

Deborah Santiago

Chief Executive Officer

Excelencia in Education

January 10, 2024

[5:00 pm] Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Happy New Year and welcome back to #EquityChat sponsored by @CollegeFutures w/your hosts @lamkeithcurry @DrTammeil & @DrPamLuster. We're excited to kick-off 2024 w/Deborah Santiago (@ds_excelencia), Co-Founder & CEO @EdExcelencia. Welcome!

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia·2m](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @CollegeFutures and 4 others](#)

Thank you so much for inviting me to join you. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·2m](#)

Replying to [@ds_excelencia @DrPamLuster and 4 others](#)

Thrilled to have you here!

[Dr. Keith Curry #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @lamkeithcurry·9m](#)

Let's Go...

[5:11 pm] Dr. Keith Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q2 @ds_excelencia. You have been an innovator, thought leader, and educational visionary for over 20 years. Was there a defining moment or experience that catalyzed your journey to engage in this work? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia·1m](#)

My HS senior year my family had to move overseas (military). We are close, but my mother sacrificed and supported me to stay stateside to figure out how to go to college. The trust & faith they had in me still motivates me today to ensure others have opportunity. [#EquityChat](#)

[5:17 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q3 @ds_excelencia. You co-founded @EdExcelencia 20yrs ago to accelerate Latino #studentsuccess in #highered. Why is the focus on Latino students so important to achieving #racialequity? @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia](#) · 1m

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @EdExcelencia](#) and 4 others

Latinos are representative of the post-traditional majority. I believe transforming colleges to more “intentionally” serve our young, fast-growing population will instigate a more asset-oriented, student-centered, & intentional education all our communities deserve. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#)

So many institutions are vying to get that 25% but aren't thinking about how their institution serves, elevates & supports Latinx students's experiences & success. [@EdExcelencia](#)'s tech support (seal) & scholars like [@GinaAnnGarcia](#) call us to transform for racial equity & liberation.

[Gina Ann Garcia @GinaAnnGarcia](#)

Look at this thread! Happy to see [@ds_excelencia](#) with the [#EquityAvengers](#)

[5:23 pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q4 [@ds_excelencia](#). How can evidence-based programs accelerate Latino #studentsuccess? In what ways does [@EdExcelencia](#) support and elevate these programs nationally? [@DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia](#) · 1m

Evidence-based practices that show Latinos are successful prove there is no excuse for inaction. To accelerate we need to invest in what works! Excelencia uses our national platform to bring positive national attention to programs doing good work with positive impact [#EquityChat](#)

[5:29 pm] Dr. Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q5 [@ds_excelencia](#). [@EdExcelencia](#) conducts & releases an annual analysis of HSIs. What insights can we glean from the newest report? What is the future state of HSIs based on the past 19 years of analysis? [@DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia](#) · 1m

Our 1st publication 20 years ago this month was “Latino Student Success at HSIs.” It is still relevant today. For me, an HSI must go beyond demography & geography to show intentionality & impact in serving their Latino, and all, students. Future is [#SealofExcelencia #EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#) · 2m

I am grateful for your groundbreaking work and the support for our institutions. [@OfficialEVC](#) is being transformed by the community & tactical action plans as part of the work. Proud to have been a prez for Latino Success & have my [@berkeleycc](#) prez be one as well!

[5:35 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q6 @ds_excelencia. What is the process for earning the Seal of Excelencia? What have you learned from those institutions who have earned it? @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia·5m](#)

The [#SealofExcelencia](#) is earned by colleges that commit to becoming places where Latino students thrive, show with data, evidence-based practice, and leadership their intentionality in serving students, and articulate a student-centered journey (1/2) [#EquityChat](#)

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia·4m](#)

39 colleges have earned the [#SealofExcelencia](#) & intensity of self-assessment using a Latino lens requires knowing who they are serving, not serving, and intend to serve. Have to be honest about what is and isn't working and be willing to continuously improve. (2/2) [#EquityChat](#)

[5:41pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q7 @ds_excelencia. How do you navigate doing this work and supporting #highered leaders in the current national climate, especially when Latino students live in many of the places where DEIA is under attack? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia·1m](#)

We are transparent...it's in our name: Excelencia in Education. We meet colleges where they are, give grace but also push, keep focused on student success, & support them with what they need to compel action. Sometimes publicly & others privately [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil· 5m](#)

I love this..."give grace but also push" and ultimately keep focused on student success. [#Grace4Action](#)

[5:47 pm] Dr. Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q8 @ds_excelencia. To do this work, we must continue learning and partnering with others. How do you educate yourself and who is informing your practice? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia·8m](#)

I listen to the faculty and practitioners doing the work every day. I listen to the presidents and trustees trying to do well and right by students. I listen to funders setting their priorities. I listen most to students and their stories. (1/2) [#EquityChat](#)

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia·7m](#)

At best, I try to translate what I hear and the good work I see with fidelity at scale to inform and compel action with decisionmakers and funders. (2/2) [#EquityChat](#)

[5:53 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q9 @ds_excelencia. We all have a vision of the future we want to live in. What is your freedom dream for higher education and what gives you hope for its future? @DrTammeil @IamKeithCurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia](#)

"Talent is everywhere, opportunity is not." (Diana Natalicio, former president of UTEP). I believe higher education will transform to serve our students with a quality affordable education that provides the genuine opportunity to reach our potential and beyond. (1/2) [#EquityChat](#)

[Deborah Santiago @ds_excelencia](#)

What gives me hope, every day, are the people who I hear and see making a positive difference for themselves, and for others. There is a lot of good out there and we cannot let ourselves be slowed down by the negative. (2/2) [#EquityChat](#)

[6:00 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

TY @ds_excelencia @EdExcelencia for your commitment to accelerating Latino #studentsuccess. Next week's #EquityChat @CollegeFutures guest is Dr. Scott Thayer (@swthayer), the newest President @CypressCollege. @IamKeithCurry @DrTammeil @DrPamLuster @equityavengers OUT!