

September 22, 2021 #EquityChat

Dr. Cecil Howard (@cehowardeeo), Interim Vice Chancellor/Chief Diversity Officer, UC Merced (@UCMDiversity, @ucmerced)

[@SDMesaPrez](#) We're back for another #EquityChat sponsored by @CollegeFutures and hosted by @SDMesaPrez & @lamkeithcurry! Today's guest is @cehowardeeo Interim Vice Chancellor/Chief Diversity Officer @UCMDiversity @ucmerced. Welcome Dr. Howard!

[@cehowardeeo](#) Hi, glad to be here

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q1 @cehowardeeo. Our education, background, and experiences make us who we are. What are three things that we should know about you? @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@cehowardeeo](#) I'm an attorney, traveling across the country on an interim basis to do a great work at Merced. I am passionate about equity, diversity and inclusion, and seek to change this world through this work.

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q2 @cehowardeeo. Tell us about @UCMDiversity and what excites you most joining @ucmerced as Interim Vice Chancellor/Chief Diversity Officer. @SDMesaPrez @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@cehowardeeo](#) There is a ton of energy surrounding EDI. There is a ton of passion for the work. There are also a ton of people who are not shy about their opinions whether good or bad. That's important in this space. Feedback is king!!!!

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

[@cehowardeeo](#) To me, equity is fairness, leveling of the playing field, untying hands, giving consideration to barriers and removals thereof. In order to embed equity-mindedness in my work, I approach EDI matters with elements of "deliberate intentionality."

[@ahandsintheair](#) "Untying hands"...I like that!

[@cehowardeeo](#) There must be an end game, real initiatives, anticipated outcomes, and an expectation that if goals are properly executed the outcomes will occur.

[@ahandsintheair](#) Intentionality is key!

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q4 @cehowardeeo. With fall semester underway and the reopening of campus @ucmerced, what have been your biggest challenges to tackle as Interim Vice Chancellor/Chief Diversity Officer? @SDMesaPrez @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@cehowardeeo](#) My challenges have been the norm: getting to know the campus; getting to know the players; understanding the culture; giving assurances of accountability; deciding which initiative to tackle first; and assuring a continued inclusive excellence trajectory

[@ahandsintheair](#) I am loving "The norm" & "continued inclusive excellence trajectory"! Sounds like you are ready to lead in times such as these!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q5 @cehowardeeo. Can you tell us more about @UCMDiversity's Uprooting Inequity Seminars?

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[@cehowardeeo](#) Uprooting Inequities is an outstanding lecture series (7) that addresses race and racism from very inception, and explores how it has impacted the society we live in today in every respect, including housing, education, and economy.



EQUITY
AVENGERS

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q6 [@cehowardeeo](#). What recommendations would you provide to colleges that are establishing Diversity Equity and Inclusion positions and offices on their campuses? [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#)
[@cehowardeeo](#) Get feedback from stakeholders regarding campus needs. Do not make decisions in a vacuum!! Seek passionate individuals who have ability to address and speak on sensitive and difficult matters, as well as the ability to roll up sleeves and do the hard work!

[@cehowardeeo](#) The lifespan of CDO's is not long! The work is very hard, but at the same time, exceptionally rewarding!!!!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q7 [@cehowardeeo](#). We're at our last question for the evening. What gives you hope? [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#)

[@cehowardeeo](#) What gives me hope: commitment from leaders, commitment from stakeholders, small gains, consistency, laser focused intentionality!!!

[@ahandsintheair](#) I like that response. If you are ever running low, our [@sdmesacollege](#) team has a ton inspiration to fuel your hope!

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q8 [@cehowardeeo](#). We're already on our last question. Let's close out with an [#EquityChat](#) favorite - What are you currently reading and what book(s) should we consider reading? [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#)
[@cehowardeeo](#) Beverly Daniel Tatum's book "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together In The Cafeteria?" Is great! Also about to re-read a favorite, The Warmth of Other Suns

[@SDMesaPrez](#) We have similar book cases [@cehowardeeo](#) !

[@cehowardeeo](#) Thinking about starting a book club regarding some of this outstanding literature out here!!!!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Thank you so much [@cehowardeeo](#) for being out guest tonight on [#EquityChat](#). We enjoy hearing from our [#highered](#) [@UC](#) colleagues. We are still confirming our guest for next week...stay tuned! [@equityavengers](#) out!

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

[@cehowardeeo](#) Thanks for the invite! I enjoyed it!!!!