

October 21, 2020 #EquityChat
Dr. Jose Fierro (@DrJfierro_),
President/Superintendent of Cerritos College (@cerritoscollege)

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Good evening and welcome to #EquityChat w/your hosts @iamkeithcurry & @SDMesaPrez Tonight we are joined by @DrJfierro_ @cerritoscollege for a conversation about #USAW2020 #CCCforUndocu #UndocumentedStudentActionWeek @cleague

[@DrJfierro](#) Hello @SDMesaPrez and @iamkeithcurry I am happy to be here today. @cerritoscollege

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q1 @DrJfierro_ #EquityChat Our education, background, and experiences make us who we are. Please tell us about the non-resume you? We want to know what's not on your resume. @iamkeithcurry @cleague

[@DrJfierro](#) I have definitely been shaped by my life experiences. When I came to the United States on December 25, 1999, I entered a country that I had essentially never been in, with no friends, no family, and I did not speak English. #EquityChat @cerritoscollege

[@DrJfierro](#) My experience helped me gain an appreciation for how hard people must work so that they can succeed in a completely foreign environment. @iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez @cerritoscollege #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) What I mean is: when you come to this country, if you do not have papers or connections, you must navigate an alternative economy when it comes to getting a car, getting a loan, or even calling relatives. #EquityChat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) I can only imagine that your experiences and the sharing of your story is inspiring for @cerritoscollege students and beyond!

[@DrJfierro](#) I feel my experiences help me connect with my student and up to a point understand some of their struggles.

[@DrJfierro](#) I see this work ethic in many of our Cerritos College students and their family members, who may have experienced similar when they immigrated to this country. #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) One lasting memory from my experience was the realization that the economy that we are familiar with is not the same economy that many immigrants experience.

[@iamkeithcurry](#) Q2. @DrJfierro_ .Tell us about being the Superintendent/President @cerritoscollege? @iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) 1/3 Being the president of Cerritos College has been one of the best experiences of my life, and one of the most challenging as well. #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) Working at Cerritos College means that you are surrounded by strong, resilient, and driven people who have worked incredibly hard to access an education and a better life for themselves and for their families. #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) Their strength motivates us to help students embark on educational journeys that may be similar to our own. This keeps us grounded and focused on the work that lies ahead of us. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) I love when people speak so lovingly of their teams. It truly makes a difference to be surrounded by such greatness and inspiration.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Challenges fir breakfast as a @CalCommColleges CEO!

[@DrJfierro](#) that is the case, but I wouldn't have any other way!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q3. [@DrJfierro_](#) This week is Undocumented Student Action Week. As Superintendent/President, how do you support undocumented students [@cerritoscollege](#)? #EquityChat #USAW2020 [@ccleague](#) [@iamkeithcurry](#)
[@DrJfierro_](#) This week Cerritos College is hosting a variety of activities, including workshops on #DACA, transferring and workforce opportunities, and obtaining an ITIN so students can become their own boss. We will also host an alumni panel, a career workshop, and UndocuAlly Training for

[@DrJfierro_](#) our staff. Our managers, faculty, and staff do a stellar job in this regard; they consistently go above and beyond so that students know they are supported. As president, I follow their lead. All of us at Cerritos recognize that in order to ensure our students feel #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro_](#) comfortable and have the tools to be successful, we must provide a sympathetic ear for our students when needed. Students who are undocumented, or who may have family members that are undocumented, are dealing with difficult and complex situations, One function of #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro_](#) 4/4 our UndocuAlly Training, for instance, is to emphasize the importance of listening, being sympathetic, and taking extra steps to ensure that undocumented students feel supported.

[@iamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@cerritoscollege](#) #EquityChat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Love the love for our colleagues who are so dedicated to our students and their colleagues

[@iamkeithcurry](#) Q4. [@DrJfierro_](#) Advice for your colleagues. What should [@CalCommColleges](#) CEOs prioritize when supporting the unique needs of undocumented students? [@iamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#) #EquityChat.

[@DrJfierro_](#) Before you get to prioritize, you need to listen to your undocumented students. It is difficult for someone who has not been in that position to understand the unique needs that an immigrant or undocumented person faces. Ask questions. Listen. Ask how you can be of help.

[@DrJfierro_](#) Earn the trust needed for students to share their needs with you. Once they have done that, empower everyone around campus so they are able to collectively provide the services students need: advisement, mental health support, legal workshops, and basic needs maybe a few of those

[@DrJfierro_](#) services. Imagine the experience of coming to a foreign country, likely not knowing the language, perhaps fearing the unknown, and having no one to lean on. It is difficult to understand unless you personally have experienced it. [@cerritoscollege](#) #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) Powerful, practical and essential advice! #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro_](#) Thank you [@ahandsintheair](#) sometimes the best thing to do is listen. Often times people just want to be heard. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) Exactly!The also they know what, where & who the barriers are, what their unique needs are etc. I have to do a plug for some of our [@sdmesacollege](#) events that create space for our community to listen, learn and support in meaningful ways - <http://sdmesa.edu/student-services/eops/borderless-scholars/index.shtml>

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q5. [@DrJfierro_](#) If you could make three policy changes in support of undocumented students, what are those changes? #EquityChat [@iamkeithcurry](#)

[@saragoldrickrab](#) [@gwcisneros](#)

[@DrJfierro_](#) 🤔 great question. 1. Permanent residency with a path to citizenship for current DACA recipients. #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro_](#) 2 - Pathways to residency and citizenship to individuals holding temporary protective status (TPS) permits. Currently, there are an estimated 320,000 immigrants from 10 nations who have permission to live and work in the US under TPS.... #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) ...due to war, hurricanes, or other disasters in their home countries that could make it dangerous for them to return. Most of these individuals are gainfully employed and active contributors to the economy and community. #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) Immigration reform could allow undocumented individuals outside of these two categories to legalize their migratory status and continue to contribute to their communities and society overall, without the fear of being deported or discriminated against. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) I like your thinking!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) perhaps under a new administration you could advise on a national level [@DrJfierro_](#)

[@DrJfierro](#) [gif: <https://twitter.com/i/status/1319084140487036930>]

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q6. [@DrJfierro_](#) From your perspective, what role will higher education play in the state of California economic recovery? Post COVID-19, how can higher education improve to serve the most vulnerable student population, including undocumented students? [@SDMesaPrez](#) #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) warning.... long answer to this question [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@ccleague](#) [@cerritoscollege](#)

[@DrJfierro](#) CA comm colleges should be at the forefront of economic recovery. For every \$1 a student spends on their community college education, they see a return on investment of \$4.80 - \$6.80, which also adds tremendous value to the local economy. Comm colleges make higher #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) ed available 2 everyone by being non-selective. Community members also enter our campuses to re-tool when they are displaced from their jobs. The scope of community colleges is increasing, but the funding to meet the demands of this increased scope has not kept pace. #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) CC's are no longer solely providers of education; we provide education AND have a moral responsibility to contribute to meeting the basic needs of students, and, in the case of this current pandemic, meeting the basic needs of the community at large as well. Some of these...

[@DrJfierro](#) ..services are traditionally provided by counties or states, and CC's are stepping up to fill an obvious void. In order to improve, we need a combination of expanded budgetary allocations and partnerships with entities meant to provide those basic needs. In the case of..

[@DrJfierro](#) ..universities, large endowments through foundations can be utilized to make education more affordable for students in need, including undocumented students. It is known that many universities could admit full classes of students at zero tuition and only make a small dent in..

[@DrJfierro](#) their endowments. If we want a better society and a better future for all, it is important to invest in those need who need our help the most. [@iamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@cerritoscollege](#) #EquityChat [@cerritoscollege](#)

[@ahandsintheair](#) 🍷 Well said!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q7. [@DrJfierro_](#) All your colleagues know you are a reader. So what are you reading? And what book(s) would you recommend we consider #EquityChat [@lamkeithcurry](#)

[@DrJfierro](#) I just finished and strongly recommend "The Years that Matter Most: How Colleges Make or Break Us"

[@paultough](#) it was recommended by [@marisaperez_16](#) Cerritos College trustee. The author puts many familiar data points and historical context together in a sequence.. #EquityChat

[@DrJfierro](#) that enables the reader to realize how disadvantaged many of our students are before they even begin their college careers. Also, our Falcons Book Club at Cerritos College is just finishing "Lean In" by [@SherySandberg](#) We have had some powerful conversations about gender...

[@DrJfierro](#) differences in the workplace in our book club discussions. As an outcome, we are putting together more mentorship opportunities for employees on our campus. [@iamkeithcurry](#) [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@cerritoscollege](#) #EquityChat



EQUITY
AVENGERS

[@SDMesaPrez](#) TY so much @DrJferro_ @cerritoscollege 4 joining us-so much rich discussion! TY @ccleague - supporting our chat tonight on #USAW2020 And...#EquityChat for Oct 28 we are proud to host @SeatedThe Andrea Dalzell RN & disability rights activist! #EquityAvengersout @lamkeithcurry

