



Newsletter

Greetings Everyone,

It feels like we are at a moment in the semester where the newness of the school year is past us and we have pivoted into a very busy time. As an academic environment there is always change taking place, even periods of evolution, because as a place centered on learning and serving the public good (the point of the academy) we should always be striving to do better. Sometimes the changes seem like they are moving too fast and yet on the other hand, some changes that need to take place are met with resistance by those who anticipate a disruption in a system of which they have always benefitted and been oblivious to the lack of equity and inclusiveness in that very system. At this moment we are also facing a national Presidential election and I have heard many people express distress at the outcome particularly since there is hyper-politicized rhetoric along racial and economic lines that are absolutely disturbing. I might add this has often been the case during U.S. Presidential elections of late as campaigns have used fear of the “other,” to mobilize voters. I was fortunate to recently attend a retreat of Lasallian high school DEI practitioners and towards the end one of the questions we were asked was “What keeps you up at night?” Many of them talked about both the ongoing attack on DEI, along with the election outcome. The attack on DEI has also been pointed out to me here on more than one occasion as if that is new information. I don’t lose sleep over that because I know that any institution standing on social justice principles which are also embedded in their faith identity and any academic institution that wants to be sustained has no choice but to embrace the increasing diversity of the country, insure that everyone has equitable opportunities for success and to recognize that it must evolve in all ways in this “marketplace of ideas,” to be inclusive of diverse ways of thinking and doing. Finally, since solidarity is mentioned in relationship to one of our Lasallian core principles, as we face head-on all these changes swirling around us, I’ll be personally looking to see how we live out that concept from a liberatory standpoint.

Side note – my friend Lt. Lyla Lauren has this wonderful idea that those who are able find ways to come together during this upcoming holiday season – starting with the Thanksgiving break – to support those among us who will be spending that time on campus and/or are a part of the community and could use some additional comfort. Let’s help her organize that love.

In solidarity,
Terri



In this newsletter you will find:

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

Updates and Announcements

Student Staff Highlight

Our office welcomes 3 new student staff dedicated to supporting the Saint Mary's Community.



Daniela Rojas-Romero

She/her/hers
HSI Apprentice

Hello! I am a current senior in the Integral Program at Saint Mary's. I am from the Bay Area and have a strong love of reading and learning. A fun fact about me is that despite having had some bad injuries before, I've never broken a bone



Angelica Gilberto-Barrera

She/her/hers
ODEI Student
Ambassador

Hi my name is Angelica Gilberto - Barrera I am a first year at SMC. I'm majoring in Kinesiology: Health promotion. I am also a first-gen Mexican and American student, I come from a small town in California called Placerville where I grew up in the nature, rivers, and lakes. A fun fact about me is that I love baking and my favorite thing to bake is banana bread with chocolate chips.



Zaniyyah Johnson

She/her/hers
ODEI Student
Ambassador

I am a second year Media Production major. I am delightfully curious to explore the possibilities of this office and making SMC as best it can be!

Updates and Announcements



Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

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 are holding three cohorts of GUIDE Tier I **this October**. 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. I want to personally thank the amazing faculty and staff who are serving as facilitators this spring: **Nash Anderson, Dr. Terri Jett, Laura Lyndon, María Luisa Ruiz, Rogelio López García, and Shaunna Vella (who also serve as facilitator-mentors).**

Official 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.