

# Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

## NEWSLETTER

### Updates



November 2023



Dear SMC Community,

The Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion continues to support campus-wide efforts to ensure a welcoming environment and systemic equity for all members of the campus. Collaborating closely with stakeholders across the college, we continue to shape a college culture that recognizes diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental pillars of the mission of the college. I want to recognize and acknowledge that the many changes happening on the campus have been challenging and impact our lives in real and tangible ways. I want to make sure that the community is aware of the concrete actions I have taken and will continue to take during my time as co-SDO's in an effort to provide a sense of stability as we move forward on initiatives and intentional progress. I firmly believe that DEI must be embedded in our organizational infrastructure, should drive who we hire and retain, how we develop relationships and inform the ways we invest in the success and advancement of diverse populations that are at the center of our community.

### Addressing Campus Climate Issues Through GUIDE

A central goal of [GUIDE](#) is to raise staff and faculty awareness of the campus climate.

Numerous studies have concluded that how students experience their campus environment influences both learning and developmental outcomes, and that discriminatory environments have a negative effect on student learning. Students thrive in healthy environments, free of the negativity of discrimination, where inclusion and respect for diversity is the daily norm.



Creating a healthy campus climate is as important for faculty and staff as it is for students. Faculty and staff who consider their campus climate healthy and inclusive are more likely to feel

personally and professionally supported. In addition, faculty and staff who have encountered prejudice directly attribute its negative effects to decreased health and well-being.

Gaels Uniting for Inclusion and Diversity through Education (GUIDE) “represents our conviction that shared intention combined with collective action will guide our college on the journey toward a respectful, inclusive, and safe environment for all members of our campus community.”

We held three successful cohorts of GUIDE this October with over 50 participants. I want to personally thank the amazing faculty and staff who served as facilitators this fall: **Sam Alberto, Amaury Avalos, Stephanie D’costa, Tangela Blakely Reavis, Jennifer Heung and Shaunna Vella** (who also served as a facilitator-mentor).

The next GUIDE cohorts will be in March 2024. They will be held during Flextimes on **Mondays and Wednesdays (1:30-3 pm)**. An online option on **Tuesday evenings** will be offered as well. Faculty and staff will be notified of specific dates and a form for confirmation of attendance will be provided.

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GUIDE Tier 2 is an opportunity to deepen understanding and engagement with important issues that affect the Saint Mary's community, such as supporting neurodiverse students in class and “How do we create commonalities with people who are different than we are?”

If you are interested in organizing a [Tier II workshop](#) or being a Tier I facilitator, please reach out to me directly.

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### Other events



A BIPOC Faculty and Staff Social was held on October 5th in the Pub. Sponsored by the Office of DEI, Faculty Affairs, and IT Services, this was a social event with some fun ice breakers and space for conversation and community.

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### Associate Vice President and Senior Diversity Officer Search

The search committee has met and interviewed candidates over zoom. On-campus interviews are scheduled with candidates the week of **December 4th**. More detailed announcements are forthcoming and can be found on the [President’s webpage](#).

Thanks again to the dedication and hard work of the search committee:

- Ameera Ibrahim, SEBA Faculty Representative
- Rebecca Anguiano, KSOE Faculty Representative
- Jose Feito, SOS Faculty Representative
- Sunayani Bhattacharya, SOLA Faculty Representative
- Carrie Davis, Director, Mission and Ministry
- Aeleah Soine, Vice Provost for Student Success
- James Scuito, Vice President for Student Life
- Jennifer Pigza, Director, CILSA, CCIE chair (interim)
- Kalilah Epperson-Lee ASSMC Student Representative
- Karin Hein, Staff & HR Support (non-voting)

## DEI Tool of the Month

The purpose of this section is to provide people with resources, tools, and techniques you can implement in your daily life to promote and thrive in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. There are many resources out there so feel free to send us your recommendations as well.

For this month we are highlighting Brave Space Guidelines: an alternative to Safe Space. These particular principles come from the [SMC Intercultural Center \(IC\)](#).

1. Controversy with Civility
2. Owning your Intention and your Impact
3. Challenge by Choice
4. No Attacks
5. Respect

To learn more about Brave Space and how you can incorporate it in your daily actions, stop by IC events or ask IC staff during IC Cafe hours.

This section is dedicated to highlighting national and campus events related to DEI. Many of the campus events are created and hosted by students or school departments where students, faculty, and staff are welcome to attend. For more information on any campus DEI events, please check out the ODEI's [DEI Events Calendar](#).

## Upcoming Campus Events

### DOC (Diversity Organization Council)

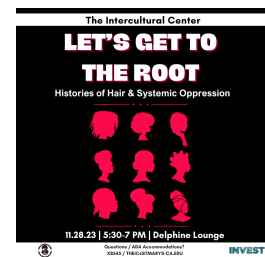
12/1 – SAS (Southern Asian Society) Karaoke and Chai: 7-10pm at the IC

### IC (Intercultural Center)



11/16 – **IC Collective Hour: Grieving in the Diaspora:** This Collective Hour holds space for people living in the diaspora, who are navigating violence in our world and who will be able to utilize storytelling to build community in the face of grief. **4-5pm at the Intercultural Center.**

11/28 – **INVEST- Let's Get to the Root: History of Hair and Systemic Oppression:** In this invest session, we will explore the history and regulation of hair and how it has been used as a tool for oppression. We will discuss how aesthetic standards have been used to excuse the systemic torment of minority groups across time. **5:30pm at the Intercultural Center.**



11/28 – **Decompression with Expression: Our Lady Guadalupe Edition 7-9pm at the IC**

11/29 – **Beyond Our Silhouettes Info Session #2 4-5pm at the IC**

11/30 – **Collective Hour: Bodies on the Border: Performers of Color in a World of Eurocentric Body Ideals.** Facilitated by Emma Stevenson **5:30-6:30pm at the IC**

12/1 – **Feel Good Friday 1-2:30pm at the IC**

## More Events



**Tolerance Means Dialogue**

What can we learn about bridging divides in America today?

**Tolerance Means Dialogues**  
Date: Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Time: 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. Pacific time  
Location: Soda Activity Center  
Saint Mary's College of California  
Hybrid Format (Zoom) Webinar  
RSVP at [www.tolerancemeans.com/txsp](http://www.tolerancemeans.com/txsp)

At a time of great division in America, many see friction and no solutions. We draw on insights from many individuals about their experiences and other constructive ways to live together with our differences.

What can we learn from our many battles for civil rights?

**Opening Remarks**  
Nicholas McDermott  
Director of the Center for Bridged Divides  
Professor and Director of Social Ethics, Law, and Public Life  
St. Mary's College of California

**Moderator**  
Stephanie Brito Woolpert  
Professor of Politics  
St. Mary's College of California

**Dialogue Catalysts**  
Legal Director  
National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)

**Robin Forewell Wilson**  
Executive Director, Open Dialogue  
R. Mitchell Van Voorhis, James Chair in Law  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Two students will be awarded a \$750 scholarship for their ideas on dissolving the culture war.

Learn more at [www.tolerancemeans.com](http://www.tolerancemeans.com)  
Submit a 500-word essay by Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM.

This event is free and open to the public.  
RDFP Approved

11/15 – **"Tolerance Means" Dialogue What Can We Learn about Bridging Divides in America Today:** Three students and two experts will lead a public discussion designed to find more constructive approaches to living together in a pluralistic society. All students who attend can join in, too, by tweeting questions and comments. The event is free and open to all. **7:30pm at Soda Center Claays Lounge.**

11/27 – **Our Lady Guadalupe Cookie Decoration: 6pm at the Soda Center**

11/29 – **Our Lady Guadalupe Karaoke and Spirits: 5:30pm at the 1928 Pub**

12/4 – **Our Lady Guadalupe BFG Dance Night 7-9pm at the Soda Center**

12/5 – **Our Lady Guadalupe Candlelight Rosary for Peace in the World 7-8pm at the Saint Mary's College Chapel**

12/6 – **Our Lady Guadalupe Loteria Night 6-7pm at Hagerty Lounge**

12/6 – **Our Lady Guadalupe Fiesta 5-9pm SMC Chapel and Soda Center**

## National Events

Native American Heritage Month: celebrates the culture and heritage of individuals who deeply enrich the United States

Movember- month-long fundraiser for men's issues, including prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men's suicide

10/31-11/2 – All Saints Day/All Souls Day/Día de los Muertos: commemorates those who have passed away in the Christian faith and Mexican and Aztec communities

11/16 – International Day for Tolerance (United Nations): founded by the UN to promote respect for various religions, languages, ethnicities, and cultures

11/16 – Dutch American Heritage Day: established to celebrate the longstanding friendship between the U.S. and the Netherlands

11/20 – Transgender Day of Remembrance (LGBTQ+): seeks to remember those who were murdered due to transphobia

11/21 – World Peace Day: established by the UN as an annual day of celebration and observance of peace.

I am pleased to welcome Nash Anderson (class of 2023) as the Graduate Intern for the Office of DEI. During his time as an undergraduate Global and Regional Studies major with a social justice concentration, Nash worked as a Social Justice Advocate in the Intercultural Center, was a member in Saint Mary's College of California's International Club, Green Gaels, Native American Indigenous Student Association (NAISA) president, Liberal Arts Bridge (LAB) ambassador, Honors Program, National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS), and Phi Kappa Phi chapter vice president. In Phi Kappa Phi he took an active role as a member of the student leadership team, he initiated several service projects. He was awarded the Dag Hammarskjold Award for the best academic achievement in the GRS major and the Hagerty Award, which is an honor bestowed upon the student with the most outstanding academic record in the School of Liberal Arts at SMC. He is currently a graduate student in the Saint Mary's Masters in Leadership Program. In his short time as the intern, he has been instrumental in updating the ODEI website and assisting with GUIDE. Welcome, Nash!

Sincerely,

**María Luisa Ruiz, Ph.D.** [\[she/her\(s\); yo, ella\(s\)\]](#)  
**Senior Diversity Officer, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**  
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Professor of [Spanish and Latin American Studies \(SaLAS\)](#)  
**Black Lives Matter | PRIDE | Dreamers Welcomed | AAPI Ally**