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PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Mike Singer
(760) 341-2883, ext. 78107

msinger@csusb.edu



Front, from left, Tomás D. Morales, president of California State University, San Bernardino, and Celeste Townsend, president and CEO of the California Indian Nations College. Back row, from left, Daria Graham, CSUSB associate vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students; Rachel Beech, CSUSB associate vice president, Enrollment Management; Andrew Rodriguez, CSUSB student; Carlos Two Bears Gonzales, coordinator, CSUSB First Peoples Center; Molly Springer, CSUSB associate vice president, Student Equity; Paz Olivérez, CSUSB vice president of Student Affairs; and Jake Zhu, dean, CSUSB Palm Desert Campus.

Agreement signed to increase number of Native American transfer students to CSUSB

PALM DESERT, Calif. – California State University, San Bernardino and California Indian Nations College (CINC) in Palm Desert have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to increase the number of Native American transfer students to the CSUSB campus.

Under the MOU, both institutions will create a college preparation program and develop an enrollment support partnership geared toward Native American students that would provide a valuable mechanism for increasing the number of First Peoples individuals earning a bachelor's degree.

CSUSB believes that the academic success of Native American students is imperative to the success of our communities and has pledged to do everything in its power to be supportive of their development, said university President Tomás D. Morales.

“As an anchor institution in the Inland Empire, CSUSB is here to serve all our region’s residents in order to build a better future for San Bernardino and Riverside counties,” said Morales. “We are committed to increasing our outreach and access efforts to the IE’s First Peoples, and this MOU is a tremendous step forward.”

CINC President Celeste R. Townsend said, “This MOU not only solidifies the partnership with CSUSB, but it also strengthens a joint quest to increase the accessibility of educational opportunities through advanced learning that focuses on diversity, inclusion and empowerment for the underserved and misrepresented population.”

The university understands that academic institutions have historically excluded Native American students and is committed to removing barriers to entry and providing a supportive and culturally competent environment once they are enrolled.

Under the MOU, CINC will be responsible for preparing students annually for transfer and/or work placement. Beginning with the 2023-24 academic year, CINC will provide all its students with a program of studies and support to meet the admission requirements for entrance to CSUSB upon graduation from CINC without the need for remedial college courses.

CSUSB will guarantee admission to the university for all graduating CINC students who fulfill certain requirements, which include:

1. Meeting the minimum CSUSB admission requirements for transfer and/or additional requirements if applying to an impacted major;
2. Completing all Golden Four coursework, with a C- grade or higher per CSU admissions policy, by the end of the term prior to enrollment;
3. Completing 60 transferable units by the end of the term prior to enrollment; and
4. Not requiring an admission exception due to failure to complete CSU admission requirements.

The MOU further underscores CSUSB’s intentional commitment to Native American students enrolled at CINC and outlines the way in which the university intends to grow, sustain and assist these students in their degree attainment.

These include guaranteeing admission for qualified incoming CINC students to CSUSB’s Graduate Pledge program in order to facilitate timely graduation, supporting CINC students through the application process with access to financial aid and scholarship workshops, using structured programs designed to improve Native American retention and completion rates as well as developing a comprehensive Native American student recruitment, and retention agenda that includes an online component comprised of networks for all Native American students, faculty, staff and alumni.

The initial partnership programs will encompass transition student support programs that are culturally responsive and that connect incoming Native American students with current Native American CSUSB students, faculty and staff. It will also provide cultural responsiveness trainings for staff and faculty across areas and disciplines to ensure a supportive environment throughout the university as these students pursue their bachelor’s degree.

“I am excited by this opportunity to build on our previous outreach efforts and support programs, like Coyotes Rising, to grow the number of Native American students attending CSUSB and pursuing their academic dreams,” said Rachel Beech, associate vice president for Enrollment Management. “Transfer students make up more than 50 percent of CSUSB’s student body, and we want to ensure that CINC’s students are included in the transfer pathways that we are committed to building.”

CSUSB Vice President for Student Affairs Paz Olivérez concurred.

“Support and collaboration with Tribal communities has been intrinsic to CSUSB’s success over the years. This MOU demonstrates the university’s commitment to ensuring that access to higher education is intentionally inclusive of the Native American residents of the IE,” Olivérez said. “I look forward to this new collaboration with CINC and the impact it will have on our region.”

About Cal State San Bernardino

[California State University, San Bernardino](#) is a preeminent center of intellectual and cultural activity in Inland Southern California. Opened in 1965 and set at the foothills of the beautiful San Bernardino Mountains, the university serves more than 20,000 students each year and graduates about 4,000 students annually. The university offers more than 70 traditional baccalaureate and master’s degree programs, education credential and certificate programs, and a doctorate program in educational leadership. Every one of its academic programs that is eligible has earned national accreditation. CSUSB reflects the dynamic diversity of the region and has the most diverse student population of any university in the Inland Empire. More than 80 percent of those who graduate are the first in their families to do so.

About the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus

The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees, a doctorate in educational leadership, teaching credentials and certificates. Serving more than 2,000 students, it is the Coachella Valley’s four-year public university and plays a vital role in educating and training the region’s growing population.

About California Nations Indian College

California Nations Indian College offers a culturally responsive academic curriculum rooted in Native American values and provides personalized support to advance the success of Native and non-Native students integrating Native American cultures, traditions, and languages in higher education.