

March 16, 2022 #EquityChat

Dr. Ashanti Hands (@ahandsintheair), VP Student Services, SD Mesa College (@sdmesacollege)

[@SDMesaPrez](#) It's Wednesday, so it's time for #EquityChat sponsored by @CollegeFutures and hosted by your your @equityavengers @SDMesaPrez & @lamkeithcurry! Today we're chatting with @ahandsintheair, Vice President student services @sdmesacollege & member of @NandiOrg Welcome Dr. Hands!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q1 @ahandsintheair. Our education, background, and experiences make us who we are. What are three things about yourself that are essential to what makes you, you? @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat
[@ahandsintheair](#) I'll go with my FAITH (rooted in love & justice) my FAMILY (immediate, extended and work) & my love of FOOD! Each of these grounds me & brings me so much joy! There is also room for everyone to fall into at least one of these essential areas. #EquityChat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Yes, your Facebook posts make me very hungry! And your family is so awesome @JHANDS08
[@jordan_hands](#) @RonnieHands

[@ahandsintheair](#) Why thank you! We love supporting our local San Diego businesses, and...I think my family is quite delightful 😊 They, like a good plate of food, make me happy! 🍴 #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) First, let me say that I am SO EXCITED to share this space with you and the Twitterverse! This is a true #equityavengerrockstarmoment for me!

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q2 @ahandsintheair. What is your definition of equity? How is equity-minded practice embedded in your work? @SDMesaPrez @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 1/3 Equity is what truth & love look like in action. A truth of higher ed is that minoritized students have historically not been served well by our institutions. Equity-minded practices are about creating conditions that matter for our minoritized students to succeed. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 2/3 It's seeing our students-valuing what they bring- disrupting structures & removing barriers that block their success & brilliance. Those conditions go beyond access & center on outcomes. Equity minded practices is where love comes in & is the lens I use for my work #EquityChat

[@SDCC AD](#) ❤️

[@ahandsintheair](#) 3/3 Everything is filtered through an equity lens. Using CUE's model these practices are evidenced based, race conscious, institutional focused, systemically aware and equity advancing. Thanks @ebensimon. #EquityChat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) ❤️👏

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q3 @ahandsintheair. What have been the biggest challenges you've had to tackle regarding student engagement and the pandemic? @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) There are many, however, today I'm grappling with our recent return to work and remote work policies. Both necessary endeavors that impact how we engage students..both will time to unpack with an equity lens #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 1/4 Maslow says student motivation increases as their basic needs are met. The pandemic impacted our ability to provide basic needs like mental health, safe spaces, a sense of belonging and value, in proven, hi-touch, engaging ways. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 2/4 Many of our students couldn't even get to the point of learning b/c their basic needs weren't being met in the community or by our campuses. While we were finding innovative ways to engage, minoritized students were often not represented in those spaces. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 3/4 We lost far too many during this time (and overtime.) While we rightfully tackle conversations about re-imagining how|when|where we engage students, I am challenged by how these new ways of being may reinforce old patterns of inequity. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 4/4 Change is inevitable & I value recent remote |f2f convo's about how we'll engage students moving forward. Such change must be student-centered using equity-minded, data-driven practices, otherwise, nothing changes for those who may need us most. #EquityChat

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q4 @ahandsintheair. We're just past the one-year anniversary of the American Rescue Plan. What are some creative ways @sdmesacollege has utilized relief efforts/funds to support students, faculty, and administrators during the pandemic? @SDMesaPrez @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 1/4 In addition to giving out \$15million in direct aid to students (not creative but..awesome), we have: Leveraged Technology by purchasing Cranium Café, Edquity App, live & virtual chat options, a Kic scanner & Q-Less (a way to get in line without getting in line) #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 2/4 2. We partnered w/Motimatic 4 social media connections & community orgs 4 free meals on/off campus

3. Hired basic needs, restorative practices& student engagement ambassadors & adjuncts to help w/ housing support-Ed Plan Campaign 4 Black&Latinx- LGBTQIA students #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 3/4 4. Hosted Reorientation for 2nd yrs who never stepped foot on campus. Scholarship & Club Rush re-engagement grants

5. District forgave \$3.9 million in student debt for 11,454 students who stopped out due to COVID. And much, much more #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) I was being ambitious, there is no 4/4. 😂

[@ThuyThiTweets](#) 😂

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q5 @ahandsintheair. Tell us about @NandiOrg and the work you're doing w/other Black women to support and empower community college women students, faculty, staff, & administrators. @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 1/2 I'd love to! @NandiOrg is a non-profit organization that is comprised of a professional network of women of African ancestry who serve to inspire, support, and empower community college women students, faculty, staff, and administrators. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 2/3 We debuted at the recent @A2MEND Summit for Black Males. Space was created for us to present three empowering presentations designed to uplift, celebrate and embrace the unapologetically Black woman! @NandiOrg is filling a void and is up to something special. #EquityChat



[@ahandsintheair](#) 3/3 Once again...I was being ambitious. This is 3/3 😂

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q6 [@ahandsintheair](#). What book(s) have you recently read and what should we consider reading?

[@SDMesaPrez](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 1/2 I ❤️ to hear people's stories. I just finished Pregnant Girl, Just Pursuit, Unbound & Will Smith's book. When people tell their stories, they become the protagonist-life is not just happening to them-they are giving meaning to their lives. #EquityChat #AudibleChangedMyLife

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Love [@NicoleLynnLewis](#) #PregnantGirlBook

[@NicoleLynnLewis](#) Honored by all of this! Thank you [@ahandsintheair](#) for reading #PregnantGirlBook! 🙏

[@ahandsintheair](#) I think we are having a moment here! I'm trying to be adult and not 🙌, so I'll simply say, [@nicolelynnlewis](#) you are a brilliant, inspiration. Thank you for telling your story. You reminded me that we have so much work to do in our ed systems & that I am up for the call #equitychat

[@NicoleLynnLewis](#) 😊 Thank you for those kind words. It warms my heart to know that the book resonated with you and inspired you. So glad we're in the trenches together doing this work! 💪

[@ahandsintheair](#) Thanks for the recommendation [@SDMesaPrez](#)!

[@ahandsintheair](#) 2/2 I keep Malcolm Gladwell in rotation, Talking to Strangers is my current fav. Student Services purchased book bundles for our 150+ employees. The bundle included some of our favs: Equity Walk to Equity Talk, How to Be an Antiracist & more. So many 📖, so little ⏰. #EquityChat



[@poppyfitch](#) This was a boss move for professional growth @ahandsintheair ! Love these pics and loved Talking to Strangers! ❤️

[@NGHeitzeberg](#) Great selection of books!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q7 @ahandsintheair. As a female leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career? What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders? @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 1/4 My most significant barrier as a black woman in higher ed has been those moments where I lived a version of myself that was based on perceptions of others. Versions that defined me as less than, weak, emotional, angry, not smart enough, difficult lacking power..#EquityChat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) This is 🔥🔥

[@ahandsintheair](#) 2/4 To that, I offer Brene Brown's quote "You either walk inside your story and own it or stand outside your story and hustle for your worthiness" as advice 4 our next gen of female leaders. Take time to embrace your story (every part) & become the protagonist in it #EquityChat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Amen

[@poppyfitch](#) This is such a powerful message @ahandsintheair and seems like it's a practice everyday to resist the hustle...maybe until we build the muscle? Maybe always? ❤️

[@ahandsintheair](#) 3/4 As women, our stories have roots in resilience, power, care, risk-taking, inclusivity, strength, support [fill-in the blank]. Instead of walking in the room trying to meet the expectations of others...walk in the room and tell | show them who you are. #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) 4/4 Own your story and walk in your truth and worth. As the great philosopher Beyonce once said, "...step out of your estimate, step in to your essence and know you are excellent....RISE!" #EquityChat

[@DeanAileneC](#) Love this and I can always use this reminder! 🙏💕

[@ahandsintheair](#) @DeanAileneC It's what we practice, together, everyday!#EquityChat

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q8 @ahandsintheair. Last question for the evening. What gives you hope? @SDMesPrez @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) Tupac once said, "I'm not saying I'm gonna change the world, but I guarantee that I will spark the brain that will." I embrace that guarantee and igniting that spark gives me hope. #MoreSparks #MoreConditionsThatMatter #EquityChat

[@ConnieG815](#) I loved when you shared this in your presentation at the Pathways to Equity conference! I was in a meeting today and I had to share my notes I took from listening to you and Dean Maxey. Thank you!! 🙏

[@ahandsintheair](#) @ConnieG815 This just made my heart smile! Thanks for joining our sessions and keeping the information flowing. #equitychat

[@ConnieG815](#) You have no idea! I even challenged my fellow student services colleagues to create goals centered on serving out Black/African American students and will discuss with my staff how we can create a goal using the SMART metrics. Seriously loved your presentation.

[@ahandsintheair](#) @connieg815 I am loving all of this, especially the immediate action. Don't forget to add the IE to the SMART goals. Specific. Measurable. Achievable. Relevant. Time-based. Inclusion. Equity = SMARTIE Goals . I loved that suggestion. #EquityChat

[@ConnieG815](#) True!! That was pretty brilliant. Thanks again. 🙏

[@SDMesaPrez](#) TY so much @ahandsintheair...so much here to read & reflect on! THX for sharing @NandiOrg & your ❤️ for #equity & @sdmesacollege ! Join us next week for another #EquityChat @CollegeFutures #WHM guest to be announced soon! @lamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez @equityavengers OUT!



[@ahandsintheair](#) Thanks again for creating such an amazing space! I thoroughly enjoyed #EquityChatting with you! And...that pic is delightful! See you 🧑🏿🧑🏻 next week! ❤️