

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Newsletter

May
2025



In this newsletter you will find:

Opening Statement, Latest Announcements and Updates, Real Talk, Campus and National Events, & DEI Tool of the Month



Opening Statement

Dr. Terri Jett

Associate Vice-President/Senior Diversity Officer

I have always enjoyed the end of the academic school year, not just because a much needed slow-down is on the horizon, but more so because I truly enjoy seeing students graduate and participate in commencement. I fully understand all the sacrifice and hard work that is symbolized in that walk across the stage when one's name is called and for many students, that walk is the walk of their ancestors. I know when I participated in commencements as both an undergraduate and graduate student I reflected on the dreams of my parents and grandparents. They did not have the educational opportunities I was afforded for many reasons mostly steeped in racist systemic conditions, but they did their best to show me how to navigate and work through and around those barriers. My family understood education as the path to liberation from both an individual and a collective standpoint. The end of this school year feels especially heavy as it is the end of my first full academic year at Saint Mary's College but even more so because I'm going to witness a student/staff member of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion graduate – our own Nash Anderson. Nash is all that is right about Saint Mary's, and he has elevated the work of ODEI with his steadfast commitment to social justice, his mentorship of our outstanding undergraduate team members – Angelica, Daniela, and Zaniyyah, his masterful organization skills with our much-needed GUIDE program, his creativity with our marketing materials and his willingness to simply support all who ask him. I even learned a little about flower arranging from him and all of this while completing his graduate education! And as if I haven't mentioned enough, Nash Anderson is the founding President of the Graduate Student Association – which is genius. And I also need to state that Nash Anderson is the author of our monthly newsletters. Having Nash be a part of our ODEI office prior to and during my first year has truly been a gift to us and even more so to the institution because this work is not easy, but Nash does it with enthusiasm and that makes this work, which at times can feel overwhelming, more joyful. And when I met Nash's beautiful mother at our recent commencement awards celebration, Terri Lee Anderson, I recognized that Nash is simply living up to the high expectations that his mother rightfully has of him and the love and care that she has taken to raise an exceptional young man.

If I have my way Nash will cross that stage and walk right back into our office for even more greatness. It is at this moment that I can think of no greater gift.



Updates and Announcements



Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

ODEI Mission Statement

Saint Mary's College is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workplace and learning environment where systems of oppression and exclusion are actively opposed and dismantled. We believe diversity is one of our greatest strengths; we broadly define diversity to include race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, immigration status, physical appearance, religion, age, military status, and socioeconomic status. However, we recognize that diversity without equity is neither sustainable nor morally just. The College commits to creating a safe, respectful, and equitable environment for all community members and does not condone discriminatory or disrespectful behavior, policies, or practices. Saint Mary's, as a college community, works to actively interrupt and transform systems of oppression, including but not limited to white supremacy, xenophobia, ableism, patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia, religious intolerance, and economic inequality, recognizing that these systems manifest at multiple levels - systemic, institutional, ideological, interpersonal, and internalized. We work together to mitigate the impacts of these systems and to build an emotionally supportive community where students, faculty, and staff feel seen and valued and can flourish as their full, authentic selves. We strive to act upon our Lasallian value of 'Respect for all People' in our everyday actions, through continuous individual self-inquiry and improvement, and through regular reviews of our policies, procedures, and systems.

Updates and Announcements



SMC Land Acknowledgment

As the community of Saint Mary's College of California, we acknowledge we are gathered on the ethnohistoric tribal territory of the intermarried Saclan/Jalquin (hal-keen)/Huchiun (hoo-choon)/ancestral Muwekma Bay Miwok and Ohlone Territory.

The present-day Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, with an enrolled Bureau of Indian Affairs documented membership of over 600, is comprised of all of the known surviving Indian lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region. They trace their Tribe's ancestry through the missionization policies deployed by the Catholic Church in connection to Missions Dolores, San Jose, and Santa Clara, during the expansion of the Hispano-European Empire into Alta California beginning in 1769. Their Muwekma families are the successors and living members of the sovereign, previously Federally Recognized Verona Band of Alameda County, now formally recognized as the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area who would like you to know that they are alive and thriving members of the broader Bay Area communities today.

The Muwekma Ohlone Indian families have never left their aboriginal ancestral homelands of the Bay Area and maintain their identity, traditions, culture and language through the tenacity, strength and legacy of their ancestors and elders. Today, they attempt to repair the sustained ecological, environmental, and cultural devastation to their Tribe wrought by over 254 years of colonial processes of disenfranchisement through the politics of erasure. Their priorities are moved forward through three established entities: the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Council, Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, Inc. and the Muwekma Ohlone Preservation Foundation.

They respectfully request that the good citizens of St. Mary's College and the Town of Moraga, and surrounding towns strive to be faithful stewards on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe by maintaining the bay, freshwater creeks, native plants, animal habitats, and the air we all breathe. We recognize that the De La Salle Brothers of Saint Mary's College and the Lasallian Family, have worked to serve honorably as good stewards of this land since its purchase in 1926.

Watch the full Land Acknowledgment video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GDYvbWaeYM