

INTRO

5:00 PM – Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Welcome to #EquityChat! We're excited to have Dr. @SumunLPendakur join us. We'll discuss the future of higher ed equity, particularly in light of recent executive actions. Her insights promise to be enlightening & vital for shaping our strategies. @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#)

Welcome Dr. [@SumunLPendakur](#)!

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur·6m](#)

Thank you so much for having me!

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster·5m](#)

We are stoked to hear from you! [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur·5m](#)

Thank you! Grateful to be in good community in these times.

5:06 PM – Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q1 @SumunLPendakur, to kick things off, what's your walk-up song or anthem that reflects your passion and drive? #EquityChat @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry

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

Q1 [@SumunLPendakur](#), to kick things off, what's your walk-up song or anthem that reflects your passion and drive? [#EquityChat @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur](#)

The Show Goes On by Lupe Fiasco. That song has it all – profound lyrics, sick beat, all heart. It revs me up and keeps me focused on what really matters – community, solidarity, hope, the long arc of justice, from Gaza to Detroit. Plus, Lupe's from Chi-town! [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · 24m](#)

This [@LupeFiasco](#) song is the jam I needed today! Truth, love, & the essential element of not letting others steal your hope. I don't mind the Oakland shoutout, too!

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 23m](#)

100, Tammeil! "You just lift your arms higher!"

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

(I'm gonna [@LupeFiasco](#) in the hope he'll see my fangirling! ;))

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · 1m](#)

I'm fangirling, too! Let's go, [@LupeFiasco](#)

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

This is now added to my morning hype music!

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=Rmp6zlr5y4U...> Thx [@SumunLPendakur](#) !

5:14 PM – Dr. Keith Curry (@iamkeithcurry)

Q2 [@SumunLPendakur](#), can you discuss the impact of President Trump's recent executive actions on higher education, particularly regarding DEI and gender-related policies? How should institutions navigate these changes? #EquityChat [@DrTammeil](#) [@DrPamLuster](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur](#)

1/ If it feels like a wrecking ball (on top of all of the anti-“CRT” bans by state legislators over these last 2+ years), it's because it is. It's instrumental to the explicit plan to roll back our multiracial democracy. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 6m](#)

2/ But it's also part of a massive campaign of chaos, fear, intimidation, instability – most accurately described by Naomi Klein in her excellent book, The Shock Doctrine. The speed and deluge is intentional... [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 3m](#)
Adding to my reading list [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 6m](#)

3/ Because they know that institutions and decision makers will obey in advance or engage in overcompliance, thereby advancing this ideologically driven, authoritarian overreach because of that fear or reactivity. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 6m](#)

4/ So this is where our tools as community-grounded educators became more necessary than ever. Demonstrate clear compassion for those directly harmed by these edicts. Do not make hasty decisions. Get crystal clear guidance from counsel. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 6m](#)

5/ Slow down reactivity wherever possible. Particularly for folks – colleagues, students – holding multiple identities under threat (and their allies), the overwhelm is real. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 6m](#)

6/ Communicate (overcommunicate!) because sensationalization and misinformation surrounds everything. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 6m](#)

7/end THIS is the time to make as many (esp in person) spaces as possible for people to be together, to be in beloved community, to not feel alone. We know how to do that. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 14m](#)
We do [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 12m](#)

I think it's only human for us to be thrown off balance and to feel deskilled and bereft in a moment of deliberate chaos, so I'd also add for anyone following - give yourself some kindness and care. You are needed for all that's to come.

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 1m](#)
Bereft AF but staying in the light [#EquityChat](#)

5:21 PM – Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q3 @SumunLPendakur, with your rich experience at @USCRaceEquity & TIDES Institute, what have been some of the most effective practices you've observed for scaling racial justice efforts in higher education? [#EquityChat](#) @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 3m](#)

1/ Key components of scaling racial learning and racial justice are institutional buy in, critical humility of all leaders involved, the willingness to make strategic, concrete, measurable changes, and the ability to be in community with the most impacted BUT... [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 3m](#)

2/ We are operating in increasing fiscal austerity (much of which is manufactured and not real). So if advancing racial justice feels too “expensive,” a useful question is: if you are committed, what is in your locus of control? What do you still own and advance? [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 3m](#)

3/ And let's be very honest: just because this attack is ongoing doesn't mean that our student demographics are changing. Being a campus that builds a culture of belonging and success for students who are... [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 3m](#)

4/end first gen, low income, students of color, queer or trans, disabled, migrant/immigrant, etc. - all of the fastest growing populations - requires creativity, EVEN when adequate budgets are in place! So we do not hide from the requirement to be creative. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 13m](#)
[#priorities=values=resources #EquityChat](#)

5:28 PM – Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q4 @SumunLPendakur, considering the political and social climate, what are the most effective strategies higher education leaders can implement to protect and advance equity work? [#EquityChat](#) @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur](#)

1/ We know that high-quality equity work is data driven, power aware, and identity conscious because those help us to achieve the highest outcomes. We have similar tools in Universal Design in Learning principles. We have the science of belonging. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 3m](#)

2/ Leveraging UDL in pedagogy, course design, campus design – practices that lift all ships (and that have a disproportionately positive benefit for marginalized students). The best example being active learning. (Or curb cuts!) [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 3m](#)

3/ How do we advance a culture of belonging in our residence halls, in our co-curricular spaces, in our classrooms in which we honor the full humanity, potential, and complexity of each individual? [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 3m](#)

4/end And like I wrote before: do not over comply! There is PLENTY that is perfectly legal and will continue to be legal. Do not make decisions that will have long term ramifications before this ugly dust settles. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 2m](#)

Loving the term "power aware" it activates the intention of the how and what in the moments and directs momentum. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 4m](#)

Absolutely key that we take a beat [#EquityChat](#)

5:35 PM – Dr. Keith Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q5 @SumunLPendakur, in your role as a strategist, what are some actionable steps institutions can take to ensure they remain committed to and effective in their equity work despite potential federal resistance? [#EquityChat](#) @DrTammeil @DrPamLuster

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur](#)

1/ Whether you are in the President's Cabinet, in housing, or the cultural centers, consider doing a "pre-mortem" tabletop exercise, as we would do when planning for any disaster. What are the sticky points, pain points, workaround points, opportunity points? [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

2/ Think about how protected classes are currently positioned in scholarship programs, in res life, in opportunity gaps from 1st to 2nd year transition, in academic advising...
[#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

3/ How will you sustain the work for all these communities if identity centric methods are struck? Make a plan that is not identity centric, but that IS about good advising, early intervention, closing gaps through thoughtful course design, belonging programs, etc.
[#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

4/end Equity work can take on other names - as long as it achieves the outcomes we aim for: the removal of inequitable obstacles, leveling the playing field, student success for all and not just for some. [#EquityChat](#)

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

Its all about the outcomes- and if we're clear about the how and who, we can get there [#EquityChat](#)

5:41 PM – Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q6 @SumunLPendakur, how can colleges and universities leverage community partnerships and external resources to bolster access and belonging under the current administration?
[#EquityChat](#) @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur](#)

1/ Many campuses are located within a stone's throw of identity-based sites of belonging if we're required to end it on campus. Town gown partnerships can grow or expand to help our students feel whole and connected. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur](#)

2/ For example, LGBTQ+ Centers in the 80s and even in the 90s had to work underground and in partnership with local community centers and orgs. We have to draw from our not so recent past when these structures did not exist on our campuses.
[#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

3/end None of us want to go back. But we have to get creative. As marginalized and minoritized peoples of a vast array of backgrounds, we are full of strengths, assets, histories, and the ability to build community, even in hostile lands. [#EquityChat](#)

5:47 PM – Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q7 @SumunLPendakur, reflecting on your impactful journey & roles you've held, how do you see the relationship btwn personal identity & professional leadership? How has your own background shaped your approach to being a transformational leader? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

1/ My personal identities are in profound relationship with my leadership. I am the daughter of Indian immigrants, beneficiaries of the Hart-Celler Immigration Act. I am a Brown, Asian American, Desi woman – a mother, a sister, and a wife. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

2/ Those IDs (along w so many more) shape my approach to leadership, strategy, community, solidarity, an ethic of care, and my understanding of power. My experiences as an activist and organizer in the struggle for Asian American Studies in my undergrad years... [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

3/ ...to my time as director of a cultural center shape my love for students, for the possibilities of something greater than the neoliberal academy. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

4/ Shifting structures and environments as a chief diversity officer and then working on taking racial equity learning to scale are both tied to the belief my parents gave me in shaping systems to be more humane, more inclusive, and more just. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 2m](#)

5/end And maybe most importantly, as a mommy to two beautiful, Brown babies, I want the world to be better for them than it was for me. That shapes everything I do. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · 55s](#)

As grandma of the same...Amen! [#EquityChat](#)

5:53 PM – Dr. Keith Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q8 @SumunLPendakur, looking beyond the immediate challenges, what's your freedom dream for the future of higher education? How do you envision an ideal landscape for equity in academia? #EquityChat @DrTammeil @DrPamLuster

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur](#)

1/ Thanks for this thought-provoking closing question. I love both Robin D.G. Kelley's intellectual work, as well as his community praxis. So to paraphrase one of his thoughts: more than just tearing down, what are we building towards? [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 1m](#)

2/ Not just the weak dream of "a seat at the table," I hope! Representation, while important, is the floor and not the ceiling. As Ruha Benjamin said, "Black faces in high places are not going to save us." [#EquityNow](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 1m](#)

3/ Corporate higher education, the neoliberal academy, is its own worst enemy. Beholden to capital, we witnessed universities brutalize their own students & faculty last year. And for what? Who and what did that serve? [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 1m](#)

4/end My freedom dream for HEd is for all of us - students, faculty, administrators alike - to be learning and working towards the greater good of society, for the upliftment of the most vulnerable, and for human potential to be fulfilled. [#EquityChat](#)

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

TY [@SumunLPendakur](#) for joining us tonight & for your indefatigable commitment to this work!

Join us next week as we host [@dramerfahmed @uvmvermont](#) Don't miss it! [@lamkeithcurry](#)

[@DrTammeil @equityavengers](#) OUT!

[Dr. Sumun Pendakur @SumunLPendakur · 1m](#)

Thank you so much! Sending light and strength your way!