

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2021

The Honorable Miguel Cardona
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Re: California State University Fullerton Visit

Dear Secretary Cardona:

As we prepare to celebrate Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Week during September 13-19, 2021, and Hispanic Heritage Month in September, we would like to invite you to visit California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) and see the critical work this campus is doing in order to increase access to education and advance equity for traditionally underserved students. CSUF is a Hispanic Serving Institution where nearly 46.2% of the student body is Hispanic and 57% of CSUF bachelor's degree recipients are first-generation university graduates.

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), founded in 1957, is a comprehensive, four-year public university and the only California State University (CSU) campus in Orange County, California. As the largest campus in the CSU system, CSUF is an affordable yet rigorous teaching and research institution for a diverse population of more than 41,000 students and serves as an intellectual and cultural hub for Southern California. The university has been recognized as the No.1 destination for community college transfer students among California public universities and the No.1 in California for awarding bachelor's degrees to underrepresented students.

Consistently, over the past four years, more than 50% of Hispanic students at CSUF were Pell-eligible and about 50% received federal loans. CSUF places an emphasis on eliminating financial and administrative barriers to ensure the continued persistence of Hispanic students. CSUF offers Graduation Initiative 2025 grants to ensure students are able to graduate on-time. Furthermore, CSUF allocates state funds and scholarships to help support its California Dream Act students. The campus closes the achievement gaps for Hispanic students through philanthropically funded scholarship programs, such as the Male Success Initiative (men of color), Guardian Scholars Program (former foster youth) and Abrego Future Scholars (first-generation). CSUF.

Leading the way in innovative student success efforts is part of Cal State Fullerton's culture. In 2014, CSUF established the Titan Dreamers Resource Center, the first CSU to establish a Dreamer Center to support immigrant students in their pursuit of higher education. The Dreamers Center provides students with academic and emotional support, referrals to financial assistance, information on programs and services that improve retention and graduation rates, and a comforting environment where students can connect with others for peer support. In 2017, CSUF

was the first CSU to establish the Tuffy's Basic Needs Service Center, in order to identify and serve students experiencing an unforeseen hardship, emergency, crisis, or catastrophic life events.

The pandemic also called attention to the severe digital divide the nation faced, especially within the underrepresented communities. When CSUF transitioned to remote instruction, many Hispanic students experienced this digital divide, lacking the necessary technology to be successful in a learning environment. CSUF quickly distributed devices to students, including laptops and WiFi hotspots ensuring all students would have continued access to their classes.

CSUF has and always will be intentional about reaching out to Hispanic students and communities in Southern California and beyond. The university actively leverages relationships and builds sustainable partnerships with local high schools and community colleges in Hispanic communities to ensure CSUF continues to be a transformational institution that is accessible for underrepresented communities.

We look forward to the opportunity for you to visit CSUF as we work with you toward our common goals of eliminating equity gaps within higher education and investing in our students to position them for future success.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Young Kim
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress