



EOPS | CARE | NEXTUP Advisory Committee Spring 2025 Meeting

May 22, 2025 from 10:00-12:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Zoom Link: <https://rccd-edu.zoom.us/j/88945594756>

Committee Members:

Daniela McCarson, Gabriela Cortez, Monica Huizar, Steven Gonzalez, Amy Kramer,, Azadeh Iglesias, Dominique Ruvalcaba, Summer Arias, Jennifer Briseno, Chris Castillo, Anthony Puccio, Kimberly Thomas, Miriam Carillo, Michelle Rodriguez, Reneisha Wilkes-CSUSB, Thavery Lay-CPP, Robert Yoshida- JFK Middle College, Nelly Cruz-UCR First Gen Initiative, Andrea Martinez- UCR First Gen Initiative, Stephen Morales-UCR Foster Youth, Philip Valdovinos-UCR Foster Youth, Giselle Barajas-ERHS, Lori Motonaga NHS (Bold indicates positive attendance)

Outline:

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
 - a. Call to order 10:05 am
2. **Review and Recap of Fall 2024 Meeting Minutes**
3. **Dean's Report, Daniela McCarson**
 - a. Team Introduction and Structural Changes
 - i. Dominique joined the EOPS NextUp Care team in December. She was selected to fill a new EOPS Specialist role, replacing the previous administrative assistant structure. Dominique has been instrumental in supporting both the EOPS team and students.
 - b. Campus Reorganization
 - i. Special Funded Programs are transitioning from Student Services (under VP Dr. Kaneesha Tarrant) to Planning and Development (under VP Dr. Tenisha James) effective July 1st.
 - ii. New Initiative: Development of a common application for equity programs to minimize redundancy for students.
 - c. Rising Scholars
 - i. Serving incarcerated students in collaboration with local men's rehabilitation facility. EOPS counselor, Amy Kramer supports intake, registration, and educational planning. Currently serving 17 incarcerated students, goal is support 25. Focused on establishing a dedicated on-campus center to support Rising Scholars post-release.
 - d. EOPS Program Data & Graduation
 - i. Students Served: 2023-24: 449 unduplicated EOPS students; anticipate a similar outcome for the current academic year.
 - ii. This year, our program has over 112 EOPS students graduating this year, including 7 from the CARE program. More than double from last years figures.
 - e. NextUp Program Changes and Regulatory Updates:
 - i. Title 5 regulations are being revised to allow NextUp more autonomy from EOPS. Allows foster youth to receive services even if they don't meet traditional EOPS criteria. Budget

and requirements will be separated starting next academic year (pending Senate approval).

f. Budget & Student Support

- i. Textbook Support: Nearly \$100,000 spent on EOPS/CARE book vouchers this year. Full-time students received: \$600 and part-time students received \$400.

4. Norco College Area Updates

a. Program Updates EOPS (Steven Gonzalez)

- i. We are currently serving over 350 students this term.
- ii. Admitted over 80 students this for Sp25.
- iii. 36 students are currently receiving services via the DRC program
- iv. 22 students enrolled under 12 units; many full-time students.
- v. 9 Dreamers and 17 CRC students served.

b. Workshops & Events

- i. Know Your Roots, Movie Night, Practicing Self-Care Workshop: Hosted by a counselor; Painting Workshop: Recent event with over 50 student participants; highly popular and will be repeated next semester.
- ii. Northern California College Tour-14 students visited 5 colleges including Sacramento State, Fresno State, Stanislaus, and UC Davis.

c. Student Resources and Educational Benefits

- i. Distributed \$600 toward textbooks and \$400 plus \$50 grocery cards for completing first contact. Provided free school supplies and loaned graphing calculators (valued at ~\$150 each).
- ii. Snacks are now available in the office for students.

d. Graduation & Recruitment

- i. Over 112 students expected to graduate this semester — the highest number to date, 50+ more than last year.

5. Program Updates CARE (Amy Kramer)

- a. The CARE program supports single head-of-household student parents who receive Cash Aid. This semester, the program served 20 students—the highest ever—with 7 graduates.

b. Workshops and Student Needs:

- i. Students requested workshops on writing scholarships to better tell their personal stories and increase their chances of success. Financial aid staff helped explain what scholarship reviewers look for. A session on imposter syndrome was conducted by health services to boost student confidence. Resume and cover letter workshops were held, with assistance from the Career and Technical Education (CTE) advisor to help students translate their experiences effectively for job applications.

c. Cooking Workshops:

- i. Cooking workshops are offered every semester, with students choosing the kitchen tools needed. The workshops are interactive, including students' children, encouraging family participation and healthy eating habits.

d. Campus Tours and Events:

- i. Students toured the nearby UCR campus to explore further educational opportunities.
- ii. An end-of-year "bolero" event fostered community among students and their families, encouraging camaraderie and networking.
- iii. CARE graduation celebrations were held collaboratively with Moreno Valley and RCC CARE programs, including a group dinner at the Spaghetti Factory.

6. Program Updates NextUp (Jennifer Briseno)

- a. May is Foster Care Awareness Month, a busy period with many events.
- b. Workshops offered included:
 - i. Orientation for new students with school supplies and program requirements.
 - ii. College success strategies.
 - iii. “Cooking with Confidence” — a new, student-led workshop inspired by Amy Kramer’s program, where 20 air fryers were distributed and all attendees participated.
 - iv. Tax prep webinar and an in-person tax filing event, open to the wider Norco community, helping students claim the Foster Youth Tax Credit.
 - v. Self-care workshop in collaboration with counselors.
 - vi. Driving workshop covering preparation for the driving test and car-buying tips.
 - vii. Crafting/crocheting workshop led by Phoenix scholar students to kick off Foster Care Awareness Month (blue heart symbol).
 - viii. Ally training on trauma-informed care and creating safe environments for foster youth.
- c. **Monica Huizar – Student Progress & Transfers:**
 - i. Jennifer transitioned into the coordinator role in February; Monica praised her smooth leadership.
 - ii. Collaboration with alumni and community partners, such as Victoria Yurkins nonprofit “Building Resilience Together.”
 - iii. Student numbers:
 - 1. 23 NextUp students (foster youth up to age 26).
 - 2. 28 Phoenix scholars (serving foster youth without age restrictions).
 - 3. Graduates: 12 Phoenix scholars earned 32 degrees combined; 1 certificate.
 - 4. Transfer destinations include Cal State San Bernardino, Fullerton, Sonoma State, UC Merced, UCLA, RCC Nursing program, UCI, UCR, and others.

7. Unity Zone Update (Chris Castillo)

- a. The Unity Zone is a unique *space* rather than a formal program. It supports LGBTQIA+ and undocumented/mixed-status students. Students engage voluntarily, self-identifying as part of the community. The center is staffed mainly by student workers and graduate interns.
 - i. Hosted a semester-long book club in partnership with the library featuring *Harvesting Dreams* by a visiting author.
 - ii. Launched a peer mentoring program specifically for LGBTQ+ students.
 - iii. Weekly study jams offering incentives such as \$50 grocery or TJ Maxx cards.
 - iv. Hosted drag nights and other community-building events.
- b. During October (Undocumented Student Week), focused heavily on undocumented student events
- c. Awarded \$1,500 scholarships to 7 students this year, with annual renewals planned. Provided \$200 monthly grocery gift cards to 20 undocumented students through partnership with the Basic Needs Center. Students are encouraged to develop their personal stories to aid in scholarships and professional development.
- d. Emphasized the importance of supporting marginalized students, especially LGBTQ and undocumented, in the current challenging political and economic climate.
 - i. Noted a significant decline in undocumented students attending campus due to fear of ICE actions locally.

- ii. Highlighted the need for collaboration between groups and schools to create safe environments and support networks. Assured confidentiality and compliance with FERPA in handling student information.
- iii. Stressed the importance of transitional support and warm handoffs for students moving from high schools to community college and then to universities.

8. Around the Room Partner Updates

- a. **Eleanor Roosevelt High School:** Giselle Barajas highlighted several student support programs including Dual Immersion (bilingual instruction), STEM, Umoja, Puente, AVID, and dual enrollment partnerships with Norco College, especially for special education students.
- b. **JFK Middle College High School:** Robert Yoshida reported strong collaboration with Norco College, noting 106 AA degrees in the current graduating class and seamless support for students with IEPs transitioning to college. Approximately 41 students are continuing at Norco College.
- c. **CSU San Bernardino:** Reneisha Wilkes celebrated the largest recent graduating class, including master's and doctoral degree candidates. She emphasized extensive student support through financial literacy, career fairs, housing stability, and volunteer opportunities. Summer Bridge program begins July 7, offering foster youth housing and transitional support.
- d. **Cal Poly Pomona:** Thavery Lay shared enrollment statistics: 804 students yielded in Fall 2024, with a majority first-time freshmen. Transfer applications and yields are lower, with a call for ideas to increase transfers from Norco. The campus faces staffing reductions due to budget cuts, affecting services. Transfer Bridge program will be virtual in early August. The priority deadline passed May 5; late applicants are waitlisted, with decisions expected by mid-June.
- e. **Cal State San Bernardino Follow-Up:** Reneisha Wilkes offered to expedite admissions for current/former foster youth or McKinney-Vento students to avoid waitlists.
- f. **UCR (University of California, Riverside):** Nelly Cruz described the relaunch of the First-Generation Initiative and partnerships with external programs like Upward Bound. UCR offers campus visits, summer programs for community college students, winter admissions, and fosters early connections with prospective transfer students to ease transition.
- g. **UCR-Foster Youth Program**
 - i. Getting ready for Graduation June 30th and end of the Year celebration
 - ii. Offer priority registration and priority housing (75 incoming students)
 - iii. New Student Survey:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScD29bAPZ0CbigC_7GiReli9zyK4B4DEGkl_D79bbkAt4ENKw/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=111343138134847455612
 - iv. Contact Information-Phone: (951)836-5435 and Email: phillipv@ucr.edu

9. Ongoing Collaboration

- a. Our Students Today, Your Students Tomorrow
 - i. Building connections to the high schools. How can we connect earlier?
 - 1. We would like to enroll and provide Priority Registration to graduating seniors prior to May each year.
 - ii. How can Norco College meet the college/university deadlines?
 - 1. During the application process we have time to have walkthrough and support the CSU application specifically for CPP.
 - 2. Host application walkthrough webinars during the application period. Willing to collaborate on joint sessions with staff and students to demystify the application and EOP/Renaissance Scholars process.

3. Advocates for early, direct communication with universities. Offers virtual and in-person presentations to guide students on application steps, document collection, and managing deadlines. Emphasizes student responsibility and having a planner to track multiple applications and submissions.
4. Hear directly from the college to have us speak with the students by a “Day” visit or a zoom meeting.
5. Ensuring students have an organizer and a planner
6. Getting timelines to ensure EOPS and Norco College can create partnerships with the HS and colleges
7. Norco College Collaboration with the Transfer

10. Student Highlight

- a. Amanda Arista: shared her experiences in EOPS and other campus programs.

11. Fall 2025 EOPS Advisory Committee

- a. October 23, 2025 in-person hosted at Norco College

12. Questions

- a. Adjournment at 11:33 am