

¡Sí Se Puede: Equity Minded Leadership at all Levels

Dr. Cynthia Olivo
President
Fullerton College



Daughter of a Strong Single Mom

A little
about me



Elders of four sisters



Grand
daughter of
campesinos



On both
sides of
my family



From Mexico to Kansas

In the early decades of the twentieth century, groups of Mexican workers arrived in Kansas to work for the railroad. Some came directly from Mexico for economic opportunities or to escape the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution. Others came from neighboring states in the U.S. Initially, companies hired seasonal workers who were expected to return to Mexico. By the 1910s, however, these men and their families started to settle down, forming barrios near the railroad tracks. The first barrio in Wichita emerged near Kellogg among workers who had helped construct Union Station. Later, Mexican workers found jobs in Wichita's meatpacking plants at Broadway and 21st streets.



Grandparents experienced systemic racism

Now, imagine a town where children of different cultures were not, in most cases, allowed to attend the same school together. It was a town where Latino children were segregated from non-Latino children – forced to attend a school where cultural pride was almost nonexistent, and where speaking your parents' language was reason enough to be sent to see the principal.

Now, try to imagine this segregation occurring in La Verne.

It did.

This particular story is of two schools that existed during the 1940s era. One was Lincoln School. The other, Palomares School.

FIRST IN MY FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE



By luck, I met Activist Sal Castro at age 22 & learned historical facts about Chicano history & culture



Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

Prop. 187 forced a generation to put fear aside and fight. It transformed California, and me



Students from various high schools skip classes and gather in Plaza Park in Concord to protest Proposition 187 on Oct. 28, 1994. (Bruce K. Huff / Los Angeles Times)

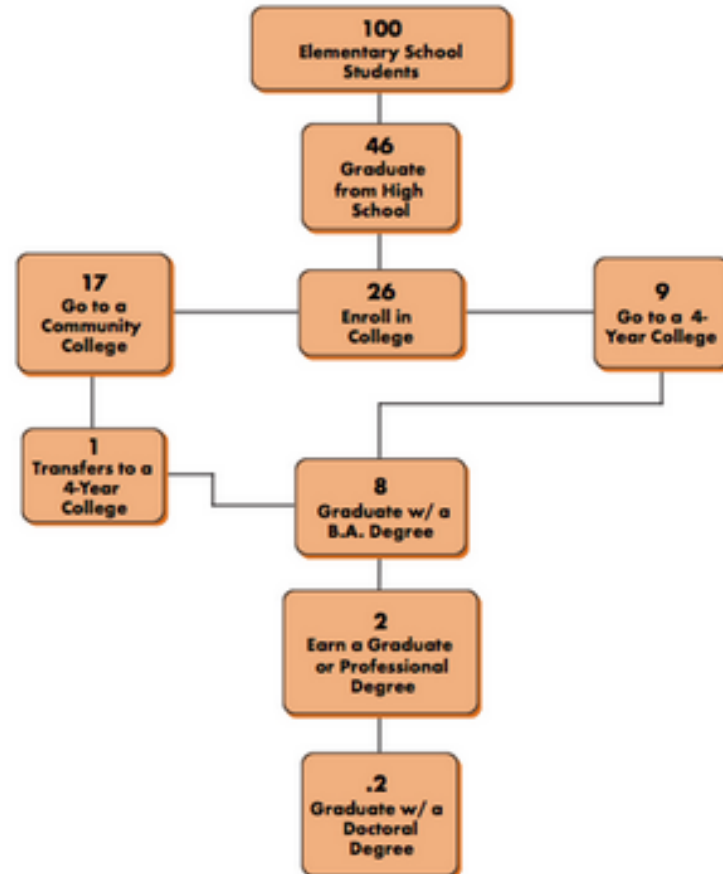


Ph.D. in Education



THIS IS THE DATA THAT WOKE ME UP

Figure 1. Chicanas and Chicanos attained low academic outcomes at each point along the educational pipeline in 2000. (Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Educational Statistics, and the National Survey on Earned Doctorates.)



We must be race-conscious in order to truly reckon with the fact that work has been defined -and restricted - along lines of race/ethnicity, class, gender, and citizenship.



- Based on what you've learned about me so far, what are the drivers of my work?



Driven by a greater cause

What drives your work?



Laws have transformed our work

Los Angeles Times
February 19, 1946

RULING GIVES MEXICAN CHILDREN EQUAL RIGHTS

Segregation of Mexican school children from others in four Santa Ana school districts yesterday was held by U.S. Judge Paul J. McCormick to be a violation of their guarantees of equal rights under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.

The opinion was written in connection with a suit filed by five parents of Mexican children asking for relief and an injunction forbidding the school district trustees from placing the Mexican children in separate schools.

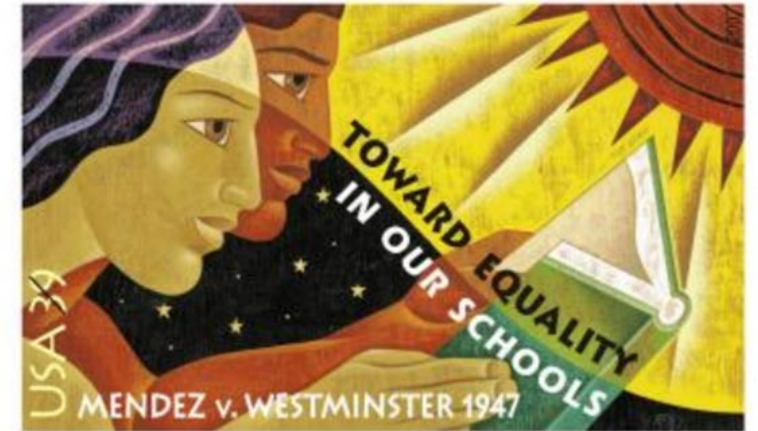
The school districts involved were Westminster, Orange Grove, Santa Ana City Schools and El Modeno. The suit also named the superintendents and trustees of the districts.

Judge McCormick overruled a defense contention that segregation being an educational matter, it fell under the jurisdiction of the State. He held that inasmuch as violations of the 14th Amendment were indicated, the Federal court had a right to intervene.

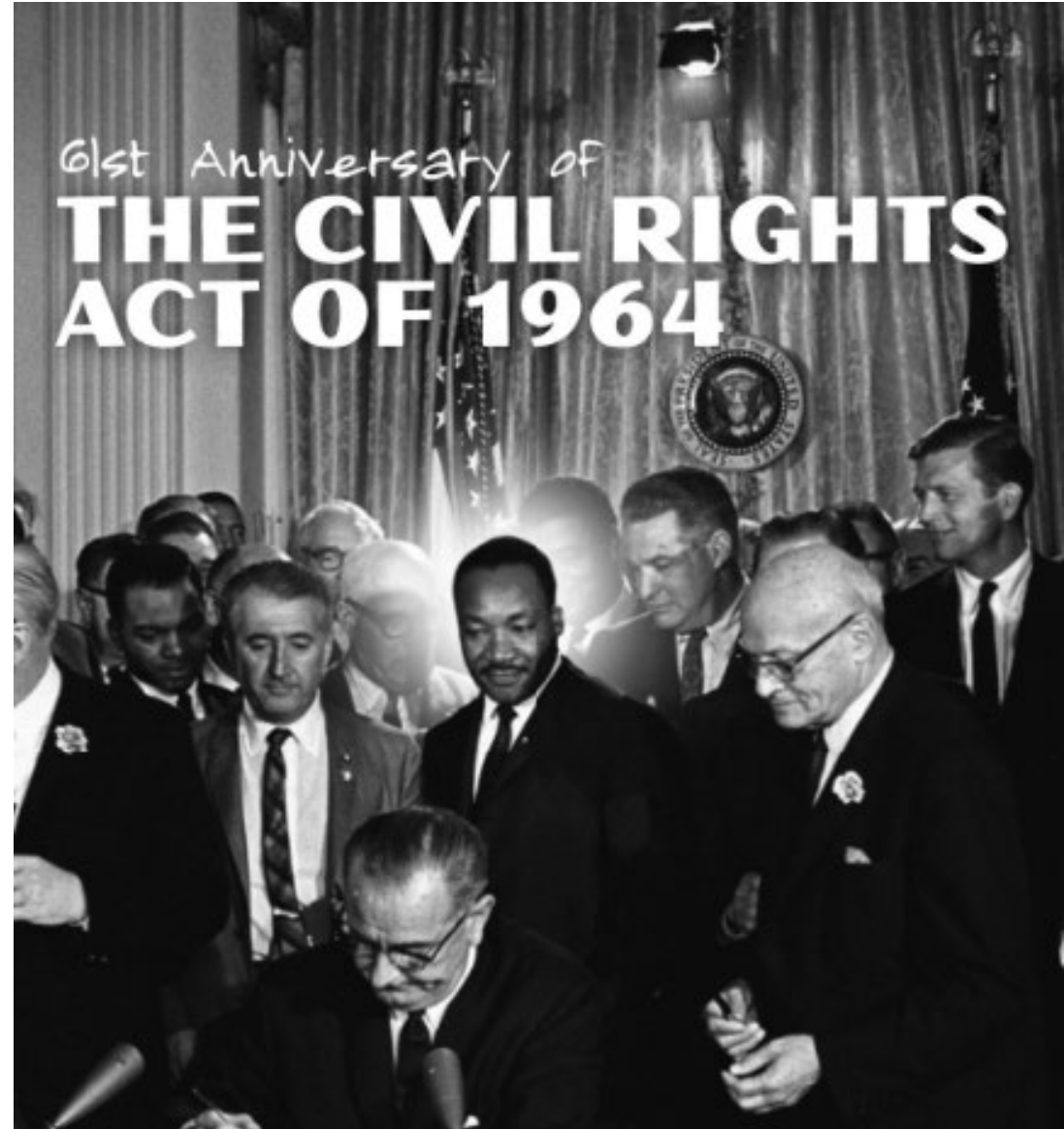
"The evidence clearly shows," the opinion states, "that Spanish-speaking children are retarded in learning English by lack of exposure to its use because of segregation . . ."

"It is also established by the record that the methods of segregation prevalent in the defendant school districts foster antagonisms in the children and suggest inferiority among them where none exists."

Judge McCormick at the same time ordered Attorney David C. Marcus, who represented the parents in the action, to file a petition for an injunction against the defendants within 10 days, indicating that the restraining order would be approved upon the findings of his opinion.



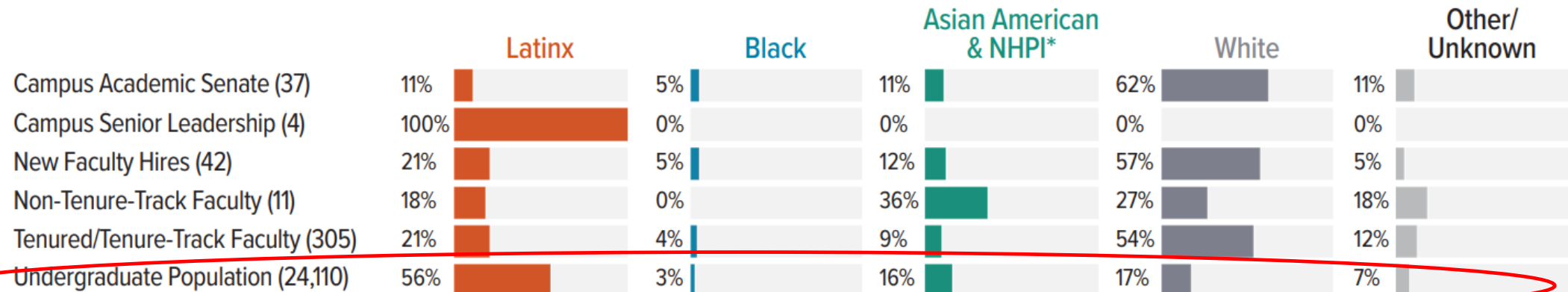
Human Resources Law



Campaign for College Opportunity Still Left Out Report, January 2024

- Student Demographics vs. Faculty Demographics

Campus Demographics by Race/Ethnicity



New Faculty at Fullerton College Fall 2025



Ryan Flores
Ceramics



LaToya Green
Communication Studies



Kaitlin Kroupa
Anatomy/ Physiology



Jacob McFee
Construction Technology



Victor Meza
Librarian



Kavita Rajah-Boyer
Natural Sciences



Leticia Ramirez
Administration of Justice



Michelle Ramirez
Child Development and Educational



Arthur Ross
Musical Theatre



Patrick Ryan
Philosophy



Donald Salcedo
Ethnic (Native American) Studies



Jewell Taylor
Counseling and Student Development



Magali Trujillo-Gonzalez
CalWORKS Counselor



Nicole Winborne
Temporary Full-Time Counselor, EOPS



DEAR FUTURE FACULTY:

As the president of Fullerton College, my hope is to contribute to building a campus community that comes together to make Fullerton College a shining beacon of love, educational liberation, and freedom. When I imagine our future faculty members, I see faculty that will be rich with experiences in serving and advocating for Black, Latine, Native American, Asian Pacific Islander students. A successful candidate will be able to clearly share their knowledge, skills and abilities in teaching; they will mentor and guide community college students in an affirming race-conscious manner inside, and outside, the classroom. A successful faculty candidate will have experience in designing learning experiences that honor and respect students and acknowledge the racialized conditions we exist in. The ideal faculty will show how they have embraced and implemented practices that lead to eliminating educational achievement gaps. Future Fullerton College faculty will demonstrate a willingness to interrogate their practices and will be invested in ongoing professional learning in order to improve their teaching. Fullerton College cultivates a community of faculty who understand it is necessary to serve students with a commitment to social justice and liberation—this is how our students thrive.

Sincerely from our family to yours,

Dr. Cynthia Olivo
President, Fullerton College



Our Mission

Fullerton College advances student learning and achievement by developing clear pathways for students from our diverse communities who seek educational and career growth, certificates, associate degrees, and transfer. We build a supportive and inclusive environment for students to be successful learners, responsible leaders, and engaged community members.

Our Vision

Fullerton College will transform lives and inspire positive change in the world.



Fullerton College

WHAT IS EQUITY- MINDED LEADERSHIP?

- Leaders, like all other human beings, have culturally acquired knowledge that influences what they notice, what they know, and how they make sense of their situation—their cognitive frames.



EQUITY- MINDED LEADERSHIP

- Equity-mindedness (Bensimon, 2007) represents a cognitive frame that is characteristic of individuals who are willing to assess their own racialized assumptions, which they often enact without awareness.





Learning is constant

- Equity-minded leaders understand that they must acquire the funds of knowledge that will enable them to exercise critically race-conscious leadership at all times (Bensimon, 2018). Developing the funds of knowledge that sustain equity-mindedness is intellectual and practical work—it is not about being nice, caring, or sympathetic.
- 



What is it?

- An equity-minded leader understands that institutions of higher education, for the most part, have been designed in an era when laws were in place that excluded diversity, and is therefore intentional about asking questions about as a standard practice.
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Questions

- “In what ways should these practices/policies be redesigned to be racially just?” For example: How should faculty hiring be changed, and how should decision-making be changed to bring racial implications to the forefront?”





What we are called to do

- They take their responsibility to safeguard racial equity seriously and consistently.



A large orange circle occupies the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

Our charge:

- institute new standard operating procedures, new expectations, and new filters



It's about
the dreams
of our
students

- race-conscious and equityminded leaders who understand the needs and dreams of racially minoritized students

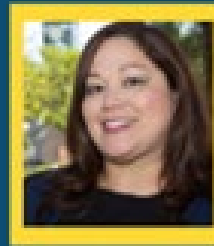
Affinity
Programs
can be game
changers



A2MEND



HSI TRANSFORMATION TEAM



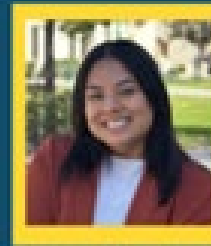
Dr. Cynthia Olive
President



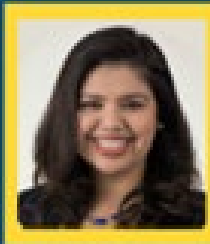
Dr. Flor Noriega
Interim Dean
Counseling & Student Development



Rosa Martinez Sibaka
Director
Admissions & Records Office



Valerie Salazar
Interim Director
Educational Partnerships & Programs



Dr. Gisela Marroa Yancovich
Director
Student Development & Engagement



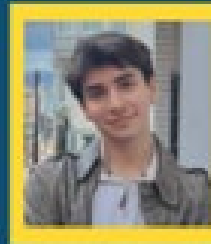
Dr. David Flores
Interim Director of
EDPS, CARE/Careworks, PYS



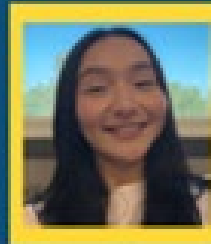
Thomas Ullrich MD MPH
Interim Director
Student Health Services



Valentin Morales
Faculty
Librarian



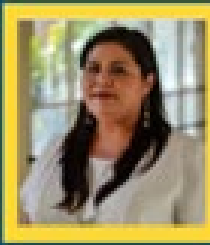
Adrian Garcia
Student
2024 Puertista



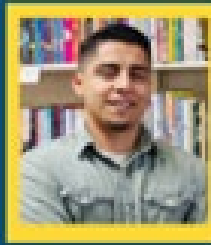
Laura Gomez
Student
2024 Puertista



Larissa Mangano
Faculty
Coordinator



Estela Adalberto
Director
Educational Partnerships & Programs



Victor Mesa
Classified
Library Assistant



Jennifer Rodriguez
Faculty
Instructor & Faculty Senate President



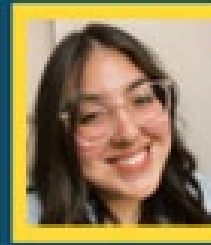
Amy Shroff
Classified
Hereditary Admin



Jennifer Morehead
Director
Educational Partnerships & Programs



Dr. Gabriela Amabile
Faculty
Coordinator



Yvelin Aguilera
Classified
Academic Support Center Admin

APIDA *Amplified*

Dr. Rosie Kar, Project Director

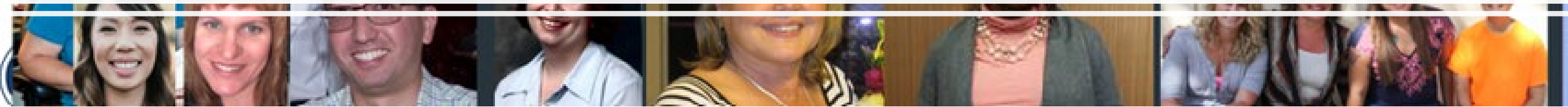
New Staff

New Center & College AANAPISI Logo





The power to transform is with the people of the organization





Call and Response

Who's Got the Power?



We've got the Power!

A black and white photograph of four people (three women and one man) laughing and stacking their hands together in a circle. The image is semi-transparent, serving as a background for the text.

What Kind of Power?

People Power!

@drcynthiaolivo

