

Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians

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NEWS RELEASE

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Rincon and CSU San Marcos Announce Landmark Guaranteed Admission Partnership

VALLEY CENTER, Calif. — The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians and California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that establishes a partnership to expand access to higher education and support the academic success of Rincon students.

Rincon Tribal Councilwoman Laurie Gonzalez and CSUSM President Ellen J. Neufeldt signed the agreement Sept. 8, formalizing a shared commitment to increase the number of Rincon students attending CSUSM and support them through the completion of their degree programs.

“Our young people are the future of Rincon, and we have a responsibility to make sure they have every opportunity to succeed,” said Rincon Tribal Chairman Steve Stallings. “This agreement is about more than opening the door to higher education. It is about giving our students a clear path forward, supporting them throughout their journey and investing in the future of our people.”

Under the agreement, CSUSM will guarantee admission to eligible first-time, first-year students from the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians who meet the university’s established requirements. These include completing CSU “A–G” subject requirements with a grade of “C” or better, earning a high school diploma or equivalent, maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 and meeting applicable CSUSM admission and enrollment requirements.

The agreement also establishes an upper-division transfer admission commitment for eligible Rincon students transferring from any California community college who meet the required criteria. CSUSM will also provide guaranteed admission to eligible first-time adult learners up to age 25 who meet the university’s admission requirements.

“Getting our students into college is only the first step. We want to make sure they have the resources, guidance and support to succeed once they get there,” said Jason Marks, Rincon Education Manager. “This partnership creates a stronger pathway to higher education for Rincon students and ensures they have support throughout their college journey.”

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Beyond admission, the partnership is designed to support Rincon students throughout their college experience. CSUSM will provide resources including success coaching, career counseling, academic advising and access to campus student support services. Students will also have access to resources through CSUSM's American Indian Student Center and California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center.

"The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians and CSUSM affirm a shared commitment to students and to the transformative power of higher education," said CSUSM President Ellen J. Neufeldt. "This signing is more than a formal agreement. It represents a partnership built on trust, mutual respect and a common purpose: creating a clear pathway to a college degree and expanding opportunity for generations to come."

To promote early access and sustained college readiness, CSUSM's Office of Recruitment and Outreach will conduct workshops for prospective students and their families. The Office of Tribal Liaison will also serve as a communication hub between Rincon students, the Tribe and the university, helping maintain strong and ongoing collaboration throughout the partnership.

The MOU will remain in effect for five years, creating a long-term framework for expanding educational opportunities and supporting student success within the Rincon community.

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About the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians

The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians is a federally recognized sovereign Tribal government located in San Diego County. The Tribe owns Harrah's Resort Southern California and reinvests revenue from its enterprises to provide essential government services, including public safety, environmental protection, economic development, healthcare, cultural programs, and a Tribal court. At no cost to taxpayers, Rincon's public safety operations respond to emergencies in neighboring communities, with the majority of calls occurring outside the Reservation. Through its enterprises, community investments, and charitable giving, Rincon is a significant contributor to the regional economy and quality of life throughout San Diego County.

About California State University San Marcos

Building on more than 35 years of impact, California State University San Marcos is a forward-focused institution, dedicated to student success fueled by innovation, education and community partnerships. Located on a 306-acre hillside overlooking the City of San Marcos, it is the only public four-year comprehensive university serving North San Diego, Southwest Riverside and South Orange counties. The university enrolls about 17,500 students and is recognized as a national leader in social mobility, expanding access to higher education and improving economic outcomes for students from all backgrounds. A recipient of the annual HEED Award since 2014, CSUSM is committed to inclusive excellence and creating opportunities that transform lives.