

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Nancy Wood, Director of School Administration
Western CUNA Management School
909.212.6059
nancyw@wcmspomona.org
www.wcmspomona.org

WESTERN CUNA MANAGEMENT SCHOOL HOLDS FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL COLLOQUIUM

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On the day that Western CUNA Management School (WCMS) third-year students would have celebrated their 2020 graduation, the school hosted its first-ever virtual colloquium instead due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority of the student body attended the July 23 event, which featured two current WCMS faculty members providing insight on measuring diversity and effective online presentation as well as a former WCMS trustee discussing credit union strategy during the pandemic. Elected student class officers offered brief messages of support for their classmates.

“This was the first summer in 62 years that WCMS did not open its physical classroom doors for students,” said WCMS Dean and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Michael Steinberger. “I personally missed the energy and passion that comes from having that brain trust of credit union leaders together in one place, and I know the students did too. While we couldn’t bring the students to campus, we could open the classroom and bring a bit of the WCMS ‘head and heart’ education to them. The colloquium brought students into contact with ideas from leaders within the credit union movement, communications consulting, and business school research. In my lifetime there has never been a greater need for education for credit union leaders to help guide their institutions through this crisis.”

UCLA Anderson School of Management Senior Associate Dean of MBA Programs and Professor of Management and Organizations Dr. Miguel Unzueta; Communication expert and Founder of Stacey Hanke, Inc. Stacey Hanke; and Northwest Credit Union Association President and CEO and CUNA Board Chair Troy Stang were the featured presenters. Dr. Unzueta and Hanke are WCMS faculty members; Stang formerly served on the WCMS Board of Trustees. The event was moderated by Dr. Steinberger. Akin to traditional WCMS instruction, students could ask questions of the speakers.

Dr. Unzueta's presentation, "Exploring Corporate Diversity Rhetoric", discussed the importance of defining what diversity means within a company or organization.

"For an organization to specifically say they care about diversity or they are pursuing diversity without defining what diversity within their ranks means, you're not going to get anywhere unless you actually define what the concept is," he told students. "If you just leave it as we care about diversity, people are going to imbue their own perception of diversity into what that goal is. So an organization should be able to answer questions like 'We'll know we're diverse when...' and 'Diversity in our environment refers to what...'"

Hanke spoke on "Maximizing Communication Effectiveness in an Online Environment", saying in part, that "the biggest mistake we are making is that we are taking this for granted." While Stang's presentation on "Serving Current (and New!) Credit Union Members through the Crisis" touched upon the issue of inclusion as it relates to the cooperative principles.

The event culminated with a surprise collage of association and league presidents sharing their well-wishes to the WCMS students. As a service to credit unions, WCMS is providing the recording of the program for all credit union professionals on its website, <https://www.wcmspomona.org/>.

About Western CUNA Management School: WCMS serves credit unions in the 13 western states and is sponsored by the leagues and associations for those credit unions, including the Alaska Credit Union League, California Credit Union League, Credit Union Association of New Mexico, Hawaii Credit Union League, Montana Credit Union Network, Mountain West Credit Union Association, Nevada Credit Union League, Northwest Credit Union Association, and Utah Credit Union Association, in cooperation with Pomona College in Claremont, CA. Graduates who have developed their skills and knowledge at the school occupy positions of leadership and responsibility at some of the nation's leading credit unions.