



# Chief Enrollment Officer Leadership Profile

Spring 2026



## Executive Summary

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) is seeking applications and nominations for its next Chief Enrollment Officer (CEO) to serve as a visionary, collaborative, and student-centered leader and guide enrollment strategy at a moment of opportunity and purpose. This senior executive will play a defining role in shaping the university's future; advancing its mission as a public, Hispanic-Serving Institution; and ensuring access, equity, and student success across a dynamic and evolving enrollment landscape.

Nestled in the hills of northern San Diego County, California State University San Marcos stands as a beacon of promise and possibility, offering the ideal blend of academic excellence and a distinctive Southern California lifestyle. Home to more than 17,000 students, CSUSM is known for its vibrant and diverse campus community, hands-on learning opportunities, close faculty-student engagement, and strong access to internships, research, and comprehensive support services. The university is deeply committed to transforming lives through education and creating pathways to opportunities for students from all backgrounds.

Reporting directly to the President and serving as a key member of the President's Advisory Team (PAT), the Chief Enrollment Officer is a central voice in institutional leadership and strategic decision-making. The CEO serves as the university's primary architect of a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan, guiding enrollment strategy across the full student lifecycle—from first inquiry and recruitment through persistence, graduation, and post-completion success. This role offers a rare opportunity to lead enrollment at an institution where purpose, impact, and student-centered values are tightly aligned.

The Chief Enrollment Officer leads the Division of Enrollment Management Services, a highly integrated organization reflecting CSUSM's holistic approach to student support. The division includes undergraduate and graduate recruitment and admissions, financial aid and scholarships, university registrar, academic advising, success coaching, and one-stop student services. Through data-informed planning, strong financial stewardship, and a focus on equity and outcomes, the CEO will foster a culture of collaboration, accountability, and sustained improvement, ensuring CSUSM continues to expand access, close equity gaps, and fulfill its promise to students and the communities it serves.

The successful Chief Enrollment Officer will be a values-driven, forward-thinking leader who deeply embraces CSUSM's dual commitment to access and excellence—and is willing to seek new enrollment opportunities in service of that mission. Grounded in a belief in social mobility and inclusive student success, the CEO will bring both strategic vision and operational acumen, contributing as a trusted member of the President's Advisory Team while translating institutional strategy into effective, campus-wide execution. This leader will be innovative and technologically adept, leveraging data, CRM systems, and emerging tools such as artificial intelligence to inform decisions and improve outcomes. In an evolving and fast-moving enrollment landscape, the CEO will be proactive, collaborative, and analytically strong—someone who can operationalize data, communicate enrollment strategy clearly across the campus, and lead by asking thoughtful questions, building consensus, and bringing people together to drive meaningful change.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see the Procedure for Candidacy section at the end of this document.

---

## Role of the Chief Enrollment Officer

The Chief Enrollment Officer (CEO) is a defining leadership role at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM). Reporting directly to the President and serving as a member of the President's Advisory Team, the CEO is a central voice in shaping the university's future and advancing its mission as a Hispanic-Serving Institution dedicated to equity and inclusive excellence.

The Chief Enrollment Officer serves as the university's primary architect of a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Management plan, guiding efforts that span the full student journey. From first inquiry to graduation and beyond, the CEO ensures that strategy, operations, and student support are unified in service of meaningful outcomes.

Success in this role requires vision, collaboration, and a deep commitment to serving students whose pathways to higher education are often shaped by resilience, ambition, and the pursuit of opportunity. The CEO will be a key partner to the President, Provost, the President's Advisory Team, Academic Affairs leadership, Deans and Department Chairs, faculty, Institutional Research and Effectiveness, University Communications, IITS, Administration and Finance, Student Affairs, as well as Associated Students Inc., alumni, and other campus leaders in aligning enrollment strategy with academic priorities and student success initiatives. Additionally, the CEO will interact regularly with the CSU Chancellor's Office on enrollment reporting and policy and will engage with community college partners, K-12 school districts, CSUSM Alliance partner schools, and community organizations to build partnerships and address enrollment and student success challenges.

The Chief Enrollment Officer leads the [Division of Enrollment Management Services](#), a highly integrated organization that includes the following operational units: Admissions and Recruitment, Outreach Programs, Financial Aid and Scholarships, the Registrar's Office, Academic Advising, Success Coaching, and Cougar Central (the university's one-stop student support center), and is made up of approximately 68 FTE staff, with an operating budget of approximately \$11.7 million.

Reporting to and working closely with the Chief Enrollment Officer are the following direct reports:

- Associate Chief Enrollment Officer
- Director, Recruitment & Outreach
- Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Director, Admissions and University Registrar,
- Director, Academic Advising,
- Director, Success Coaching,
- Administrative Support Coordinator
- Administrative Assistant

The Chief Enrollment Officer's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Contributes to university-wide strategic decision making, ensuring a community-focused strategy to support the university's mission as a Hispanic-Serving Institution.
- Develops, recommends, creates, and implements the university's comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP), including both long- and short-term goals and operational plans for Enrollment Management Services.
- Identifies, develops, and implements enrollment strategies that result in quantifiable and measurable outcomes, leveraging enrollment forecasting, market analysis, and higher education enrollment management best practices.
- Ensures fiscal viability and effective budget management across all EMS departments, including the development of enrollment projections and financial reports as needed.

- Facilitates the sharing of enrollment information and data with campus constituents.
- Collaborates with and encourages campus-wide commitment to the achievement of enrollment goals among academic units, Student Affairs, University Communications, IITS, and other business partners in the achievement of university goals.
- Builds effective strategic alliances with K-12 school districts, community colleges, the CSUSM Alliance partner schools, community-based organizations, and regional workforce partners.
- Identifies and anticipates community needs both on and off campus; monitors demographic, economic, and policy trends and translates insights into actionable enrollment strategies.
- Reviews admission, academic, and educational policy to advance university goals, enhance student persistence, eliminate equity gaps, and improve time to graduation.
- Leverages technology, CRM platforms, and enrollment analytics to inform strategy and continuously improve operational effectiveness across all EMS units.
- Facilitates an environment that motivates, empowers, and inspires commitment from employees; builds effective teams committed to organizational goals.
- Creates and implements methods for improving individual and team performance.
- Develops and oversees, in collaboration with University Communications and campus partners, comprehensive communication plans, event planning, and multi-channel marketing strategies for all stages of the enrollment funnel.
- Designs, administers, and ensures adherence to policies and procedures governing enrollment management functions and state, federal, and CSU regulations, including those governing financial aid, FERPA, and CSU Chancellor's Office enrollment reporting.
- Serves as the division representative on appropriate university and CSU system-wide committees.

The division's current *Strategic Enrollment Plan* (SEP) is available [here](#).



---

## Enrollment Management at California State University San Marcos

The Division of Enrollment Management Services at CSUSM supports the university's mission by identifying, recruiting, enrolling, and retaining a diverse and highly motivated student population. Through an integrated approach to enrollment, the division aligns recruitment, financial aid, advising, and student success functions to support students from initial inquiry through graduation.

California State University San Marcos is a growing institution with a strong commitment to access and student success. The university currently enrolls more than 17,000 students, including approximately 15,500 undergraduate students and more than 1,500 graduate and postbaccalaureate students.

The student population reflects the university's regional mission and commitment to equity:

- Approximately 54% first-generation college students
- Approximately 51% Hispanic or Latinx students, reflecting its HSI designation
- Approximately 70% receive financial aid
- Approximately 10% Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students, supporting its AANAPISI designation
- A significant population of military-affiliated students (1 in 9), among the highest per capita in the CSU system

This is a student body defined by potential, determination, and purpose. It is also a student body that benefits from thoughtful and intentional enrollment strategies, supported by a divisional staff that recognizes the complexity of students' lived experiences and the importance of systems that promote persistence and success.

Detailed enrollment and graduation trends can be found through the [CSUSM Institutional Planning and Analysis dashboards](#).

### Office of Recruitment and Outreach

The [Office of Recruitment and Outreach](#) advances the university's mission of student success by expanding access to higher education and supporting students throughout their transition into the university. Reflecting CSUSM's commitment to inclusive excellence, community engagement, and a culture of care, the office leads a comprehensive portfolio of outreach, recruitment, and college access initiatives designed to serve prospective students and their families across the region.

A central component of this work is the university's School Relations and outreach efforts, which build and sustain strong partnerships with K–12 school districts, community colleges, and community-based organizations. Through these partnerships, the office develops and maintains clear, supported pathways to enrollment, particularly for first-generation students and those from historically underserved communities.

The office also oversees federally funded TRIO programs that provide academic preparation, advising, and college-readiness support to students who may otherwise face barriers to higher education. Together, School Relations, TRIO, and broader outreach initiatives reflect CSUSM's long-standing commitment to access and outcomes, supported by its recognition as the #1 university in the nation for social mobility (*CollegeNET Social Mobility Index*) and as a Top Performer on Social Mobility by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Recruitment efforts are focused on first-time students, transfer students from California community colleges (a high-yield demographic at 42%), and individuals from historically underserved populations. Through early outreach, sustained engagement, and targeted programming, the office plays a critical role in increasing college-going rates and ensuring that students are prepared to enroll and succeed at CSUSM.

Prospective students engage with the university through campus visits, virtual programming, and targeted communication strategies within a test-blind admissions model. The team manages the recruitment and admissions process from outreach through application review and enrollment yield, utilizing the Cal State Apply platform in alignment with CSU system practices. For the Fall 2025 admissions cycle, the university received approximately 17,500 first-year applications and admitted approximately 16,275 students (a 93% admit rate).

### Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships

The [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#) plays a central role in advancing CSUSM's commitment to access and affordability. For many students, financial aid is a determining factor in both enrollment and persistence, and the office ensures that students and families can navigate the financial aid process with clarity, transparency, and confidence. The office administers federal, state, and institutional aid programs for undergraduate and graduate students, aligning financial aid strategy with enrollment goals and student success outcomes. Given the university's high proportion of Pell-eligible students, financial aid practices are designed not only to support access but also retention and timely degree completion. Approximately 71% of students receive financial aid, and the university distributes approximately \$100 million in total financial assistance annually. These efforts have contributed to strong student outcomes. Notably, 58% of CSUSM students graduate with no education loan debt, reinforcing the university's national recognition for advancing social mobility.

### Office of the Registrar

The [Office of the Registrar](#) supports the university's academic mission by effectively managing student records, registration, and enrollment processes. The office ensures compliance with CSU and federal regulations while maintaining accurate and accessible academic records that support student progression. Working closely with academic departments and campus partners, the Registrar facilitates course registration, degree audit processes, and graduation certification. This work is foundational to the student experience, enabling students to navigate their academic pathways efficiently and complete their degrees in a timely manner.

### Office of Academic Advising

The [Office of Academic Advising](#) provides coordinated academic planning and guidance that supports student progression and degree completion. Advising efforts are designed to help students navigate academic requirements, make informed decisions, and remain on track toward graduation.

### Office of Success Coaching

The [Office of Success Coaching](#) complements academic advising by providing proactive, individualized support to students throughout their academic journey. Success coaches engage students early and consistently, helping them navigate challenges, build effective habits, and connect with available resources. Through targeted outreach and intervention strategies, success coaching supports persistence and contributes to improved retention and graduation outcomes. The office plays a key role in advancing CSUSM's commitment to a culture of care and holistic student support.

### Cougar Central (One-Stop Student Services Center)

[Cougar Central](#) serves as the university's centralized student services hub, providing a coordinated and accessible entry point for enrollment-related services. Designed to streamline the student experience, Cougar Central brings together support for admissions, financial aid, registration, and related services in a single location. By simplifying administrative processes and improving service delivery, Cougar Central helps reduce barriers and ensures students can access the information and support they need in a timely, efficient manner. The model reflects CSUSM's commitment to student-centered service and operational effectiveness.

## Student Outcomes

Student success at California State University San Marcos produces meaningful results that are frequently recognized nationally. The university's commitment to academic persistence is reflected in strong student outcomes, including a first-time, first-year retention rate of approximately 78% and a six-year graduation rate of approximately 53%. Transfer student success is also a notable strength, with a retention rate of approximately 86% and a four-year graduation rate of approximately 71%.

Beyond graduation, the university's impact continues to resonate locally. Approximately 8 in 10 graduates (80%) remain in the region, contributing to the professional workforce and strengthening the social and economic fabric of the communities that CSUSM serves. This regional retention is a key driver of the university's status as a leader in social mobility, as graduates often become the first in their families to achieve high-earning professional roles within North County San Diego and Southwest Riverside County.



## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

California State University San Marcos offers a compelling leadership opportunity at a moment of genuine momentum. As a young, thriving campus with expanded facilities, strong, relevant academic programs, and positive enrollment trends, CSUSM is well-positioned for its next phase of growth and impact. As it grows, the university remains deeply relational, one in which leaders collaborate closely, share information openly, and intentionally break down silos. Under President Neufeldt's leadership, a culture of trust, teamwork, and mutual respect has taken root.

Located in a dynamic and growing region where many alumni choose to live and work, CSUSM benefits from strong community connections and forward-looking ambition. As the campus evolves, balancing a strong commuter identity with an increasingly residential feel, it remains defined by a deep commitment to students, social mobility, and transformation. For a changemaker eager to help shape the future of a university on the rise, CSUSM represents an exceptional and energizing place to lead.

Key priorities for the new leader include the following:

### **Lead Enrollment Strategy in a Shifting Landscape**

The Chief Enrollment Officer will guide CSUSM through a rapidly evolving enrollment environment shaped by demographic decline, increased competition, and changing student demand. While the university has experienced continued growth, this leader must actively monitor enrollment, demographics, and market signals to ensure the campus does not become complacent. Anticipating population shifts, in-state and out-of-state competition, and policy changes, the CEO will lead with foresight and position CSUSM to remain competitive, relevant, and mission-driven in an increasingly complex enrollment marketplace.

### **Advance a Mission-Centered, Student-Focused Institution**

Success in this role requires a deep commitment to CSUSM's mission as a student-centered, access-oriented institution. The Chief Enrollment Officer will work closely with faculty and staff across campus to ensure enrollment strategies advance social mobility, serve diverse student populations, and support long-term student success, not only for new students, but throughout the full student lifecycle. The CEO will champion a broad understanding of enrollment management as an institutional responsibility, aligning recruitment, retention, and completion efforts across divisions.

### **Build a Proactive Outreach and Yield Culture**

Demographic shifts and increased competition from other institutions for students in CSUSM's traditional feeder markets will require the university to move to a more proactive, strategic approach. The CEO will be expected to strengthen outreach to communities, schools, and students, particularly through expanded K–12 engagement, and to sharpen yield strategies in a more competitive environment. This leader will play a visible external role, spending meaningful time in the region to deepen partnerships, protect CSUSM's local market, and ensure the university remains well connected to the communities it serves.

### **Strengthen Brand Identity and Market Position**

An important opportunity for the next Chief Enrollment Officer is to help clarify and elevate CSUSM's brand. Working in close partnership with University Marketing and Communications, the CEO will help articulate the university's value proposition, competitive edge, and student experience, telling the CSUSM story more boldly and consistently. As CSUSM expands its footprint, the CEO will support market-specific strategies that enhance visibility, recognition, and relevance across multiple campus locations and constituencies.

### **Expand Pathways and Student Populations**

The CEO will lead efforts to broaden CSUSM's enrollment portfolio beyond its traditional undergraduate base. This includes developing strategies for adult learners, degree completers, military-affiliated students, and those pursuing alternative credentials. The Chief Enrollment Officer will think expansively about pathways to and through the university, ensuring CSUSM remains responsive to how today's learners seek education and expand its competitive position among institutions moving aggressively in these spaces.

### **Align Enrollment with Academic Strategy and Capacity**

The Chief Enrollment Officer will serve as a true strategic partner to academic leadership, translating enrollment data into meaningful insights for academic planning. This leader will align enrollment strategy with academic capacity, modality mix, and workforce demand, while reducing duplication of effort and strengthening integration between Enrollment Management and the colleges. A system-level perspective and close collaboration with the deans will be essential to ensuring sustainable growth and institutional effectiveness.

### **Create an Integrated Enrollment Ecosystem**

A key expectation for success is the creation of a cohesive enrollment ecosystem that touches every aspect of the student experience—from recruitment and financial aid through advising, retention, and timely degree completion. The CEO will help institutionalize coordinated, data-informed approaches to student success, including more systematic attention to students in the academic "middle," not just those excelling or struggling most. This leader will also guide the adoption of improved systems, analytics, and processes that support seamless collaboration and informed decision-making.

### **Lead with Stability, Trust, and Effectively Manage Change**

The next Chief Enrollment Officer will be expected to lead with steadiness, transparency, and care. Building on recent progress, the CEO will foster trust, reinforce a healthy and accountable culture, and engage the team in shaping a shared vision for the future. Adept change management, inclusive leadership, and the ability to bring people together around a common purpose will be critical to long-term success.



---

## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The Chief Enrollment Officer will be a mission-driven, forward-thinking leader who champions access, excellence, and social mobility at California State University San Marcos. Serving as a strategic partner to the President, this leader will pair big picture vision with strong operational execution, using data, technology, and emerging tools to guide enrollment decisions. In a rapidly changing landscape, the CEO will be collaborative, analytically agile, and adept at bringing people together to communicate strategy, build consensus, and drive meaningful, student-centered change.

The successful candidate will possess many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

### Strategic Vision and Executive Leadership

- Strategic, big-picture leader who serves as a trusted thought partner to the President and Cabinet, with the ability to map and advance a comprehensive enrollment vision across undergraduate and graduate education.
- Proven executive presence, judgment, and temperament to lead effectively at the Cabinet level and guide the institution through complex change.
- Ability to translate long-term institutional vision into clear operational priorities, balancing patience, context-building, and sustained progress over short-term or transactional solutions.
- Demonstrated capacity to lead in ambiguity, align stakeholders, and enable groups to achieve results in complex, highly regulated environments.

### Comprehensive Enrollment Management Expertise

- Deep knowledge of modern strategic enrollment management principles and best practices across admissions, recruitment, financial aid, registrar functions, advising, student success coaching, and one-stop student services.
- Experience leading enrollment strategy for both undergraduate and graduate programs, with demonstrated success growing graduate enrollment and supporting academic expansion, including professional and doctoral programs.
- Proven ability to develop and implement a Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) aligned with institutional priorities, resource realities, and long-term financial sustainability.
- Understanding of how enrollment strategy intersects with retention, persistence, and completion, particularly through advising and student success initiatives.

### Data-Informed, Predictive, and Analytical Decision Making

- High level of fluency in data, analytics, and enrollment forecasting, with the ability to move beyond reporting to predictive modeling, scenario planning, and strategic decision-making.
- Curiosity-driven leader who leverages data to explore trends, test assumptions, and inform institutional choices.
- Skilled at translating complex data into actionable insights for academic, administrative, and executive partners.

### Innovation, Technology, and Forward-Thinking Practice

- Technologically adept leader with experience leveraging CRM systems, student information systems, analytics platforms, and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, to modernize enrollment strategy.
- Willingness to rethink traditional enrollment models in response to shifting demographics, student behavior, and market conditions.
- Commitment to continuous improvement, quality management, and sustained innovation rather than one-time fixes.

### **Mission-Driven Leadership and Commitment to Access and Equity**

- Deep alignment with CSUSM's mission as a student-centered public university committed to access, social mobility, teaching excellence, and active learning.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and student success, with the ability to promote access and outcomes simultaneously.
- Experience serving underrepresented student populations, with familiarity with strategies that support first-generation, low-income, Latinx, and other historically underserved communities.

### **Collaborative, Relational, and People-Centered Leadership**

- Highly collaborative leader who builds trust-based partnerships across campus, promotes shared ownership of enrollment outcomes, and values transparency.
- Strong people manager with experience leading complex organizations, building high-performing teams, developing talent, and supporting ongoing professional development.
- Ability to lead courageously, address difficult issues, manage conflict, ensure confidentiality, and operate effectively within a collective bargaining environment.

### **External Engagement, Communication, and Institutional Storytelling**

- Charismatic and effective ambassador for the university with experience engaging schools, community partners, regional stakeholders, and external audiences.
- Strong appreciation for institutional marketing, brand, messaging, and market positioning, and the connection between enrollment strategy, alumni engagement, and institutional storytelling.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, with demonstrated success in persuasion, negotiation, and communicating purposefully to diverse audiences.

### **Required and Preferred Qualifications**

- Earned master's degree in education, doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D., or equivalent) desired. Candidates with an equivalent combination of education and progressively responsible experience will also be considered.
- Deep, progressive higher education administrative experience in enrollment management, including senior-level leadership.
- Experience with or ability to understand a four-year public university such as CSUSM.
- Strong knowledge of federal and state regulations related to financial aid (Title IV), FERPA, CSU enrollment policies, and compliance requirements.

# About California State University San Marcos

## Overview

[California State University San Marcos](#) (CSUSM) is a dynamic, student-centered public university and a member of the 23-campus California State University system, the largest four-year public university system in the United States. Founded in 1989, CSUSM quickly established itself as a national model for access, student success, and social mobility, serving more than 17,000 students across a focused portfolio of undergraduate and graduate programs.

Located in North San Diego County, one of the most economically vibrant and innovation-driven regions in the country, CSUSM combines the strengths of a comprehensive public university with a clear and purposeful commitment to expanding opportunity. The university is designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and enrolls a highly diverse student body, including a majority of first-generation college students and those from historically underserved communities. This identity is central to CSUSM's mission and shapes its academic priorities, student support strategies, and institutional culture.

Under the leadership of President Ellen Neufeldt, CSUSM is guided by its strategic plan, [The Power of CSUSM](#), which advances an integrated vision centered on student success, inclusive excellence, innovation, and community impact. Through this framework, the university continues to strengthen its role as a regional anchor institution, preparing graduates who contribute to economic mobility and workforce development across Southern California and beyond.

## Mission

At California State University San Marcos, our mission is [student success](#). As an engine of transformative knowledge, our community of dedicated teacher-scholars and staff holistically advances the academic, social, professional, and personal development of students across the student life cycle, through education, innovation, and [community partnerships](#).

## Vision

California State University San Marcos will be a national leader of [social mobility](#), transforming lives, families, and communities. As the first-choice university for first-generation students and future generations, we will drive [intellectual engagement](#), [innovation](#), and [sustainability](#) for a diverse, global society. Our exemplary academic programs will respond to societal needs and prepare students to be tomorrow's socially just leaders and change makers.

## Values

California State University San Marcos is an academic community dedicated to the values of:

- [Intellectual Engagement](#)
- [Student Success](#)
- [Inclusive Excellence](#)
- [Culture of Care](#)
- [Innovation](#)



- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Stewardship of Resources](#)
- [Sustainability & Climate Justice](#)

## Academics

At California State University San Marcos, learning and discovery are central to the institution's mission. The university offers 43 bachelor's degree programs and 35 minors, along with approximately 23 master's programs, 11 credential programs, and doctoral programs launching soon. Academic programs are housed within four primary colleges, which serve as the foundation for the university's state-supported undergraduate and graduate degrees:

- [College of Business Administration](#) (CoBA)
- [College of Education, Health and Human Services](#) (CEHHS)
- [College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences](#) (CHABSS)
- [College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics](#) (CSTEM)

### Extended Learning

In addition to the four academic colleges, Extended Learning operates as a self-supporting academic unit that expands the university's reach and responsiveness to workforce and community needs. Extended Learning offers accelerated degree programs, including the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN), fully online programs in Cybersecurity, Business, and Criminology, and professional certificate programs in Human Resources and Supply Chain. The unit also manages programs at off-site locations, including the CSUSM Temecula and Chula Vista campuses.

### Graduate Education

Graduate education at CSUSM is supported through the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, which provides administrative oversight, student support, and coordination of graduate programs. While graduate degrees are conferred through the academic colleges, the office plays a key role in advancing graduate education, research activity, and academic quality across the university.

Click [here](#) for a complete list of CSUSM's degree programs.

## Student Population

The student population at California State University San Marcos reflects both the region's diversity and the university's strong commitment to access and opportunity. Approximately 54% of graduates are the first in their families to earn a bachelor's degree, and 55% of students come from historically underserved populations. The university is federally designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, with 51% of students identifying as Latinx, and over 70% receive financial aid. CSUSM also serves a significant population of military-affiliated students (1 in 9) and is home to nearly 500 student veterans, representing the highest per capita percentage of any campus in the California State University system.

## Land Acknowledgement

CSUSM acknowledges that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Luiseño/Payómkawichum people. Today, the meeting place of CSUSM and its surrounding areas is still home to the six Luiseño/Payómkawichum federally recognized bands of the La Jolla, Pala, Pauma, Pechanga, Rincon, Soboba, and one non-federally recognized band, the San Luis Rey band. It is also important to acknowledge that this land remains the shared space among the Kuupangaxwicheh/Cupeño, Kumeyaay, and Ipai peoples.

## Leadership

### Ellen Neufeldt, Ed.D., President



Dr. Ellen Neufeldt is the fourth president of California State University San Marcos, where she has led transformational progress to position the university as a national model for student success, social mobility, and regional impact. Since her appointment in 2019, she has guided CSUSM through unprecedented forward momentum—launching a new strategic plan, expanding high-demand academic programs, transforming the physical campus, and achieving record-setting gains in enrollment, research, and philanthropy.

As a national trailblazer in social mobility, President Neufeldt hosts the National Social Mobility Symposium, bringing together policymakers, experts, and higher education leaders from across the country to share ideas and innovations around redefining and advancing social mobility. CSUSM ranks #1 in the nation on CollegeNET's Social Mobility Index, which measures how well universities graduate students into well-paying careers and leadership opportunities to improve their social and economic situations compared to previous generations.

Under President Neufeldt's leadership, Cal State San Marcos launched its first institutional strategic plan in 15 years, centered on social mobility, academic excellence, and student success. She established a university-wide student success and retention committee and oversaw the highest year-over-year enrollment growth in the CSU system. Faculty-sponsored research reached a record \$20 million for the second consecutive year, while philanthropic support soared, doubling year-over-year results and setting a university philanthropic record with the most funds raised in a single fiscal year. CSUSM secured its first 8-figure level gifts totaling \$20 million—one to launch an accelerated behavioral and mental health program and another to provide unrestricted campaign matching opportunities across campus. She also secured \$5.6 million for degree expansion in Temecula and led the university's most successful fundraising efforts focused on social mobility. CSUSM's comprehensive blended campaign has raised more than \$130 million in just three years.

During President Neufeldt's tenure, CSUSM has experienced remarkable growth, both physically and programmatically. The California State University Board of Trustees has approved the Hunter Hall of Science and Engineering building, which broke ground in summer 2025 and is set to open its doors to faculty, staff, and students in late 2027. This state-of-the-art facility will provide much-needed collaboration, research, and learning spaces, enabling CSUSM to address the critical need to accommodate future enrollment growth and expand programs across campus. Additionally, the construction of a new Student Recreation and Wellness Center, through an innovative public-private partnership, as well as affordable student housing, which more than doubles on-campus housing to 3,300 beds, allows CSUSM to better serve students and meet their needs.

A champion of innovation and entrepreneurship, President Neufeldt launched CSUSM's Innovation Hub less than a year into her tenure, creating an on-campus nexus for solving societal challenges. Her vision extends beyond physical spaces—she has fostered an ecosystem of social innovation and regional collaboration, positioning CSUSM as a driver of economic development and workforce readiness. Demonstrating her commitment to high-demand, workforce-aligned education, President Neufeldt has expanded academic offerings across disciplines to meet regional and statewide needs. She launched a computer engineering degree to complement CSUSM's existing strengths in software and electrical engineering, supported by a \$5 million Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) grant to build a diverse regional engineering pipeline. In collaboration with the Cities of Chula Vista and Southwestern College, as well as Temecula and Mt. San Jacinto College, she broadened access to four-year degrees, helping to meet the evolving workforce needs of Southwest Riverside and South San Diego Counties. Under her leadership, CSUSM also introduced an undergraduate cybersecurity degree and SWIFT, an innovative

3-year accelerated degree pathway in public health or human development—designed to prepare students for in-demand careers in growing sectors.

President Neufeldt is also firmly committed to ensuring that Cal State San Marcos is a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming home for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. Each day, she works toward making CSUSM a model for guiding students throughout the student life cycle so that they become engaged and active alumni in the community while fueling the needs of the region. Underscoring her commitment to Cal State San Marcos' role in cultivating partnerships that create opportunities for students and enrich the communities served by the university, President Neufeldt serves on the boards of the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, LEAD California, Commission on International Education, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities.

Dr. Neufeldt has been recognized with numerous awards, including in recent years:

- The 2025 LEAD San Diego Visionary Awards – Innovation & Economic Opportunity Awardee.
- The 2025 President's Award from NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.
- A 2022 Distinguished Alumna Awardee from Tennessee Technological University.
- A 2022 San Diego Business Journal CEO of the Year Awardee.
- The 2020 Outstanding Enrollment Professional Award from NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, Enrollment Management KC.
- The 2020 Outstanding Enrollment Professional Award from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Enrollment Management KC.
- The 2018 Melvene Hardee Award, awarded by the Southern Association of College Student Affairs, recognizes her contributions to the student affairs profession for national work in social mobility and student success.
- The 2017 Pillar of the Profession, awarded by NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, for sustained professional distinction in higher education.
- The 2016 Howard Davis Senior Award, awarded by the Southern Association of College Student Affairs, for outstanding service.
- The 2014 Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Performance as a Senior Student Affairs Officer, awarded by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, is presented to a lead student affairs officer who has demonstrated sustained professional achievement in student affairs work, innovative response in meeting students' varied and emerging needs, effectiveness in developing staff, and leadership in community and college or university affairs.
- The 2014 John Jones Award for Outstanding Performance as a Senior Student Affairs Officer, awarded by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region III, based on criteria of outstanding administrative competency, respect of colleagues and students, innovative programming, leadership on campus and in the community, staff development, and significant contribution to the field.
- Named in 2010 to The Daily Record's "Maryland's Top 100 Women" list, awarded annually to women in the state of Maryland who have made significant contributions to their organization, profession, and community.

President Neufeldt received her Doctor of Education from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and both a Master of Arts in Educational Psychology and Counselor Education and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Tennessee Technological University.



## About San Marcos, California

California State University San Marcos is located in the city of San Marcos, a vibrant and growing community in North San Diego County that offers an exceptional quality of life and access to one of the most dynamic regions in the country. Home to more than 95,000 residents, San Marcos provides a welcoming, progressive environment that combines the ease of suburban living with proximity to major economic and cultural centers.

Set in the scenic foothills of northern San Diego County, the city enjoys a temperate climate with approximately 280 days of sunshine each year. The natural surroundings offer abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation, from miles of hiking and biking trails to nearby beaches along the Pacific Ocean, just eight miles away. Downtown San Diego, with its rich arts, dining, and entertainment scene, is located approximately 35 miles to the south, providing easy access to a major metropolitan hub while maintaining a more relaxed and livable pace.

San Marcos sits within a region widely recognized for its innovation-driven economy. San Diego County is a national leader in biotechnology, healthcare, aerospace, and technology, supported by a strong ecosystem of research institutions, startups, and global companies. This environment creates meaningful opportunities for collaboration, partnership, and dual-career pathways.

The city itself offers a strong sense of community, with local dining, retail, and gathering spaces that contribute to its livability and character. Highly regarded K–12 schools, diverse neighborhoods, and a growing cultural scene further enhance its appeal for individuals and families. For faculty and staff, San Marcos offers a compelling combination of professional opportunity and lifestyle. The region supports both career advancement and personal well-being, making it an attractive destination for those seeking to contribute to a mission-driven institution while enjoying the richness of Southern California living.

To learn more about San Marcos, visit [here](#).

## Procedure for Candidacy

California State University San Marcos has partnered with WittKieffer for this search.

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV/resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile. Review of applications has begun and will continue until the position is filled. **For fullest consideration, applicants are encouraged to submit their materials as soon as possible.**

Please submit all applications, nominations, and inquiries to the search team through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by clicking [here](#). New users should select "Register Here" to create an account before proceeding. After logging in, navigate to "Open Positions," then locate the role by entering the institution's name and clicking the search wheel.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Amy Crutchfield, Shelley Arakawa, J.D., and Bree Liddell

[CSUSM-Enrollment@wittkieffer.com](mailto:CSUSM-Enrollment@wittkieffer.com)

*Anticipated Hiring Salary Range: \$18,750 - \$22,500 per month*

*CSU Classification Salary Range: \$10,106 - \$32,441 per month*

*Salary is commensurate with the background and experience of the individual selected. This position is eligible for a broad range of benefits, including medical, dental, vision, life and disability insurances, retirement (CalPERS), tuition waiver, vacation and sick leave. In addition, 15 paid holidays are offered each year; 14 scheduled on specific days and a Personal Holiday that may be taken any time during the year. A comprehensive benefits summary for this position is available online by visiting our Benefits Portal. The CSU Total Compensation Calculator demonstrates the significance of the benefits package.*

*Following a conditional offer of employment, satisfactory completion of a background check (including criminal records check) is required prior to beginning employment. Any offer of employment rescinded if the background check reveals disqualifying information, and/or it is discovered that the candidate knowingly withheld or falsified information. Failure to satisfactorily complete the background check may affect the continued employment of a current CSU employee who was conditionally offered the position.*

*The person holding this position is considered a 'mandated reporter' under the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act and is required to comply with the requirements set forth in CSU Executive Order 1083 Revised July 21, 2017, as a condition of employment.*

*This position is a "designated position" in the California State University's Conflict of Interest Code. The incumbent in this position is required to file Conflict of Interest forms subject to the regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission.*

*California State University San Marcos is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We consider qualified applicants for employment without regard to age, physical or mental disability, gender or sex, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, medical condition, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion or religious creed, sexual orientation, and veteran or military status.*

*The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act or Clery Act Notification can be found at <https://www.csusm.edu/clery/annualreports.html>.*

*Pursuant to the CSU Out-of-State Employment Policy, as of January 1, 2022, the California State University is prohibited from hiring employees to perform CSU-related work outside the state of California.*

*California State University San Marcos is not a sponsoring agent for staff or management positions (i.e., H1-B visas).*