



Diversity Initiatives at California State University Northridge

California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is leading diversity-themed change in an intentional manner. In addition to our proud designations as a HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) and AANAPISI (Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander Serving Institution), we continually seek opportunities to celebrate diversity and to forge pathways for access and cross-divisional collaboration in support of inclusion.

The depth of CSUN's diversity is reflected in the unique experiences, talents and contributions of our 40,000 students and more than 4,000 employees; and our collective commitment to diversity includes recognition of the critical conversations and efforts being cultivated around those designations which transcend compliance toward a genuine action plan for what our notion of institutional excellence is.

From informal exchanges to public discourse to a range of well-established programs, a diversity ethos permeates our campus culture. Through university-wide policies, programming, and open dialogue, diversity is frequently and broadly championed by CSUN President Dianne Harrison and other campus leaders, as a fundamental catalyst for innovation, creativity and excellence in research and teaching. Also championed are high impact practices that involve students in research, community service learning, internships, capstone and culminating projects that occur throughout a student's tenure at the university. In a recent keynote address to faculty, President Harrison reaffirmed the notion that a diverse faculty can demonstrate to students in whatever field or major that the path to leadership and success is open to everyone of every background. For faculty themselves, recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty is essential for governance and better decision-making as well as for the intellectual growth of faculty overall.

The result of these diversity initiatives has been a more focused, sustained effort toward curricular and co-curricular redesign, broadened pools and pipelines, and a robust support network for individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups.

The following highlights just some of the ongoing diversity initiatives at CSUN:

- With the intent of centralizing activities to prioritize and maximize institutional effectiveness around issues of diversity, CSUN will appoint a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) in Fall 2015. The CDO will chair CSUN's Commission on Inclusion and Diversity Initiatives composed of faculty, staff, students, administrators and community leaders.
- BUILD@CSUN Program is a new collaborative effort of faculty and administrators at CSUN and is an ambitious effort to create a paradigmatic shift in research training and mentoring to diversify the biomedical workforce by reframing and redesigning current approaches through the lens of Critical Race Theory. The goal is develop rigorous and sustainable research training programs for underrepresented students, using a model of research development that incorporates best practices from the literature, from our undergraduate research programs, and the programs of others. This model addresses student recruitment starting in high school and focuses on a large pool of promising freshmen, sophomores, and early transfer students. Within BUILD laboratories, students and faculty members engage in their ongoing research in a cooperative social environment rather than a competitive one – less hierarchical and more inclusive of input from all members of the laboratory and with attention paid to the social justice implications of one's work. Ninety-seven faculty have signed on as research mentors and have submitted projects.
- Accelerated Coursework in Computer Science and Engineering for Student Success (ACCESS) is a program geared toward attracting highly-motivated, underrepresented minority and female high school students to careers in engineering and computer science.

- AIMS² is a collaborative grant with two local community colleges focused on enhancing the transfer rate and graduation of underrepresented minorities in engineering and computer science. Some preliminary program assessment results show that students in the program completed more units than students in a comparison group and earned higher cumulative GPAs. They also experienced a 96.7% persistence rate vs. 78.7%. For its work in accelerating Latino/a success, the program was recognized with an honorable mention by the Excelencia Foundation in Washington, D.C. and included in its compendium of best practices that is available for use by all HSIs.
- Teaching to Increase Diversity in STEM initiative (TIDES) is a novel, joint program involving faculty from Computer Science and Music to use music as a way of encouraging women and persons from underrepresented communities to consider careers in computer or information sciences.
- One of CSUN's longest-running programs of its kind, the NIH-funded Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC) program has been on campus since 1990. The goal of the program is to increase the number of competitively prepared traditionally underrepresented students for research careers in basic biomedical sciences. The 2014-15 cycle supported nearly 800 entering freshman through summer workshops and Science 100 courses, and 150 transfer students, as well as hundreds through tutoring and advisement. Since the start of the program: 36 former MARC students have received Ph.D.'s and 17 more are currently in Ph.D. or M.D./Ph.D. programs. The retention and completion rate of CSUN MARC students in Ph.D. programs is 85%, compared to the national average of 57%. MARC graduates are more likely to enter a Ph.D. program than non-MARC students. Students who take the MARC-sponsored math and language arts courses have a significantly higher GPA after one year, and take higher level math and have a higher passing rate in math – something we are looking to scale up at the university.
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) has provided access and retention services to low-income and first-generation college students since 1969. In recent years, EOP has developed K-12 Outreach and Partnership Programs that create pipelines to the community, and transitional Bridge Programs to help facilitate students' adjustment to the university.
- Founding the nation's first Central American studies program and one of the first Chicana/o studies programs, CSUN continues to have one of the largest and most diverse selection of ethnic studies programs in the California State University system including major and minor options in programs like American Indian, Jewish, Central American, Middle Eastern and Islamic, and Russian studies. CSUN also offers separate departments for Asian American, Chicana/o and Africana studies.
- National Science Foundation-funded Partnership for Research and Education in Materials grant in Physics and Astronomy allows CSUN undergraduate physics majors to spend nine weeks at Princeton conducting research. All of the students are from underrepresented groups and the goal is to recruit minorities into careers in physics.
- CSUN is part of a California State University systemwide program called the "Math and Science Teacher Initiative" that includes among its goals increasing the number and diversity of teacher candidates.
- Office of Equity & Diversity (E&D) affirms the university's commitment to the core principles of diversity and inclusion, to ensuring equal opportunity in education and employment, and to a culture that embraces a multiplicity of talents, knowledge, beliefs, abilities and experiences. E&D provides guidance and leadership to address fundamental issues of bias and exclusion in order to maintain an educational environment free of discrimination, harassment and retaliation.
- Student Housing offers the Oppression Reduction Training program, which provides student staff with training that assist in their ability to understand the manifestation of discrimination, racism,

privilege, and disrespect that could be present in the residential community and, therefore, negatively affect the living and learning experiences of our diverse resident population.

- Black Male Initiative – Brings together Black male students with professional staff, faculty and administrators in an effort to create opportunities for engagement, mentoring, intellectual space, and a sense of belonging in order to support student retention and graduation. The Sisterhood program seeks to achieve the same goals as outlined above for Black female students.
- The Pride Center supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and questioning students, faculty and staff through programming and educational outreach to improve the campus climate for LGBTQ individuals as well as advocate for the respect and safety of all members of the campus community.
- The Veterans Resource Center (VRC) exists to assist CSUN students as they transition from military service to academic success. The VRC promotes the academic, personal and professional development of student veterans and their dependents through supportive services, resources and community building events.
- National Center on Deafness exists as a nationally known leader in providing educational support and services for deaf and hard of hearing students educated in a mainstream university environment that serves hearing and non-hearing students.
- Disability Resources and Educational Services Office provides mandated accommodation for students with disabilities that empower students, foster independence, promote achievement and assist students in discovering their full potential. Through the strengths-based Thriving and Achieving Program, students are assisted in becoming more self-supporting.
- Financial Aid Office administers the DREAMERS scholarship program that provides needed financial support for undocumented students who are not eligible for federal financial aid.
- International and Exchange Student Center – CSUN enrolls the largest number of international students attending a public comprehensive university. The primary interest in this area of enrollment focus is to provide a diverse global perspective to the educational experiences of our domestic students. The Student Panels for an International Curriculum and Education (SPICE) provides an opportunity for international students to visit classrooms to provide information about the background and cultures of the student presenters.
- Discover, Inquire, & Grow in Los Angeles (DIG LA) is an educational resource for the CSUN community. With the goal of building a culturally diverse community that is appreciative, sensitive and understanding, DIG LA emphasizes the artistic expressions, traditions and historical significance of various cultures. The group activities planned by DIG LA provide an opportunity for students and faculty to discuss cultural issues in a safe and open environment, encouraging a link between classroom learning and to our culturally diverse environment.
- The Associated Students provides funding to support numerous student clubs and organizations, some of which provide opportunities for identity and leadership development, collaboration with other diverse organizations, and the creation of a welcoming experience outside of the classroom. Clubs such as the Armenian Student Association, Black Student Union, Central American United Student Alliance, Chabad Jewish Student Center, Filipino American Student Association, MEChA, Muslim Student Association, and the Vietnamese Student Association illustrate the diverse communities of students who are supported at CSUN.
- Peer Mentor Program in the College of Humanities was initiated in Fall 2006 to address retention issues among first and second year students, many of whom are first-generation, across all academic majors at CSUN.