

#EquityChat - Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez, The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) **Wednesday, October 23, 2024**

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

It's Wednesday, and it's time for [#EquityChat](#) w/your [@equityavengers](#) hosts [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) & [@DrPamLuster](#) tonight our guest is [@TICAS_org](#) @ManniRodri7 Dir of Policy & Advocacy. Manny is driving change in CA by streamlining financial aid to boost equity in [#HE!](#)

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7 · 3m](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster](#)

Gracias! Super happy to finally join the [@equityavengers](#) and your star studded list of participants for an [#EquityChat](#)

[5:05 pm] Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q1 [@MannyRodri7](#), as you engage in equity-focused work, what is your walk-up song or anthem? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7 · 23m](#)

NGL, this was tough. I spent a few hours thinking about this. For pure vibes, I'd go with "DAKITI" by Bad Bunny. But for deeper/more powerful lyrics, it's a tie between "It's Movement Time" by Las Cafeteras and "If I Ruled the World" by Nas & Lauryn Hill. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · 18m](#)

Nas & Lauryn Hill "If I ruled the world (imagine that) I'd free all my sons, I love 'em, love 'em, baby Black diamonds and pearls (Could it be, if you could be mine, we'd both shine) If I ruled the world (Still livin' for today, in these last days and times)"

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7 · 16m](#)

You know it, [@DrTammeil!](#) Since I was a kid this song just hit different.

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 23m](#)

Whoa...ok its a trifecta tonight- will be googling during our session...

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7 · 21m](#)

I'm telling you. I couldn't pick! So I had to give my top three

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez@DrPamLuster · 21m](#)

All good [@MannyRodri7](#) ! Mine changes on the regular...

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

Q2 [@MannyRodri7](#), as the son of Mexican immigrants and a 1stgen college student, was there a defining moment that inspired your journey to advocate for educational justice & equity?

[@DrPamLuster](#) [@DrTammeil](#) #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7 · 19m](#)

Yes, but I will say, it wasn't just one moment, but a series of consistent efforts/moments by my parents as e-board members of the local ELAC Parental Advisory Cmte during my middle & high school years. [#EquityChat](#) [#MyInspiration](#) 1/2

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez@MannyRodri7 · 19m](#)

They grew membership, advocated to school + district admin. for addtn'l services & programs for English learners, & educated the community thru guest speakers so that parents got involved in their kids' education. Their dedication set an example that I live by to this day. 2/2

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez@DrPamLuster · 18m](#)

What a great legacy they modeled for you- [#EquityChat](#)

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez@MannyRodri7 · 15m](#)

100%, I owe them a lot! One of those things is the passion for helping our community and pushing decisionmakers to invest in the education of the next generation.

[5:18 pm] Dr. Luster ([@DrPamLuster](#))

Q3 [@MannyRodri7](#), how does [@TICASOrg](#)'s work in affordability and financial aid reform contribute to advancing racial equity for California's college students? [@DrTammeil](#)

[@lamkeithcurry](#) #EquityAvengers

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7 · 15m](#)

At [@TICASorg](#) we know that when we advocate for robust need-based financial aid programs like Cal Grants + Pell Grants, we can ensure that students from historically underserved communities can afford to attend & complete college w/o excessive debt

[#EquityChat](#) [#Affordability](#) 1/2

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez@MannyRodri7 · 15m](#)

Speaking from my own experience, when low-income, 1st-gen, and BIPOC students earn a credential/degree debt-free, it helps close racial and economic equity gaps by allowing them to access a wider range of opportunities compared to what our parents had. [#FinancialAidisKey](#) 2/2

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster](#)

And I know you all work hard to expand not just access but on finding a deeper level of resources thru [#CalGrant](#) reform and other sources [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Keith Curry #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @lamkeithcurry · 2m](#)

Double pell grants and implement Cal Grant reform now for students. We can't wait any longer.

[5:25 pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q4 @MannyRodri7, as a passionate advocate for evidence-based solutions, what research or policy strategies have you found most effective in promoting college affordability for underrepresented students in California? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry #EquityAvengers

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7](#)

We use data to guide policy & check it against the students/college experiences. Recently, we released 3 reports w/ CA's statewide student assoc.'s to highlight college affordability at UC, CSU, +CCCs. We found that costs far exceed tuition, including non-tuition expenses. 1/3

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7 · 10m](#)

Even w/ aid, students turn to work, loans, or reduce enrollment to cover costs + low-income & BIPOC students are more likely to incur debt. We collaborate with equity groups, researchers, parents, students, & civil rights orgs to advocate for policy changes & investments. 2/3

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez@MannyRodri7 · 9m](#)

These partners share their personal stories & put a face to the data so that policymakers see who this impacts. This makes coalition work critical for myself & [@TICAS_org](#) in promoting college affordability for underrepresented students in CA. [#EquityChat](#) [#CollegeAffordability](#) 3/3

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez@DrPamLuster · 7m](#)

This kind of partnership is the only way to make sustainable changes over time!
[#EquityChat](#)

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez@MannyRodri7·6m](#)
collaborative & sustainable changes

[5:32 pm] Dr. Curry (@lamkeithcurry)
Q5 @MannyRodri7, what challenges have you faced in your work to expand financial aid access in California, and how have you addressed them to create better outcomes for students?
@DrPamLuster @DrTammeil #EquityChat

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7](#)
My biggest challenge is that strong data + a strong equity rationale isn't enough to guarantee change. Politics, fiscal issues, limited attention & competing priorities, + misconceptions all make the equitable changes we need harder to achieve. [#EquityChat](#)
[#HigherEdAdvocacy](#) 1/2

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7·11m](#)
This is why coalition building, collaborative educational campaigns, & personal connections are crucial. We can't do this alone or overnight, but together we can incrementally move the needle to create better outcomes for students [#EquityChat](#)
[#CoalitionBuilding](#) 2/2

[5:39 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)
Q6 @MannyRodri7, what strategies have proven most effective in creating lasting changes for underrepresented students in your work with @TICASOrg? @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry
#EquityAvengers

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7·6m](#)
1) Doing research & putting out a report isn't the end; we need to follow that up w/ outreach on what we found on & what comes next. 2) After you've gotten a major policy reformed/passed you need to follow implementation & ensure that it's working & revisit it when needed. 1/2

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7](#)
3) Build relationships w/ students (who we do this work for) & ensure they're supported + included in the process. 4) Take care of yourself + your team, we can only do this work if we're healthy & balanced—this work is critical, don't let it burn out your passion
[#EquityChat](#) 2/2

[5:46 pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q7 @MannyRodri7 To do this work, we must continue learning and partnering with others. How do you educate yourself, and who is informing your practice? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7](#)

I stay updated w/ podcasts, read insightful reports/article, converse w/ a wide range of folks & learn from my amazing @TICASorg colleagues + partners—special shoutout to those who bring new perspectives or even disagree w/ me, they often teach me the most! [#LifelongLearning](#)

[Emmanuel "Manny" Rodriguez @MannyRodri7 · 9m](#)

Would love to hear from y'all as [#EquityChampions](#) and leaders who I look up to, how you all do this as well? Open to suggestions if you have some. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · 6m](#)

We have a podcast now! [#EquityAvengersAssemble](#) - our last episode featured [@emzgallaher](#)

[5:53 pm] Dr. Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q8 @MannyRodri7 The road to racial equity is long. How are you sustaining yourself, and what practices would you recommend to others in this space? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil #EquityChat

[@MannyRodri7 · 1m](#)

Self-care is essential! For me, it begins w/ watching sports, baseball ([#LFGSD](#)), NBA & fútbol. I also love escaping into sci-fi or historical fiction books. Lastly, the outdoors is the best, camping/backpacking/hiking help me recharge & slowdown. CA has all of these! [#EquityChat](#)

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

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 11h](#)

TY so very much [@MannyRodri7](#) -I hope you felt the [love emoji] during our [#EquityChat](#) tonight-TY for your work [@TICAS #HigherEd](#)! Join us next week as we lean in to a [#Halloween #DielosMuertos](#) themed [@equityavengers](#) sesh...til then [@lamkeithcurry @DrTammeil & @DrPamLuster](#) OUT!