



WHITTIER UNION

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nov. 12, 2025 **CONTACT:** Amanda Nieto **PHONE:** 909-447-2407

Whittier Union Scholars Share Experiences with CSUF Education Grad Students

WHITTIER – Pioneer High School students shared their high school experiences with future teachers during a field trip to Cal State University, Fullerton (CSUF) in October, designed to assist aspiring CSUF grad students as they learn the best strategies for providing equity in the classroom.

Nine Pioneer High students lent their perspectives on school life during a panel titled "Speaking Our Truth: Young Men's High School Perspectives on Culture and Belonging" to CSUF Diversity in Education students looking to earn their teaching credential.

"I enjoyed my time at CSUF and felt a great sense of leadership and accomplishment in being on the student panel," Pioneer senior Darean Bullard said. "Being able to help and share my personal experience made me feel heard and inspired for what lies ahead in my future."

The trip was organized by Pioneer intervention counselor Alejandra Flores and Pioneer afterschool PREP program site coordinator Isaiah Huizar. More than three dozen PHS students, including Guided Studies students, academic mentors, and Associated Student Body (ASB) leaders, visited CSUF.

"We are so proud of our student panelists for providing their insight to the next generation of teachers," Flores said. "Our male students shared significant memories of how they have been impacted in the classroom, and made recommendations on how teachers can stay better connected with students. One thing our students made clear is that teachers are more impactful than they think they are."

Huizar, a Class of 2017 Pioneer High graduate and 2023 CSUF graduate, reached out to his former teacher, CSUF diversity education instructor Dr. Minerva Chavez, and invited her to come to Pioneer and speak with his students. Chavez suggested that Huizar instead bring a group of Pioneer students to Fullerton and provide insight to her class.

"Dr. Chavez recommended we come and talk to her students, as part of their training," Huizar said. "It went even better than we expected. The CSUF students were inspired that our students came out and told their stories. One teaching student even became emotional hearing the stories and seeing Latino men representing themselves."

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Pioneer students received a campus tour, including a visit to the school's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) office and a meeting with representatives of the school's Male Success Initiative (MSI). MSI's mission is to address the underrepresentation of undergraduate men of color in higher education.

"We recruited several Guided Studies students to attend the field trip, and felt it would be good for them to explore the available support and mentorship opportunities as they consider their college journeys," Flores said. "Students from MSI shared their experiences and discussed the challenges they faced as first-generation college students and the various obstacles they overcame along the way."

The field trip provided Pioneer academic mentors and ASB leaders an opportunity to meet their peers at CSUF. The students also attended the "Speaking Our Truth" panel, supporting their classmates. The experience was a moving one for the students, many of whom were on the fence on attending college, including Pioneer senior Robert Minero.

"The CSUF field trip was very engaging and informative," Minero said. "It gave me a valuable perspective on Cal State Fullerton and inspired me to pursue higher education. I enjoyed the experience and left feeling uplifted and motivated."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

WUHSD_CSUF1: Pioneer High School Guided Studies students, academic mentors, and ASB leaders attend a Cal State University, Fullerton field trip in October.

WUHSD_CSUF2: Pioneer High School senior Robert Minero was one of nine students who participated in a Cal State University, Fullerton (CSUF) panel, where they shared their high school experience as young Latino men to a class of CSUF teaching students. The panel was part of a field trip to CSUF in October that included Pioneer Guided Studies students, academic mentors, and ASB leaders.

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OUR MISSION

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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