



## CELEBRATING **HISPANIC HERITAGE**

**Dear Hornet Family,**

We are proud to celebrate **National Hispanic Heritage Month**, which was first observed in 1968 and enacted into law in 1988. Hispanic Heritage Month is Sept. 15 – Oct. 15 and celebrates the histories, cultures, and contributions of the Latinx diaspora within the United States. In addition to the being a month of festive commemoration, this time span has a great deal of historical significance for many countries in the Latinx diaspora. Sept. 15 is the anniversary of independence from Spain for Central American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, significant because it marks the end – but not the effects – of colonial rule. Sept. 16 is the anniversary of Mexico’s independence, and Sept. 18 is Chile’s, both also from Spain. Equatorial Guinea gained its independence from Spain on Oct. 12. All these milestones are included in the 30 days of rich cultural celebration.

As a designated **Hispanic-Serving Institution**, Sacramento State has an obligation to not only recognize but to increase awareness and understanding of the rich cultural and political history of our Latinx student population to better serve the student body. Sac State is committed to justice, anti-oppression and implementation of our **Antiracism and Inclusion Campus Action Plan** and as such, it is extremely important to resist the erasure of the distinct cultures, yet acknowledge, uplift, and empower the humanity, community, and indigeneity within the Latinx/Chicanx diaspora.

So, what does empowerment and justice look like at Sacramento State and beyond as we begin to observe and truly celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month?



As explained by Professor Manuel Barajas, interim director of the **Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice**, to focus on truth and advancing a social justice agenda while celebrating and uplifting the people behind the socially constructed label of “Latinx,” we must first “acknowledge the vast diversity, experiences, and categorization of ‘Latinx’ peoples as it relates to land, indigeneity, resources, race, ethnicity, national origin, identity, etc.”

Interim Provost Carlos Nevarez says it means seeking to close the gap between the 1% of Latinx/Chicanx administrators, 7% of Latinx/Chicanx faculty, and the 38% of Latinx/Chicanx students. In tandem, Maria Ramirez, a part of University Library administration, reminds us that a major shift in “having more Latinx/Chicanx people in decision-making spaces at Sac State” would be a sign and progress towards justice.

To Erik Ramirez, director of **Equity and Affinity Centers**, empowerment and justice mean continued investment in programs that serve the Latinx community, such as the **Serna Center** and the **Dreamer Resource Center**, to ensure that our undocumented students and their families, staff professionals, and faculty receive resources and support that provide safety, and financial, psychological, and legal support.

To Lisa Cardoza, vice president for University Advancement, it means, “ensuring that we remain steadfast in our mission of being a Hispanic-Serving Institution – mindful and proactive in meeting the needs and culture of our Latinx students. It also means ensuring that our Latinx faculty and staff are supported with opportunities for career development and growth, networking, and being in community with each other. The inaugural community of practice, the Latina Mentoring Network, is an example of strategically challenging the status quo and providing critical support for our Latinx community.”

It means equity, equality, and support for the Latinx community as it relates to rights, access, benefits, and opportunities to thrive, not just this month, but throughout the year(s). It means inclusion and belonging that embrace the richness and diversity within Latinx culture. It means acknowledgement and celebration of the intersectional experiences of Latinx/Chicanx peoples.

Beyond Sac State and at the state and federal levels, it means continued advocacy for non-criminalization of Latinx immigration and equally applied laws, standards, and procedures for naturalization status. As we as a Hornet Family observe Hispanic Heritage Month, let us reflect on the tangible ways we are partnering with the Latinx/Chicanx communities to ensure justice prevails, and let us be mindful of our interdependence and reliance on the multiple contributions of this community to the U.S. that benefit us all daily.

**In partnership,**

**Dr. Mia Settles-Tidwell**

**VP for Inclusive Excellence and University Diversity Officer**

Background image: Detail of “Camaval, San Francisco, California”. Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith, 2012 (Library of Congress)

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