

November 4, 2020 #EquityChat

Marlene Garcia (@M\_LGarcia),

Director of California Student Aid Commission (@castudentaid)

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Good evening and welcome to #EquityChat with @lamkeithcurry & @SDMesaPrez ! Tonight our guest is @M\_LGarcia ! Welcome Marlene!

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) Thank you for having me. #equitychat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) Happy to join this conversation.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q1. @M\_LGarcia 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. @lamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez #EquityChat @castudentaid

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) Some people who are close to me like to say I am "all gas and no breaks." I'm passionate about the work I do. I'm passionate about helping students, especially low-income, first-gen students like myself, live their best lives by getting a college education.

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) More personal note, my husband says he has never been bored being married to me. I am an adventure seeker, love to socialize and have fun , cook, my specialty is Paella. I also reserve time take the time to think about the world around me. #equitychat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) \*all gas no brakes... typo with twitter....

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q2. @M\_LGarcia. Q2. Tell us about @castudentaid? And your position with @castudentaid?

@SDMesaPrez @lamkeithcurry #EquityChat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) First experience with Student Aid was when I opened my Cal Grant award letter! It is the greatest honor of my life to lead this organization as its Executive Director. #equitychat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) CSAC is the largest financial aid institution in the country, overseeing close to a \$3 billion budget. CSAC provides financial aid, primarily Cal Grants, to close to a half-million students annually. #equitychat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q3. @M\_LGarcia What is your definition of equity? How is equity-minded practice embedded in your work? @lamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez #EquityChat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) Equity is a core value that drives my commitment to seeking equal opportunity and justice for all. I recognize how systems of exclusion are prevalent in virtually all the spaces we inhabit. Critical to be intentional about breaking down barriers. #equitychat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) So often, barriers go un-challenged and accepted as norms. We must intentionally work to break-down barriers, level-the-playing field and promote equal opportunity for all. #equitychat

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q4. @M\_LGarcia. How is @castudentaid committed to finding new ways to support California postsecondary students with financial aid resources? @SDMesaPrez @lamkeithcurry #EquityChat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) CSAC is committed to re-imagining financial aid to meet the needs of diverse students today. Students recognize the value of a college degree and that it is the gateway to good job in the 21st Century. But not all believe they can make it. #equitychat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) Living in poverty and experiencing racial injustice makes this goal appear illusive. We believe in tapping all of California's talent irrespective of where they come and opening opportunities with FA. #equitychat



[@M\\_LGarcia](#) At CSAC, we are committed to meeting students where they are and pursuing aggressive outreach with w/ community partners statewide to ensure all students have information they need to get financial aid and succeed in college. #equitychat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q5. [@M\\_LGarcia](#) Last year @castudentaid released the @castudentaid Student Expenses and Resources Survey. What are three takeaways from the report educational leaders should know? #EquityChat @lamkeithcurry  
[@M\\_LGarcia](#) It's time to double-down and inform students that financial aid is available to begin or continue their college students. We cannot afford to a generation of students who drop out because of the pandemic and their concerns about money.#equitychat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Indeed, and we need a broad strategy for all kinds of students...parents, part time, etc

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) SEARS Survey was issued fall 2019. Before COVID, students were struggling to make ends meet. In any given month, 1 out of 3 students experience food and/or housing insecurities. In the wake of the pandemic, 70% of students have lost some or all their income. #equitychat

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q6. [@M\\_LGarcia](#). 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? @SDMesaPrez @lamkeithcurry #EquityChat

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) Higher education provides an essential talent pipeline to the workforce. Now, more than ever the state needs the students graduating from college to fill high-skill, tech-infused jobs of the future. This means drawing from the entire CA talent pool representing ALL zip codes.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q7. [@M\\_LGarcia](#) What are you reading? And what book(s) would you recommend we consider reading? #EquityChat @lamkeithcurry

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) Just finished White Fragility. Eye opener. Easy for good, well-meaning people to engage in unconscious bias that perpetuates racism. Time to have hard, honest conversations about race in our country and how to tear down its onerous effects on students, society. #equitychat

[@DrAtelesSuarez](#) Frankenstein. Not obviously equity, per se. But when you consider that it is a novel about humanity, what it means to be human, and how our perceptions of others may make us miss the beautiful human-ness of their souls, then yes it is about equity.

[@coyle\\_kathy](#) I am reading "American Wolf". I recommend "the mirror and the light" the third chapter of the life of Thomas Cromwell, by Hillary Mantel.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Thx @coyle\_kathy ! Hope you are well-

[@Klacher0711](#) Begin Again by Eddie S. Glaude Jr. He uses the works of James Baldwin to try to make sense of what's happening in America today. While the timing has been perfect, I will admit it has also been difficult to read it these past two days as the election results unfold.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) .@M\_LGarcia @castudentaid thank you so much for joining us! We are inspired by your work & stand ready to advocate for greater resources for @CalCommColleges students! Join us next week as we host @LarryGalizio @ccleague on Vets Caucus #VeteransDay2020 🇺🇸

[@M\\_LGarcia](#) Thank you to everyone who participated. Looking forward to continuing the conversation! #equitychats