

Celebrating Culture & Community Wellness

Dear Hornet community,

At Sac State, we care deeply about our communities and the ways they have been impacted by structural oppression. There is not one group or community that has not been affected by some form of oppression, whether based on animus relating to racial, cultural, ancestral, religious, gender-based, immigration, social, political, or disability status. As we continue our efforts to educate, edify, and empower multiple communities, this month's focus will commemorate Mental Health Awareness, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage, and Jewish American Heritage Month.

Many factors contribute to either the support or disruption of our mental health. If we take a moment to reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic, the history of trauma, stressors, oppression, and pain that has been inflicted on our bodies and psyche, we can gain better awareness of some of the whys that contribute to the decline of our mental health. Unfortunately, as a society, we often have chosen to stigmatize people who have experienced challenges to maintaining healthy or non-self-destructive behaviors. It is easy to judge, ostracize, or alienate those who display mental health challenges.

This month, we challenge you to turn toward, instead of away from, one another as we come together as a community to support individuals who may be struggling with mental health issues. At Sac State, we are very fortunate to have amazing [mental health resources, events, and activities](#). We encourage our campus community to take advantage of these free resources and commit to creating spaces to talk openly and positively about mental health.

Also in May, we celebrate, commemorate, and congratulate the over 20,000 people who make up the diaspora of the Asian American, Pacific Islander and Desi American communities. Today, we use the term Asian Pacific Islander Desi American, which includes South Asian peoples. With over 50 distinct ethnic groups, speaking over 100 languages, it is vitally important to understand the unique histories and stories of each of the ethnic groups represented under this broad banner. We celebrate this year's grand opening of Sac State's [APIDA Center](#) on the second floor of Lassen Hall, and the \$8 million dollar grant awarded to Sac State to lead the inaugural CSU-wide center for [Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Student Achievement Program](#), expected to be housed at Sac State Downtown.

To understand the belonging stories and journeys of our APIDA community, the Division of Inclusive Excellence will add APIDA as a fifth cohort group to the 2023-24 Belonging and Bridging Program. We will also invite a diverse panel of scholars, speakers, and storytellers to uplift the distinct and collective resilience, legacies, traditions, and cultures of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Desi Americans at our Feb. 7, 2024, Green and Gold Speaker Series.

To complete this month's recognition, Sac State would like to uplift and celebrate the diverse contributions of the Jewish diaspora. Jewish American Heritage Month marks the time to pay homage to the multiple generations of Jewish Americans who have shaped in positive ways the history, culture, and discourse in the United States. With a more than 350-year history within the U.S., Jewish Americans have contributed to the arts, philosophy, business, legal, and multiple other fields of study.

Additionally, many Jewish Americans marched arm-in-arm alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to fight for the civil rights for Black Americans, resulting in human rights for all. Jewish people are no strangers to their own experiences with being oppressed and fighting for their own freedoms. Having endured and survived the horrific Nazi Holocaust, Jewish people have empathized with other oppressed people and have their own stories to tell about the impacts of antisemitism past, present, and future.

As we turn toward one another, the Division of Inclusive Excellence has launched a [Addressing Antisemitism at Sac State webpage and campaign](#). The page will educate our campus community about antisemitism and how to support our Jewish community. The purpose of the campaign is to stress the importance of belonging for our Jewish community, as we desire for all communities. We will kick off our Green & Gold Speaker Series on Sept. 20, 2023, with a focus on the Jewish community and belonging. You can [join the campaign by using this link](#) or via the QR code below to share ways that you, your clubs, organizations, divisions, or groups are actively combating antisemitism.

It is our desire for all communities to be well mentally, physically, and socially. We need one another and are inextricably tied to a shared history of resilience, social justice, and reliance on one another to combat oppression in all forms. As we reflect on the highs and lows of this academic year, let's continue our commitment to BECOMING an antiracism, inclusive, and anti-oppression campus.

In partnership,

Dr. Mia Settles-Tidwell
Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and University Diversity Officer



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