opportunities for synergistic culturally transformative thinking. This may be the only true path to institutional transformation. This is in essence the task of all higher education institutions, including CSU Channel Islands.

In conclusion, inclusive excellence must demand the space for disagreement and cathartic reflective time to critically examine our assumptions and our pleasantries that hinder true inclusion and optimal opportunities for synergistic culturally transformative thinking. Never forgetting the centrality of honor the human dignity of all. It is about the courage of living up to our espoused values, our commitment to a better future and doing all we can now. We can change. If we can challenge and overcome selfishness within ourselves. The impulse to loudly say me me me when the humanity dignity calls for the respect and honoring of us us us.

I remain hopeful.





## DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

By Mitch Avila, Ph.D.

CSUCI Strategic Initiative 3.1 is to “Build a shared understanding of inclusive excellence that includes the development of operational definitions.” Toward that end, I am taking off my Provost hat and donning my political philosophy thinking cap.

I’ll start where philosophers always begin—by asking the right question. Early on philosophers learned to stop treating evaluative concepts as *nouns* and instead treat them as *adjectives*. Hence, Platonic musings on “The Form of the Good” (a hopeless inquiry!) were replaced with more productive Aristotelian investigations of *goodness* as a *quality* of exemplary instances. Likewise, we would do well to avoid treating “inclusive excellence” as a noun and instead employ it as an adjective. What does this mean? Rather than ask “What is inclusive excellence?” by treating inclusive excellence as an adjective we can ask a raft of more fruitful questions, including: *What is an inclusively excellent hiring policy? What is an inclusively excellent degree program? What is an inclusively excellent advising program? What is an inclusively excellent financial aid program?* And so on. For any aspect of the University, an interesting and productive question can be posed:

“What are the characteristics of an inclusively excellent [fill in the blank]?”

From here, reflection and thoughtful conversation lead us into more fruitful directions. There is a wide and growing literature in nearly every field and every aspect of higher education, setting out to discover answers to these important questions. By adopting this approach, we can quickly begin to fill



in the details, building consensus and constructing actionable courses of action, while avoiding Platonic quagmires and Sisyphean tasks.

Second, our challenge is to build a just and equitable institution from the “crooked timber of humanity.” In this regard, my view is that we will get farther faster by focusing on *policy and process* as opposed to *people*. As an institution, the University cannot rely solely on the moral character of its faculty and staff as the guarantor of inclusive excellence. In part this is due to the enormous psychological challenges of improving moral character, but also because we are simply not going to agree on what constitutes an “inclusively excellent person.” Nonetheless, reasonable disagreement is common, and I, for one, regard it as a permanent feature of our society, especially in complex institutions such as the University. Fortunately, while reasonable people disagree, they are still willing to offer fair terms of cooperation to those with whom they disagree. This can be done by having a process for adopting policies and practices that guide our decision making.

Let me offer an example. It is critically important to have *inclusively excellent hiring practices*. This is best achieved by adopting a hiring policy that delineates rules and procedures throughout the hiring process that instantiate our best judgments.

While we would hope that members of the search committee would be attentive to matters of both implicit and explicit biases, we cannot depend on their personal moral character to achieve our institutional goals. After all, even the best among us is often tired and distracted, falling short of our own standards. It is far better, in my view, to adopt policies that lay out processes that support our end goal of an inclusively excellent staff and faculty. Indeed, the outcome is so important that it would be a grave failure if we were to fail to adopt inclusively excellent hiring policies.

Finally, inclusive excellence is rooted in the fundamental mission of the University. We are, ultimately, educating citizens to participate in a democratic society. That democratic society is built on a shared and resolute commitment to justice, fairness, and equality for all. Each of the courses we teach and each of our interactions with students are opportunities for developing habits of mind, building democratic character, dismantling racism, and modeling the democratic virtue of reasonable disagreement. We say it so often it sounds cliché, but *the work of higher education matters. We impact the lives of students and shape communities for decades to come.*

Putting my Provost hat back on, I’m pleased to be joining you in this vital work. I pledge to work with each of you in your respective roles on campus to adopt policies and practices that advance inclusive excellence as we educate democratic citizens.

*Mitch Avila earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from UC Santa Barbara. He has worked in the CSU since 1994 at Fresno State, Cal State Fullerton, CSU Dominguez Hills, and now as Provost at Channel Islands. Avila researches the application of political liberalism to problems in global justice, including the theoretical foundations of human rights and transnational obligations.*





## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MICHELE SERROS

By Salpy Kharadjian

Last Fall, I spent the day at the beach with my friends to appreciate Michele Serros' life, her hometown, and her love for nature and the beach. We wrote poems in honor of her and felt friendship, gratitude, peace, serenity, and happiness.

Michele Serros was a Chicana writer who influenced many young minds, and changed the perceptions of the expectations of Chicana women. The term "Chicana" can be defined in many ways, and be seen to each individual differently. There isn't one right way to be "Chicana," and Michele Serros had to prove it by standing alone against an entire generation of Chicana women who were the first to introduce the term. Although the older generation created the word "Chicana" for themselves and future generations, they had certain expectations for what it meant. Michele Serros opened up the meaning of the word to become an ideal for anyone who identified with it. She was a role model to many of the younger Latinx/Chicanx, and wanted every single person in this community to feel loved, accepted, and inspired. She wrote her book *Chicana Falsa and Other Stories of Death, Identity, and Oxnard*, which was a collection of poems about her life growing up in a small town in California. She wrote unapologetically about herself and the world she lived in, hoping that others would read it and realize that being true to yourself and the way you see your culture is very important and unique. She brings on new meaning for young adults undergoing an identity crisis, being caught between two cultures. She has a way of writing about the real aspects of life that some people sometimes struggle to even talk about while still finding the humor in it. She puts a light into the darkest and heaviest topics.

Michele was a beautiful woman who wore sneakers and barely spoke Spanish, yet was considered a very wholesome Chicana role model. There were many who accused her of not being Chicana because of her "sloppy Spanish" and the way that she dressed, but she stayed true to herself and did not give in to the fixed mindset way of thinking. She was one of the first Chicana writers who mentioned that she hoped more would emerge after

### Salpy Kharadjian First Poems

Inspired by Michele Serros

#### Sweet, Sweet Love

His face is like fire  
I can't stare too long, even if I wanted  
Burning Sensations  
He says my name with an extra sound  
Music to my soul  
My heart dances  
My breath sleeps  
Am I lost or dreaming?  
I wake up between the trees  
Forrest Lane

#### Beach Vibes

Dolphins in the distance  
Dog kisses on my toes  
Hot sand massages on my legs  
Sun kisses on my forehead  
Laughter in the air  
Warmth in my soul  
Can't help but smiling  
As my friends tell stories  
Feelings of pure happiness  
Pure bliss  
Peace & Love



Michele Serros • The Michele Serros exhibit featuring the late author's memorabilia is located in University H



Victoria Jackson, Sam Nuño and Salpy Kharadjian

her. She paved the way for other writers in a time where there was a lot of pressure to be a Chicana writer. This is the reason she had received such judgement and criticism, yet she refused to stand down from her vision for a better future for Chicana writing.

Michele Serros was not only a Chicana writer but a strong woman who became a role model to many. The shrine dedicated to Michele Serros at CSUCI is a beautiful start to appreciating our Latinx/Chicanx brothers and sisters. I don't believe there are enough words to emphasize the meaning this has to the university, Ventura County, the state, the country, and the women, the writers, and the Latinx/Chicanx community. The monument is the start of the long overdue recognition and appreciation deserved for a very long time.

I spent the day at the beach with my best friends who are Chicana. It was a beautiful day filled with love, gratitude, and peace. My friend asked "What can we do right now to empower the Chicana culture?" I told her that we were already doing it. We're here on a beautiful beach in Ventura, California, enjoying it without any stresses or struggles. We have the ability to go to the beach whenever we want and enjoy the day with the ones we love. That is what many Latinx ancestors have been dreaming of for years. We are able to do it freely in the way that we would like to experience it. We sat together, writing poems that were simple but beautiful.

Michele Serros was a talented writer, and some of us barely started writing in our lives. My friend, Victoria, a cousin of Michele's said she was absolutely sure that she would have been happy and proud. We took a moment of silence for her and held hands together. I cannot express how much this day impacted me and my friends. I felt like our souls were linked to each other, and Michele Serros was right there with us.

*Salpy Kharadjian graduated with her Psychology degree in May 2020. She was a research assistant for the Growing Works project, and an active participant in the Our Bodies Out Minds workshop, advocating for prevention/intervention of intimate partner violence. She plans to continue conducting Positive Psychology research and strives to have a positive impact on everyone she meets.*

Excerpt from **"El Cielo or Bust" - chicana falsa and other stories of death, identity, and Oxnard** by Michele Serros

Every other day  
before *Dos Mujeres*, *Un Camino*  
after *Wheel of Fortune*,  
a uniformed woman  
in rosary beads and name badge  
comes to Aunt Linda,  
comes to bring her IT.  
The wafer,  
the key  
that will unlock that gate,  
her final destination,  
last trip,  
no senior discount needed to  
*El Cielo*.

That faraway place  
high above shake-shingle rooftops,  
El Rio water tower.  
And just like every 1940s film  
on channel 15 promises,  
there she will go,  
Up an angel hair path  
Leading to some glorious  
Hollywood harp shaped gate.

And then I'll Miss Aunt Linda,  
real bad.  
Her untouched guest soaps,  
Noxema fresh smell,  
crochet dollies every Christmas,  
Arthritic fingers,  
aching over making  
strawberry shortcake supreme.  
She gotta keep doing  
all the good things  
told to me  
'cause someday,  
at the gate,  
Great Aunt Linda,  
Great Uncle Willie,  
and Warlord  
will be ready and awake  
waiting to welcome ME.

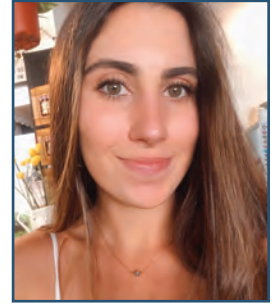


all, east lobby.

## ANI POOCHIGIAN: STAYING SOCIALLY CONNECTED WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING

by Emily Browning

With social distancing and shelter in place orders being the new norm, Ani believes that we can still successfully develop a sense of community at CI during these unprecedented times. During the semester she believes that if every professor found a way to limit the number of students in the classroom, or perhaps split all students into groups for weekly virtual learning; this would create opportunities to still work together as a team and provide a more direct line of communication with the professor. Ani also recommended scheduling a daily or even weekly check-in for the assigned groups, with or without the presence of the professor. This would provide all students with a sense of support and aid in not feeling completely disconnected from their peers or school spirit throughout the entirety of the school year. As students, we sometimes take for granted what social connections contribute to our learning processes and sense of determination. Ani stated, “When I develop friendships with people in my classes and have fellow students to talk to, it keeps me motivated and I feel more engaged with the campus. Overall, I perform better in my classes with available communication from my peers.” If this lockdown has taught us anything, it would be that self-isolation is a difficult thing to manage alone. Social interaction is essential for a healthy well-being.



*Emily Browning graduated in May 2020 with her degree in Psychology.*

*Ani Poochigian, a San Diego native and Communications major at CSUCI, transferred from Santa Barbara City College in Fall 2019. She is currently finishing her last year at CSUCI with plans of working for a non-profit in her hometown of Yerevan, Armenia after graduation in May 2021.*

## LIVING THROUGH THE RAIN STORM

By Savanna Toledo

Being a first-generation Latina navigating through college is like a rainstorm. In 2020, the challenges seemed to be greater than ever, especially in the era of Trump where Dreamers/DACA are being met with opposition, and hostility to the Latinx population is actively encouraged against our most vulnerable children and refugees.

Despite the challenges, I am passionate about being a success story, completing my college degree, getting educated, and being an empowered first-generation Latina college student. Last Spring I took a Chicana/o Studies class surrounded by peers just like me, discovering our identities and developing pride for our shared culture and history in an academic setting. Trying to survive through this rainstorm set against us, we are together as allies on the same crew. We go into classes as strangers, but come out as close friends, knowing each other's roots and stories, providing each other encouragement to weather the storm together so we can obtain the degree we are all striving for. Our professor is our mentor and our captain—we know we can always count on if needed because she has lived her own journey and strives to share her passion and pride with us.

This academic year things have changed because of the volatile political situation and the pandemic that has affected our way of learning. The storm is a time of uncertainty, and many of us first-generation students are stuck not knowing what to do next in our education. We have tasted the value of community support and education through our classes. We want to continue educating

ourselves, empowering ourselves, becoming agents of change and positive representatives in the Latinx community. However, many of us, including myself, don't have parents or family members to help guide us, give us advice, and navigate us through the stormy waters of college.

Access to college represents a chance for us to be on an even playing field. It is an environment where I could ask my peers or professors what to do. School is getting harder and harder due to distance learning, and there is a strain on the economy as a result of the pandemic. It is hard not to lose motivation, especially in a world where our families and our elders are all in need of more support than ever, and it is so easy to look at college being the first thing that needs to go. Yet, this experience is what we need to empower ourselves and emerge from the pandemic stronger than ever. As Latinx, we are not only attending college for ourselves, but more importantly for our parents who didn't have this opportunity or never had the chance because of social injustices that kept them from their dreams. We need to stay on course through the storm with more focus, motivating each other, and bringing as much excitement and positive energy as if we were in class in person. To that end, I will continue to be the best student I can be as I move ahead along my journey, weathering the storm.



*Savanna is a Psychology major/Chicana/o Studies minor, graduating in Spring 2022. Her future goal is to become an occupational therapist.*

# 2019-2020 CME Mini-Grant Recipients



**Annie White, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Studies**  
**2019-2020 Mini-Grant Recipient – Maori World View**

White hosted a presentation of the Maori culture and New Zealand bicultural and bilingual commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi). Brenda Soutar, a prominent Māori leader from the North Island of New Zealand (Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Awa), and Wendy Lee, a distinguished New Zealand educator, author, international speaker, and Director of the Educational Leadership Project came to CSUCI on November 25, 2019 to deliver a spectacular presentation on the Maori World View.



The Center for Multicultural Engagement (CME) mini-grants support faculty efforts to enhance multicultural and diverse perspectives via teaching, mentoring, program development, research, and creative endeavors.

We encourage faculty mini-grant proposals for projects emphasizing the promotion of diversity, multicultural perspectives, and inclusive excellence using innovative virtual spaces as project platforms. [www.csuci.edu/cme/faculty/mini-grants](http://www.csuci.edu/cme/faculty/mini-grants)

**Center for Multicultural Engagement Advisory Board Members 2019-2020**

**CME Faculty Director:**  
Christy Teranishi Martinez  
**CME Student Affairs Director:**  
Charles Osiris

**2019-2020 Faculty Advisory Board Members:**  
Dana Baker\*  
LaSonya Davis\*  
HyeSun Lee  
Ronald Berkowsky\*\*  
Jennie Luna\*\*

**2019-2020 Student Affairs Representatives:**  
Rich Yao  
Toni DeBoni  
Hiram Ramirez  
Kem French  
Natalie Johnson

**Manager of Institutional Equity and Deputy Title IX Coordinator:**  
William Nutt

**Communication & Marketing:**  
Joanna Murphy

**Ex-Officio Members:**  
Jules Balén  
Pilar Pacheco  
Marie Francois

**Mission Based Centers Coordinator:**  
Jeannette Edwards

\* term ended spring 2020  
\*\* term started fall 2020



**Ronald Berkowsky, Assistant Professor of Health Science**  
**2019-2020 Mini-Grant Recipient – LGBTQ+ at CI: Identifying Service Needs to Promote Inclusive Excellence**

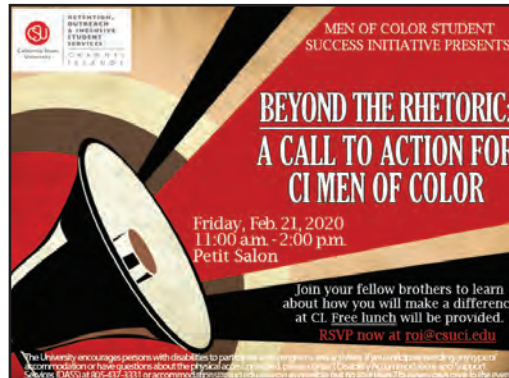
In Fall 2019, Berkowsky received a mini-grant to conduct a roundtable discussion with faculty, students, and staff to identify the specific needs of LGBTQ+ at CSUCI. Due to the pandemic, Berkowsky re-envisioned his plan, conducting a virtual roundtable discussion while collecting preliminary data on LGBTQ+ life on campus, communication, institutional support, aggressions, and implicit biases against the LGBTQ+ community. Berkowsky plans to continue this project to gain more insight into the issues and problems faced, and to develop strategies for providing increased support and resources to address the needs of the LGBTQ+ community at CSUCI.



**Tim Allison, Lecturer AY Political Science**  
**2019-2020 Mini-Grant Recipient – Intergenerational Mentoring Initiative**  
Allison received a mini-grant to support his work coordinating the Intergenerational Mentoring Initiative. He matched Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) program participants and retired community members with first-generation and underrepresented CI students to share their life experiences and provide advice, support and resources to help foster success with their educational and career goals.

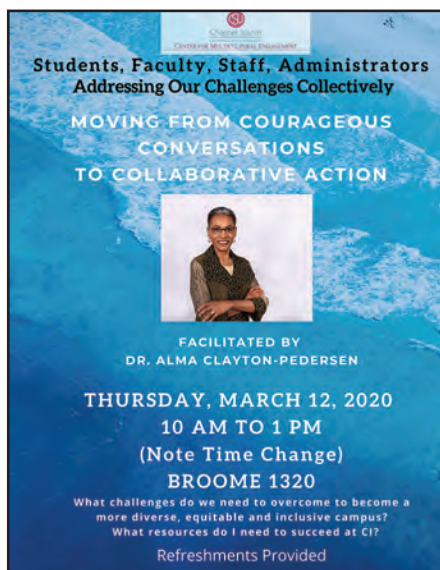
## BEYOND THE RHETORIC: A CALL TO ACTION FOR CI MEN OF COLOR

On February 21, 2020, DSA Retention, Outreach and Inclusive Student Services along with CSUCI Staff and Faculty men of color mentors hosted the 2nd Annual Men of Color Luncheon forum. The theme for this luncheon was, “Beyond the Rhetoric: A Call To Action for CI Men of Color.” Students were empowered to take responsibility for utilizing campus resources, holding faculty and staff accountable and seeking help/support before it becomes urgent. To commit real action to their education and leadership development during their collegiate experience. Faculty and staff speakers discussed strategies for collaboration with students to create greater synergies in pedagogy, programming and student learning to promote greater academic success for men of color at CI. There were discussions about the importance of sound research, inclusive excellence, and data-informed practices and intentional decision making for men of color student scholars. This forum was designed to promote strategic thinking, maximize student engagement, facilitate collaborative learning, and build institutional capacity to support the academic success of men of color.



*Inclusion works to the advantage of everyone. We all have things to learn and we all have something to teach.*  
~Helen Henderson

*Strength lies in difference, not in similarities.*  
~Stephen R. Covey



*Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.*  
~Malcolm Forbes

## MOVING FROM COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS TO COLLABORATIVE ACTION

In Spring 2020, the Center for Multicultural Engagement sponsored a workshop, Addressing Our Challenges Collectively: Moving from Courageous Conversation to Collaborative Action, facilitated by Dr. Alma Clayton-Pedersen. On Thursday, March 12th, CSUCI students, faculty, staff, MPP, and administrators came together to discuss challenges and resources needed to develop a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable campus climate. In Spring 2021, Dr. Alma Clayton-Pedersen will facilitate a follow-up workshop, aiming to help develop a CI campus-wide Action Plan for enhancing our campus climate and building a greater sense of community.

*Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.*  
~Dr. Seuss



## CAMPUS READING CELEBRATION: Tommy Orange

CSUCI's Campus Reading Celebration welcomed Tommy Orange, who presented his novel, *There There*, a multigenerational, relentlessly paced story about a side of America few of us have ever seen: the lives of urban Native Americans. The novel was one of *The New York Times* Book Review's 10 Best Books of the Year, won the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

## MISSION-BASED CENTERS

### Our Stories Matter discussion series

A thought-provoking series focused on interdisciplinary, evidence-based perspectives presented by CSUCI faculty and invited experts who speak to and discuss specific topics related to fascism, white supremacy, current events (local to global), in the context of CSUCI's stated values of diversity, equity and inclusion.

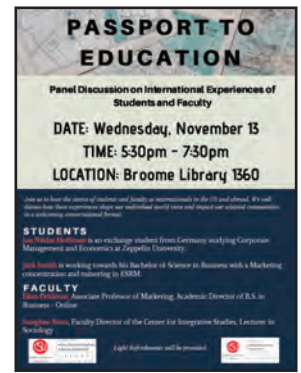
## FALL 2019



OH CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN!  
(Tim Allison and Christy Teranishi Martinez)



FREEDOM WRITERS



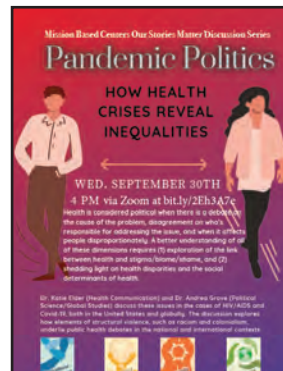
PASSPORT TO EDUCATION  
(Sunghee Nam, Ekin Pehlivan, Jan Niklas Hoffman and Jack Smith)

## SPRING 2020

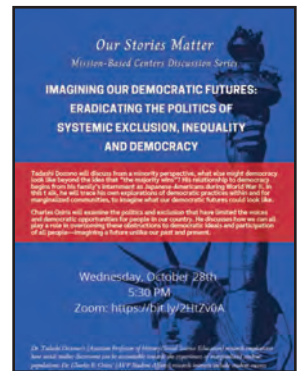


OUR BODIES OUR MINDS  
(Maya Grodman and Cary McQueen)

## FALL 2020



PANDEMIC POLITICS  
(Andrea Grove and Katie Elder)



IMAGINING OUR DEMOCRATIC FUTURES  
(Charles Osiris and Tadashi Dozono)



# Resources

## WORKSHOPS/TRAINING

- **DACA Training** (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival) – [www.csuci.edu/cme/multicultural-resources/diversity-training](http://www.csuci.edu/cme/multicultural-resources/diversity-training)
- **SAFE Training** (Students, Administrators and Faculty for Equality) – [www.csuci.edu/cme/current-events](http://www.csuci.edu/cme/current-events)
- **Self-Defense Classes** – [www.csuci.edu/publicsafety/crime-prevention/RAD\\_program](http://www.csuci.edu/publicsafety/crime-prevention/RAD_program)

## SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Academic Advising** – [www.csuci.edu/academics/advising/](http://www.csuci.edu/academics/advising/)
- **CAPS (Counseling & Psychological Services)** – [www.csuci.edu/caps](http://www.csuci.edu/caps)  
Borderline Survivors
- **CARE Team (Campus Access, Retention & Equity)** – [www.csuci.edu/campuslife/care](http://www.csuci.edu/campuslife/care)
- **DASS (Disability Accommodations & Support Services)** – [www.csuci.edu/dass/](http://www.csuci.edu/dass/)
- **Dolphin Pantry** Arroyo Hall, Room 117 – [www.csuci.edu/basicneeds/food-assistance](http://www.csuci.edu/basicneeds/food-assistance)
- **Emergency Intervention & Basic Needs** 805-437-3332 – [www.csuci.edu/basicneeds](http://www.csuci.edu/basicneeds)
- **Mariposa Evolucionando\*** – [www.mariposabefree.org](http://www.mariposabefree.org)
- **MDC (Multicultural Dream Center)** – [www.csuci.edu/mdc](http://www.csuci.edu/mdc)
- **TITLE IX** 805-437-2077 – [www.csuci.edu/titleix](http://www.csuci.edu/titleix)
- **Undocumented Student Ally Resources\*** – [www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/undocumented-college-student-resources/](http://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/undocumented-college-student-resources/)
- **UNITY COALITION**
  - CHILFASA (Chicana/o Latina/o Faculty and Staff Association)** – [www.csuci.edu/chilfasa/](http://www.csuci.edu/chilfasa/)
  - LGBTQIA+ Student Resources** – [www.csuci.edu/mdc/resources/academic-support-pages/lgbtqia](http://www.csuci.edu/mdc/resources/academic-support-pages/lgbtqia)
  - BFSA (Black Faculty and Staff Association)**

## STUDENT CLUBS – [www.csuci.edu/clubs-organizations](http://www.csuci.edu/clubs-organizations)

(e.g., Latina Leadership Coalition, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Queer Student Alliance, Kilusan Pilipino, etc.)

\*Non-campus resources

*For everyone, well-being is a journey. The secret is committing to that journey and taking those first steps with hope and belief in yourself. ~Deepak Chopra*