



CATCH THE NEXT



NEWSLETTER

October
Volume 12, No. 2



CATCH THE NEXT

FALL 2023 SEMINAR

Catch The Next's Ascender Fall Seminar convened on October 27th and 28th in Austin, Texas at Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in the Austin-University Area. CTN brought together an array of esteemed attendees, including educators, advisors, counselors, and CTN Leadership Fellows from diverse regions across the state. The event served as a platform for in-depth deliberations on the progress and challenges inherent to the program, fostering the exchange of invaluable pedagogical insights. With a primary emphasis on team building, the seminar effectively addressed the unique requirements of different academic disciplines through a series of interactive breakout sessions. Notably, the program's agenda remained highly responsive to the specific needs of the current cohort, ensuring a tailored and enriching experience for all participants.



CTN's participants that attended the Fall 2023 Seminar

On the first day October 27th, after a welcome from Anna B. Alaniz, CTN Director of Professional Development and Maria Martha Chavez, CTN Chief Executive Officer, participants heard from Dr. Sonya Armstrong, Texas State University, Associate Dean for Student Success for the College of Education and Professor in the Graduate Program in Developmental Education, in her session titled “Honoring Learner Literacies: Breaking the Toxic Tradition of Tacit Literacy Expectations.” Participants gained an understanding of the tacit literacy expectations that students face as they transition to higher education and were able to identify strategies for making these more explicit for students. Participants also gained an understanding of disciplinary and other contextual variations in literacy practices and identified strategies for honoring and extending the literacy assets that students bring.



Dr. Chavez and Dr. Alaniz



CTN participants, participating in an icebreaker



Next Jonathan Bell, South Texas College Ascender Mathematics Instructor and Dr. Anna B. Alaniz, CTN Director of Professional Development provided a session titled “Interwoven Insight: Bridging Argumentative Essays and Mathematical Problem Solving.” Their presentation included the comparison on strengths and perceived weaknesses between English and Mathematics. Additionally, participants analyzed how innovative curricula based on English and Mathematics have similar teaching processes. Following Mr. Bell and Dr. Alaniz’s presentation; Dr. Stella Flores, College of Education, UT-Austin presented the topic on “Navigating Educational Policy: Advocacy and Next Steps.” Participants gained a deeper understanding of the current educational policy landscape, how to hone their advocacy skills, and identified opportunities and innovations to face policy changes. Furthermore, Dr. Flores provided innovative strategies on how to be better equipped to navigate policy changes and to advocate for education.



Mr. Bell and Dr. Alaniz presenting



Dr. Stella Flores presenting



CTN participant actively working

After lunch, Dr. Anna B. Alaniz, CTN Director of Professional Development presented on “Understanding Corequisites Models in Education: Navigating the Benefits and Challenges of Corequisites in the Ascender Model.” Attendees gained insights into the impact of corequisite models on student success, accelerated learning and targeted support. Vidal Almanza, Austin Community College Ascender Advisor, led a presentation titled, “Educational Pathways: Exploring Pathways Innovations and Advising Advocacy.” This presentation was a comprehensive understanding of the latest innovations in Pathways and the crucial role of student-centered advising in promoting educational success. Participants were empowered with practical strategies and insights to enhance advising practices and contribute to the effective implementation of Pathways at their institutions.



Dr. Alaniz, leading her presentation



Dallas College engaging in presentations



Mr. Vidal Alamanza presenting

The rest of the afternoon was filled with breakout sessions. The *mathematics session* titled, “Mathematics in the Ascender Framework” was led by Jonathan Bell; Mathematics Ascender Professor, South Texas College and Mario Morin, Mathematics Department Chair, Mathematics Instructor, South Texas College. The *English session* titled, “Re-Engaging Reading: Micro and Macro Classroom Strategies” was led by Dr. Sonya L. Armstrong, Texas State University, Associate Dean for Student Success for the College of Education and Professor in the Graduate Program in Developmental Education. She gave participants the opportunity to identify practical micro-level strategies and mini-lessons reading appropriate for their teaching context(s). Participants also identified practical macro-level strategies (curricular adjustments and longer-term approaches) appropriate for their teaching context(s). The *learning frameworks session*, “Familia: Creating Community Inside and Outside of the Classroom” was presented by Amber Sarker, Austin Community College, Associate Professor of Learning Frameworks. She led the participants to engage in several learning activities to help create a classroom community in postsecondary settings. She also allowed for a variety of volunteer opportunities that were an interesting addition to course curricula. The audience viewed a variety of self-care and mental health strategies that could be incorporated as in-class activities or reflections. Lastly, participants, brainstormed on how to add a classroom community or self-care activity into one or more of their courses. The fourth breakout session was on *advising*, “Student Retention as a Team Effort” led by Vidal Almanza, CTN Fellow and Specialist, Area of Study Master Advising, Austin Community College. In this breakout session, participants learned different strategies and best practices on how to retain students beyond the first year.



The day ended with participants writing reflections and an ofrenda which were shared and discussed the following day. The celebrations continued at the reception where a cohort of CTN Ascender participants' graduated after participating in a sequel of three semester session seminars.



Graduate pictures alongside, Dr. Anna B. Alaniz and Dr. Maria Martha Chavez



Group picture of 2023 CTN Graduates

In continuation, Mr. Juan Higa was recognized due to his leadership and service to CTN.



Juan Higa, received testimonials from the CTN staff followed by a recognition plaque



On the second and final day October 28th, in the morning participants reflections were shared by the CTN Team. Following reflections, Dr. Laura Rendon UTSA Professor Emeritus, Researcher led a session titled, “Elevating Excellence: Unveiling the Impact of the Ascender Program’s Professional Development in Dallas.” This session gave participants valuable insights into the impact of the Ascender Program’s professional development initiatives on professors in Dallas. Participants were additionally equipped with evidence-based knowledge to inform future professional development sessions, enhance teaching practices, and ultimately contribute to improve student success within their own educational institutions.



Dallas College discussing Dr. Rendon’s group time



Dr. Rendon, autographing books



Dr. Armenta and raffle book winners

Dr. Anna B. Alaniz, presented on “Missed Mentoring Meeting” where participants learned about research-based findings on mentorship with an emphasis on the Ascender Program. After Dr. Alaniz presented campus team time was allocated to give participants the opportunity to go to a breakout room to discuss concerns, questions, and resources available to their campuses, these sessions were led by CTN staff and college coordinators.



Dr. Alaniz leading a presentation



CTN participants, completing group activity

After lunch, Dr. Kevin A. Christian, D.A. Director - Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity at the American Association of Community Colleges, spoke on “The Heart of Community Colleges: Insights and Strategies.” Participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the speaker’s role in community colleges and insights from the AACC's initiatives. In continuation, Yvette Regalado, CTN Director of Curriculum & Instruction conducted a team building to have participants internalize what they had learned while reminding participants that teamwork’s leads to success. Maria Martha Chavez, CTN Chief Executive Officer and Anna B. Alaniz, CTN Director of Professional Development and Leadership Fellows presented on “Holistic Engagement Troubleshooting: Navigating Challenges with Students, Parents, and the Community/Familia.” This presentation opened dialogue to address challenges and share solutions encountered while implementing Ascender activities, including Noche de Familia, University Tours, Ascender Club, survey administration, and other key initiatives aimed at fostering a sense of belonging and active engagement within their educational communities.



Dr. Kevin Christian presenting



Yvette Regalado leading a team builder

The day ended with an Ofrenda Sharing which was led by Maria Martha Chavez, CTN Chief Executive Officer and Anna B. Alaniz, CTN Director of Professional Development; where participants shared one piece of their writing from the two-day presentation as an ofrenda to the rest of the group.



CTN participants sharing one piece for their “Ofrenda Sharing”

We Need Your Help!

Catch the Next to Participate in GivingTuesday on November 28

On November 28, 2023, people all around the world are coming together to tap into the power of human connection and strengthen communities and change our world. Will you be one of them?

Catch the Next will be participating in GivingTuesday and we need your help!

By joining the GivingTuesday movement, you're proving that in times of uncertainty, generosity can bring the whole world together.



Here is how you can get ready to give:

1. **Mark your calendar**
2. **Give.** On November 28, go to <https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1217887> and give.
3. **Spread the word.** Encourage your friends and family to join you in creating real impact on November 28 by sharing what our mission means to you and why you support our organization ([here are some ideas](#)). Make sure to use hashtag #GivingTuesday and tag us so we can share!

Let's rally together to build stronger communities.

Learn more at www.catchthenext.org

College News

ascender
CATCH THE NEXT




**SOUTH TEXAS
COLLEGE**

STC Ascender Club Hosts Fundraiser and Elects Officers

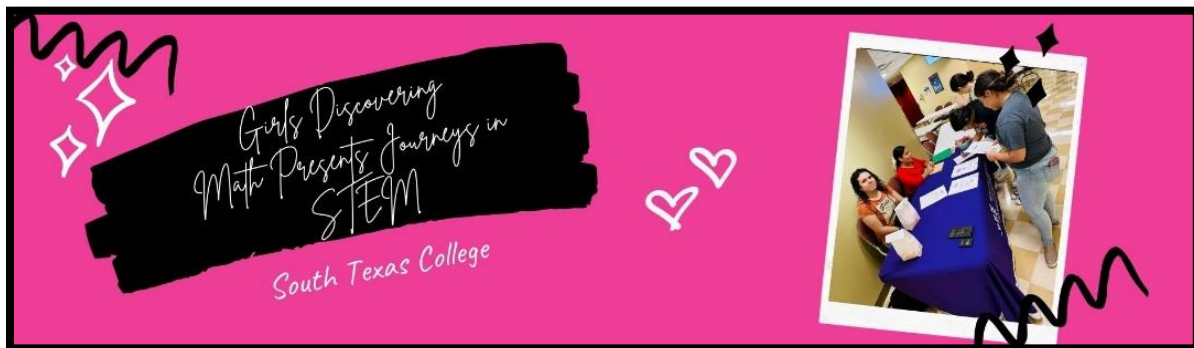
By Aly Ceballos, STC Intern



The Ascender Club at the Starr County Campus organized a fundraiser for the Fall 2023 semester. The earnings from the sale of Nothing Bundt Cakes will be used to pay for the Noche de Familia event on November 9. Club members sold about 300 cakes and made a profit of close to \$900. Ascender student, Ross Guerra, sold 50 Nothing Bundt Cakes all by herself. Ross has been in the Ascender program for 2 years. She said that she loves the Ascender's program since it's helped her develop not only as a student, but also as a person. "I was amazed at the way the students took over and distributed the orders. Everyone did their part and their teamwork really paid off," commented Dr. Anna A. Alaniz. "I am so proud to lead these students because they are dedicated inside and outside of the classroom." The Ascender Club also has new officers: President- Consuelo Trejo; Vice-President- Jazmine Lozano; Secretary- Itzel Pena; Treasure- Annette Garza; and Historian- Joanna Aleman.

STC STARR County Campus – Girls Discovering Math

By Leslie Hurtado, STC, Girls Discovering Math Club President and CTN Intern



On September 20, 2023, The Girls Discovering Math Club kicked off the Fall 2023 semester activities by attending the South Texas College Club Fair. This event offered clubs the opportunity to share and inform students about their services and club views. The club had an awesome turnout and gained a good number of members! The club members handed out candy and flyers while answering students' questions about the club. The first-semester meeting followed right after, where the club introduced themselves and talked about future meetings, activities, and officer positions.

The new 2023 Club Officers are: President: Leslie Hurtado, Vice President: Lazaro Garcia-Costilla, Social Media Managers: Jocelyn Pena, Mayela Vela, and Isela Trevino.



Recruiting

Students recruiting for Girls Discovering Math Club at STARR County Campus – South Texas College

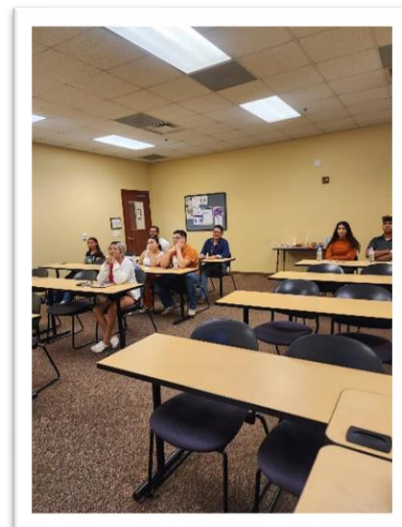


Students taking a group picture and proposed Girls Discovering Math Club t-shirt

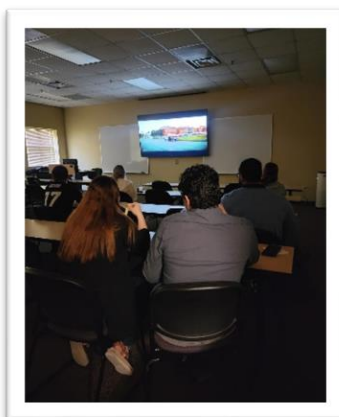


**PLEASE FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK:
@GIRLSDISCOVERINGMATH_STC**

On Thursday, October 5, 2023 the second meeting was the first installment of a series called “Journeys in STEM”, which aimed at sharing the journeys of different STEM careers and how the presenters got there. The first presenter was Ms. Matea Vazquez, electrical engineer, and South Texas College Math Faculty. She shared her life and work experiences as a first-generation college student and working in las maquiladoras in Reynosa as the only female in her team.

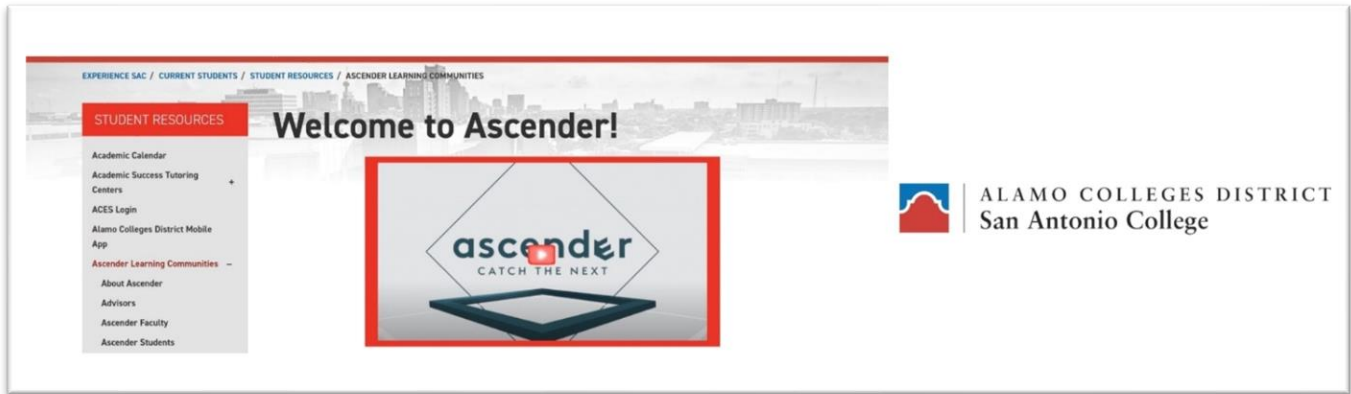


Students during Matea Vazquez presentation, with snacks provided



Wednesday, October 18, 2023 the club had their third meeting of the semester. They watched a movie after the meeting, "Hidden Figures" hoping to inspire fellow club members to embrace the love of math and STEM-related careers. Other events included Study Date on October 25th, where members were encouraged to bring homework or other related activities and work together to help each other, as well as receive help from sponsors and CLE member Lazaro Garcia-Costilla. Additionally, they also plan on hosting a Food Drive to benefit local Soup Kitchen on Thanksgiving break!





PAC Hosted Keynote Speaker, Jesse Borrego

By Ronald G. Perez, M.A., PAC - Learning Frameworks Instructor



On September 21st, keynote speaker, Jesse Borrego, spoke at Palo Alto College Latinx Heritage month. Jesse Borrego is an actor, singer, and dancer from the original FAME TV series—star of the classic Latino film Blood In Blood Out. He's also appeared in Dexter, 24, Vida, Con Air, Colombiana, and Fear The Walking Dead. He is pictured above with Catch the Next Ascender Club President Logan Martinez and Vice-President Joannette Casias. He as well took a picture with Catch the Next Ascender Humanities instructor, Maggie Yznaga.



On October 20th, Noche de Familia set the ground for students to have a successful Fall Semester.



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT

San Antonio College

In search for a MATH Professor,
 who would like to start a
 Girls Discovering Math Club as a
 pathway to the STEM program.



Ascender

Students and Mentors



The driver of her education

Goal planning + coffee = SUCCESS

October 2nd and October 6th mentors and students sharing memories together.

ACC Mental Health Session

By Gustavo Deveze Castellanos, ACC, Ascender Student Employee



A remarkable collaboration with the Austin Community College (ACC) Counseling Department, the ASCENDER program hosted its inaugural "Mental Health is Not Taboo" session on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at the ACC Highland Campus. This event aimed to raise mental health awareness and encourage open conversations among students, faculty, and staff. Three ACC Counseling Department counselors provided invaluable insights into mental health, particularly within the Hispanic community, addressing often-taboo topics and emphasizing effective ways to discuss mental health with family and friends. With an audience of 16 diverse individuals from within the ACC community, this session fostered understanding and communication about mental health, breaking down barriers, and creating a supportive environment. ACC Ascender's Program invites others in this transformative journey as they continue to break the stigma surrounding mental health, ensuring that everyone feels supported and heard.



October 12, students and their familias played "Ascender Loteria with a Twist" at Noche de Familia. There were three different dates to choose from to ensure that everyone could be a part of Noche de Familia fantastic evenings: October 12, 19, and 26. These nights were all about bringing students, their families, and mentors together in a warm setting. It was an opportunity to make connections and learn about the resources the college offers that help them in their academic journey. Each night began with a delicious traditional Mexican dinner, during which everyone had the opportunity to chat, share stories, and form lasting bonds. These get-togethers were packed with excitement and delightful surprises. The custom Ascender Loteria was a smashing success, filling the room with laughter and camaraderie as they all eagerly marked their cards in the hopes of winning fantastic prizes. It added a new dimension of fun and connection to the evenings. These nights have become a much-loved event in the Fall, cultivating a strong sense of community and support for the ACC Riverbats.



October 19, Austin Community College hosted Noche de Familia and had a night full of joy and laughter. “¡Los Riverbats! ¡El Taquito!”

METRO&STATE + BUSINESS

ACC chancellor talks vision, power of community colleges

Austin's Colony has water concerns
Residents complain of smell, color, crust

Emiliano Tahú Gómez
Austin American-Statesman
USA TODAY NETWORK

HORNSBY BEND — In the seven years since Kerse Bransen bought a newly built house in Austin's Colony — a string of developments in the Hornsby Bend unincorporated community in eastern Travis County — she has had to replace her sink fixtures, water heater, water pipes and toilet.

The culprit, she said, was her water supply.

"The water smelled like stagnant water," said Bransen, a government worker. The crust on her toilet "was like plaque" on a "month that isn't brushed."

On Saturday morning, as many Central Texas residents prepared to watch the eclipse, Bransen and more than three dozen others crowded into a small community center meeting room to explore a difficult question — how to approach a neighborhood concern of more than a decade over water quality and pricing.

Residents' frustrations stem from the "hard" quality of the water.

Texas Water Utilities, a subsidiary of the national for-profit SouthWest Water Co., provides the area with water. Its most recent Drinking Water Quality Report indicates that the water the company provides to the area meets state and federal standards.

However, many residents said they

Lily Kepner
Austin American-Statesman
USA TODAY NETWORK

where he had served as president since 2014 — to win the prestigious Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence this year

'LOVE OUR STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS'

Austin Community College Chancellor Russell Lowery-Hart high-fives student Elisha MacGregor after she gave him an autographed volleyball from the ACC team during a tour of the new welcome center at the Highland campus Monday.

PHOTOS BY JAY JANNIK/AUSTIN-STATESMAN

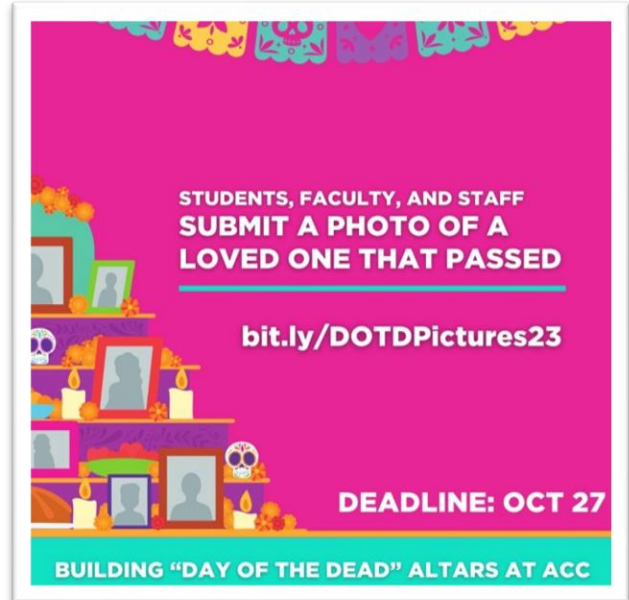
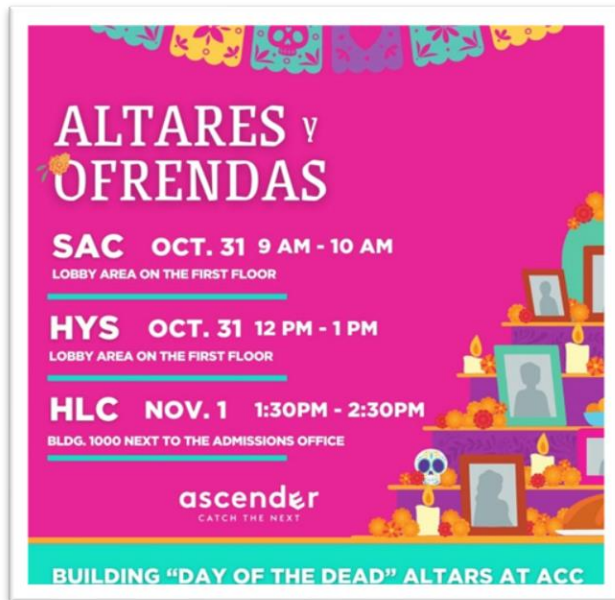
See COLONY, Page 2B

October 16, Elisha MacGregor, a current Ascender student, had the opportunity to meet the new ACC chancellor!

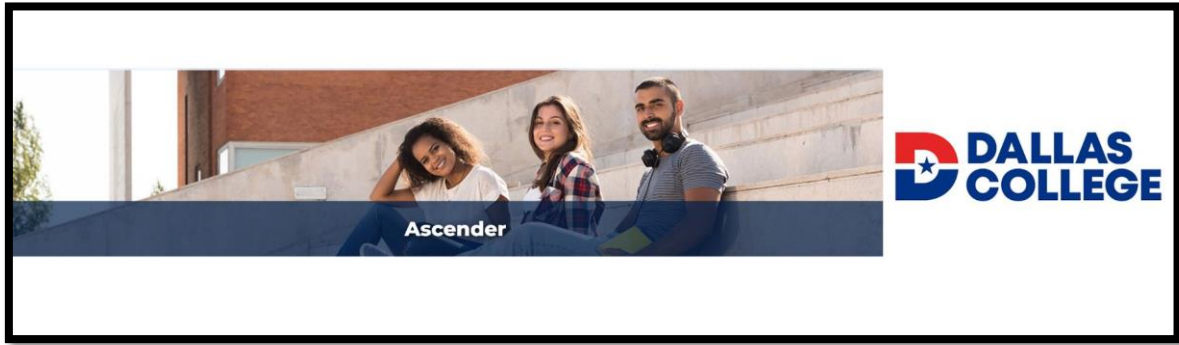


October 21, three Ascender students attended the virtual latinxleads Conference.

Altars y Ofrendas



Austin Community College hosted on October 31st and November 1st an opportunity where students, faculty and staff could be part of a world where they could unite to pay homage to their cherished departed souls. They wanted to continue their tradition on campus, as they set up altars filled with love and memories. Everyone was encouraged to submit a photo of a loved one who passed to add to their collective tribute.

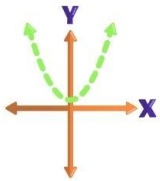


Dallas College – Girls Discovering Math

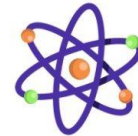
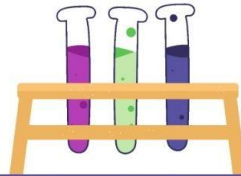
By Dr. Maria Martha Chavez, CTN CEO

DALLAS COLLEGE - NORTH CAMPUS

GIRLS IN MATH



$$x = \sqrt{a}$$



Leader: Teresita Ramirez-Rosas

Ms. Ramirez will serve as a leader of the Catch the Next- Ascender Girls In Math Initiative at Dallas College North Campus, being sponsored by Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation. She will provide leadership to other Dallas College campuses, and will collaborate with other Ascender faculty across the state wanting to engage their students in a statewide Girls Math Movement. She will work with campus advisors, as well as student intern(s) and tutor(s) that will help promote the skill development necessary for students to fulfill their educational requirements and to consider Mathematics as the entryway to careers in STEM.



CATCH THE NEXT

Thinking About Your 2023 Tax Deductible Gift

Consider giving to Catch the Next so we can continue to fulfill our mission of empowering faculty, staff, and institutions to increase the educational attainment of Latinos and other underserved communities in order to close higher education equity and opportunity gaps.

Send donations to

Catch the Next
18756 Stone Oak Pkwy, Ste. 200
San Antonio, TX 78258

To sign up as a monthly donor,
Call 203-508-3129 or email maria.chavez@catchthenext.org
Visit <https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1217887>
to make an online donation

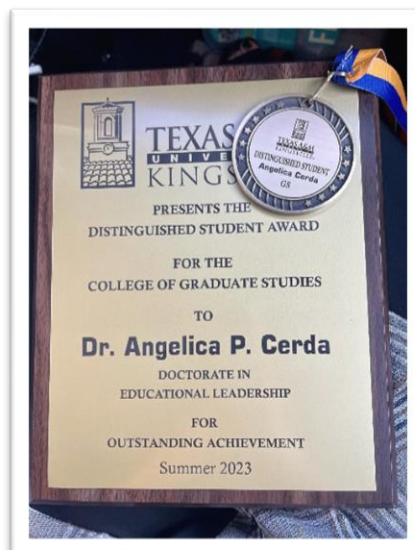
Ascender Instructors

South Texas College English Instructor Obtains Doctorate

By Dr. Cindy Yarely Marroquin-Garza, CTN Communication's Director



In May 2023, **Dr. Angelica P. Cerda** successfully defended her Dissertation title: EXPERIENCES OF FACULTY WHO TRANSITIONED FROM FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION TO ONLINE LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. She graduated from her Doctorate in Educational Leadership with a 4.0 G.P.A., being the only graduate student to receive the Distinguished Student Award. Following her defense, she received a remarkable opportunity to serve as an adjunct professor, teaching English at Texas A&M University. This achievement marks a significant milestone in her academic and professional journey.



New to CTN

Have you
met

our new
CTN Board Members?

Dr. Greg Morris



Dr. Greg Morris serves as Senior Vice Provost for Academic Services at Dallas College, one of the nation's largest community college systems, serving over 100,000 students annually.

In his role, Greg provides executive leadership over several academic support areas, including the Learning Commons (libraries, tutoring, academic testing, and instructional computing) and the Offices of Academic Scheduling, Articulation and Transfer, Academic Compliance, and Catalog and Curriculum Operations.

He also leads the Office of Special Academic Programs, which supports several academic enrichment programs, including the Honors Program, Phi-Theta Kappa, SkillsUSA, Service Learning, and the Common Book initiative.

Supporting both faculty and curriculum development, Greg's portfolio includes the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) and the Academic Incubator, where innovative solutions are tested in support of industry needs. He oversees Prior Learning Assessment for the College and guides the college's three Hispanic serving institution (HSI) Title V grants.

Greg has over twenty-five years of extensive higher education experience in private, public, two-year, and four-year institutions. His depth of leadership roles has encompassed academic affairs, enrollment management, workforce, and economic development, military outreach, and leading nationally recognized online education initiatives.

Before coming to Dallas College, Greg served as the West Virginia Community and Technical College System's Vice Chancellor and the chief undergraduate enrollment officer at The University of Texas at Dallas. He led the University of Hawaii System's off-campus military education and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard apprenticeship programs at Honolulu Community College.

Dr. Morris holds an undergraduate degree in Landscape Architecture from West Virginia University and a Doctorate in Education from George Washington University and was a 2018 Aspen Presidential Fellow with the Aspen Institute.

Dr. Catherine Olivares



As the Dean of Transfer, Articulation, and Alternative Credit Programs, Catherine Olivares manages and oversees Dallas College's Ascender program, the college's Transfer Partnerships and Pathways (Articulation), and the growing alternative credit programs (competency-based education, prior learning assessment, etc.). She has over 15 years of experience in various roles that have all served to bridge the work and needs of academic and student services. She led the implementation of Guided Pathways to Success (GPS), championing pathway development to streamline the journey for students to complete a credential at Dallas College.

She also held positions in Transfer Articulation and Orientation and Transition Programs at the University of North Texas, in Academic Advising for the School of Education at Texas A&M University-San Antonio, and in Graduate Admissions and Enrollment Services and Financial Aid at the University of Texas San Antonio.

She is skilled at delivering presentations for large and small audiences regarding Transfer, GPS, and numerous other topics. She has had several manuscripts published in peer-reviewed journals and is an editorial board member for the Journal of Hispanic Higher Education.

Dr. Chris Nelson



Dr. Nelson earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Southern Illinois University in 2003. He began teaching at South Texas College in 2004, where he has worked since. He was awarded the classification of Associate Professor of Philosophy in 2009 and the classification of Professor of Philosophy in 2015. He served as Chair of the Department of History and Philosophy, from 2006 to 2009 and from 2012 to 2015, as Assistant Dean of Humanities in the Division of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences from 2014 to 2019, and as Associate Dean of Curriculum and Student Learning in 2019. He serves as Dean of Liberal Arts, Co-Lead for the College's Texas Pathways Project Team, and Liaison to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. He has published numerous articles on various aspects of the philosophy of Søren

Kierkegaard, as well as articles on the phenomenology of religious experience in the writings of William James and the philosophy of education in the writings of Simone Weil.

Dr. Darrial Reynolds



Dr. Darrial Reynolds has taught core political science classes at South Texas College for 21 years. Most students at the Starr County Campus over the past two decades have taken at least two of his courses. His teaching style is engaging and inspires the students to take advantage of their educational opportunities. Like him, many of his first-generation students have to overcome hurdles to succeed in higher education.

He lived in Talladega, Alabama, until age 15 while attending a segregated school system until the 6th grade. He then moved to Chicago, Illinois, at age 15 and completed his senior year of high school without graduating due to his fear of swimming, which was part of the physical education requirement. He moved to Cleveland, Ohio, at age 18 to work at gasoline stations and the Midland Ross Steel Products factory. He returned to Talladega to live with his grandparents at age 21 to work on the family farm and as a county government janitor. He earned his GED at age 22 and started his first year at age 24 at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (1988) at age 28.

At that time, he decided he was passionate about becoming a college professor and wanted to go from living in university student housing to faculty housing. He went on to Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho, to earn his Master of Health Education (1991), Doctor of Arts in Political Science (1997), and Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education (1999). He started teaching at South Texas College in 2000 on the Starr County Campus. He supports programs like Ascender, Early College, and Co-Requisite that help first-generation students thrive. He tells the first-generation students that since they have disadvantages, it is their job as college students to read, write, and study in ways that prove they are serious about what they are trying to do. One of the most important skills he teaches his first-generation students is reading closely and thinking critically. He asks them to re-read and rewrite the textbook in a way that puts it in their own words to show that they understand it. He also asks students to take advantage of opportunities such as financial aid and the Ascender Program. "Since I love my job as a college professor, it is easy for me to be motivated to teach and just try to bring learning objectives alive and make them relevant to the students. I feel pride in reaching core learning objectives and transforming students. South Texas College has allowed me to work at being the best student mentor and college professor I can be now and in the future."

Dr. Yolanda Reyna



Dr. Yolanda Reyna is a Professor and Lead Instructor of Learning Framework and Student Development at Palo Alto College, where she has taught and held various positions for over 30 years. During her tenure at PAC, she has served as a Counselor, Coordinator of the Equity Program, Director of the Returning Adult Center, and Chair of Counseling and Student Development. She is the Lead Instructor for the Learning Framework and Student Development Program in the Behavioral Sciences Department and Instructor for Catch the Next Program. She is also an advisor for the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

She has presented at numerous conferences, workshops, and institutes and has won awards, including the Palo Alto College Mariana Ornelas Trailblazer Award, Catch the Next Trailblazer Award, NISOD Awards, and the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education Distinguished College Faculty Award.

Dr. Reyna strives to instill the value of life-long learning in her students. She teaches the value of education as a powerful tool to guide them through life experiences and direct a path to their destination. Dr. Reyna instills in her students that knowledge is the key to understanding the world and transforming oneself and society.

Dr. Elena Foulis



Dr. Elena Foulis is a student-centered educator with over 15 years of experience in higher education. She is an Ohio State alumna and holds B. A and M.A. degrees in Spanish and Latin American Literature and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies. Her research and teaching interests include U.S. Latina/o literature, Spanish for Heritage Learners, and Oral History. She has presented her work at national and international conferences. She teaches undergraduate courses in service learning, Latin American Literature, and Spanish for heritage learners.

Her articles explore Latin voices through oral history and performance, identity, and place through the linguistic landscape, ethnography, and family history in advanced heritage language writing courses. Dr. Foulis began a digital oral history project about Latin@s in Ohio in 2014, which is being archived at the Center for Folklore Studies' internet collection at Ohio

State University. Some of these narratives are in her iBook titled [Latin@ Stories Across Ohio](#). She is also the host and producer for the [Latin@ Stories](#) podcast, an extension of her oral history project. She is working on a Digital Humanities project about 21 lives lost in Uvalde, Texas. In 2022, she was a TedxOhioState speaker; her TedTalk was titled “[We Are More Than a Statistic: Oral History and Latinx Identities](#).”

Dr. Linda Serra Hagedorn



Dr. Linda Hagedorn is a Professor Emeritus and former Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs at Iowa State University. She works with nine community or technical colleges as an Achieving the Dream coach and is a Scholar Mentor for CTN.

Dr. Hagedorn has been the recipient of several awards, including the most recent, the 2022 Career Achievement Award from The Association for the Study of Higher Education. She was also awarded the Senior Scholar Award from the Council for the Study of Community Colleges and the *Career Achievement in Research Award from Iowa State University*. She has served as president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, the Iowa Academy of Higher Education, and the Council for the Study of Community Colleges.

Dr. Hagedorn earned her Ph.D. in Public Policy Analysis with a concentration in higher education from the University of Illinois. She is incredibly proud of her honorary Los Angeles Trade Tech associate degree.

Dr. Emmy Perez



Emmy Pérez, USA fellow 2022 and Texas Poet Laureate 2020, authorizes the poetry collections *With the River on Our Face* and *Solstice*. A collection of her new and selected poetry is forthcoming from TCU Press.

Pérez receives a Poets Laureate Fellowship from the Academy of American Poets and poetry fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, CantoMundo, New York Foundation for the Arts, and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. She has also received the Modesta Avila Award, the Alfredo Cisneros Del Moral Foundation Award, and the James D. Phelan Award.

Her work appears in anthologies such as *Ghost Fishing: An Eco-Justice Poetry Anthology* (U. of Georgia Press), *Other Music: New Latina Poetry* (U. of Oklahoma Press), *A Broken Thing: Poets on the Line* (U. of Iowa Press), *The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry* (U. of Arizona Press), among others. Her poetry also appears on the Poetry Foundation online, Split this Rock's *The Quarry: A Social Justice Poetry Database*, and the Poem-A-Day series with the Academy of American Poets.

Pérez is a graduate of Columbia University (MFA) and the University of Southern California (BA). She has taught in Texas borderland institutions since the year 2000. Over the years, she has also led community-based creative writing projects and taught poetry writing in juvenile and adult detention centers. Since 2008, she has been a member of the Macondo Writers Workshop for socially engaged writers, and in 2020 she was named a member of the Texas Institute for Letters. In 2021, she served as Consulting Artist-in-Residence with UT San Antonio's Democratizing Racial Justice Project as a sub-awardee of their Mellon Foundation grant. She is a full professor of creative writing at UTRGV and teaches MFA and undergraduate creative writing courses. In 2016, she was awarded a Faculty Excellence Award in Student Mentoring and in 2012, a UT Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award. She is an affiliate faculty member in Mexican American Studies and holds the Dr. Robert S. Nelsen Professorship in Mexican American Studies, 2021-2024. She also serves as Chair of the Department of Creative Writing.

Sofia Farias -Alumni Representative



Sophia Concepcion Farias has spent the past school year working with a community of dedicated and wholehearted individuals to elevate the critical literacy and mental health of children in San Antonio's west side while mitigating the casualties of the school-to-prison pipeline that runs rampant in America's redlined communities. Working with organizations like City Year and Girls Inc., among other nonprofits, has helped Sophia advocate for kids to rise above poverty through education and self-expression. Sophia has continued her creative pursuits and plans to return to school to increase her voice's value to her work."

Farah Guerrero-Alumni Representative



Farah Guerrero grew up in the small town of Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato, Mexico. She is one of two children. She lived in different states and now lives in a different country, which she says is now also part of her nationality and her heart. During her adolescence, her parents separated, and due to her financial situation and the instability of her residence, she was in and out of high school four times but always came back hoping to finish and get a higher education. Due to the lack of monetary support for students at Mexico for University, she could not attend university; however, she never let her dream go.

At seventeen, she lost her father to cancer, and since then has been learning to fight and get ahead so he continues to be proud of her. Her mother taught her to work hard, and she started working at fourteen in many different jobs. Ten years ago, her family situation changed, and she had the opportunity to move to the United States. She realized that if she wanted to get a better job, it would take twice as much effort as in the past. At that time, she only hoped to get an English certificate. In 2012, she got her GED. After she got her GED, she decided to try at least to get a certificate or as much other higher education as possible. She applied to South Texas College but was sent to remediation classes due to her lack of English language proficiency. Here, she discovered the Ascender program and met great advisors like Dr. Anna Alaniz. She began her classes with only 30% knowledge of the English language and also had yet to set foot in a school for several years. She also has yet to receive financial aid, and the list of challenges continues. However, the Ascender program helped her understand that goals could be achieved no matter how big the situation could be with perseverance and discipline. After seven years on this path and a lot of effort and perseverance, she can say that she dreams of having higher education and the possibility of inspiring others. She graduated with her Associate in Business Administration 2013 from the University of South Texas College. After this, she continued her bachelor's degree in Business Management in 2016 from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. In 2018, she decided to return to school and further her education, graduating with a Master of Industrial Science Management from the University of Texas at Tyler in 2020. She is the first generation in her two families to complete this level of education.

Today she lives in Dallas and works for a manufacturing company in a senior generalist role. She offers these words of advice, "It is never too late to start, and if you have a dream, never give up until you achieve it.

Armando Joab Sanchez- -Alumni Representative



Armando Sanchez is a Catch the Next Ascender Program Alumna from Austin Community College (ACC). As a student at ACC, he first began with an interest in becoming an automotive technician. A year later, he switched his interest to the government after meeting an individual who opened his eyes to a different world. With the additional support from two professors who taught state and federal government, Armando then went on to earn an opportunity to intern at the Texas House of Representatives. He continued his interest in government by participating in the Diplomats Club at ACC as the secretary, discussing international issues. Armando started the Ascender program in 2017 and later graduated with his

Associate of Arts in General Studies in December 2019.

In January 2020, he transferred to Texas State University at San Marcos, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, minoring in Communication Studies. He graduated in August 2021. During his undergrad journey, he developed skills that allowed him to adapt to different political settings, explain his concerns, and address current issues. The skills he developed throughout his time at Texas State have helped him advocate and research pertinent information. He has drawn upon these skills while being interviewed several times to discuss the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and other issues undocumented individuals face in Texas. Throughout these interviews, he was also allowed to present his concerns about the Supreme Court ruling on DACA, discuss the Texas House Bill 1486, and how it will impact undocumented students from being eligible for in-state tuition.

Armando, a first-generation DACAmented Ixtapan de la Sal Mexico student, is now pursuing a Master of Arts in Political Science at Texas State University as a Graduate Assistant. One of his fundamental goals is to continue to use his skills to advocate reform in the treatment of the Latino community and the immigration system. Despite his rough childhood, Armando is proud of where he is and acknowledges the support he receives. He exists for what the future has in store for him, doing his best to change the world while making sure his parents are proud of all of the sacrifices they have made for him, giving him the world, and reminding him to keep his head up no matter how cruel the world may be.



Dr. Cindy Yarely Marroquin-Garza serves as a College and Career Success Advisor II with Region One ESC at Grulla High School. She has nine years of higher education experience. She worked at Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi with the Scholarship Office as a student worker then transition to Administrative Assistant. She later moved to South Texas College in Rio Grande City, TX with the Ascenders Program and managed the first Ascender's Center as a Student Success Specialist. She continued her career to The University of Texas Rio Grande

Valley with the Engaged Scholarship & Learning Office as a Program Coordinator. She has two years of experience in public education and worked as a teacher and managed various campus leadership roles her first year for IDEA Public Schools. She recently obtained the Director of Communications with Catch The Next to share all the exciting news from all participating partners.



Aly A. Ceballos is 19 years old and close to finishing her Associates in Elementary Education at South Texas College on the Starr County Campus. She plans to transfer to the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley to finish her bachelor's in interdisciplinary studies. She is currently part of the Ascenders Club where she helps fundraise for future events. She's also a work-study student in College Connections for admissions at STC. She is currently part of the Student Leadership Academy, where she will be doing community hours and workshops. She is also an active member of the Student Government Association, where she offers ideas and helps students be heard. She is a hard-working daughter who wants to give the world to her parents and her two loving little brothers Her favorite hobbies are going to the gym and going for a walk to see the sunset every afternoon.



Izaac Alba is a 19-year-old Austin Community College freshman. He has a wide variety of interests such as music creation, production, art appreciation, dogs, and food. He plans to be a rapper, creating music that touches the hearts and souls of all people through delicious grooves and hypnotic rhyme schemes. He does his best every day, whether that be in one of his two jobs or in class. He gives his 101% in every task he is committed to. Izaac believes in pursuing happiness and that chasing dreams is what life's all about.

CTN Members News



Farah Guerrero CTN former Alumni and current CTN Board Member recently had a baby girl and became a family of 3. Mileva is currently 3 months and is the next Catch The Next baby! Farah, stated that Mileva, “is part of a new generation with new opportunities due to the huge effort we did to get an education as parents.”

Student Resources

The following are student professional development opportunities, including scholarships, internships, articles to read and student success opportunities.

If you would like to share an opportunity, please email at stacy.ybarra@catchthenext.org

Thank You,
Stacy Ybarra Evans
Catch The Next

External Student Professional Development Opportunities

Student Opportunities

Date	Activity	Activity Description
10/25/2023	Dream Scholarship	Now you have more time to work on your #TheDreamUS #Scholarship application! Visit http://thedream.us to get started!
10/25/2023	FAFSA	FAFSA update-Typically, the FAFSA opens on October 1 for students and families starting college the following year. But this year, the FAFSA is delayed until sometime in December 2023. The reason is complex, but has to do with “FAFSA simplification” and to how financial need is calculated
10/25/2023	HACU Scholarships	HACU Scholarships https://www.hacu.net/hacu/Scholarships.asp
10/25/2023	UT Austin Summer Research Programs	UT Austin Summer Research Programs https://ugs.utexas.edu/our/conduct/summer

Website Offers Best Scholarships for Latino Students

Scholarships are a great way to pay for college without the obligation to repay funds. Maximizing scholarship potential can be especially useful for Latino students, who on average received less in institutional grants than their white counterparts in 2016, according to a [statistical brief](#) from UnidosUS.

There are hundreds of organizations that recognize this financial gap and offer scholarships specifically for Latino college students with the aim of making a college education more accessible and affordable. Here’s where you can start your search and apply for a few of the best scholarships for Latino students:

<https://www.bankrate.com/loans/student-loans/scholarships-for-latino-students/>

Resources Available for Students and Families to Complete FAFSA

The White House Hispanic Prosperity Initiative has a [resources webpage](#) to help students and families complete their FAFSA form. The Department’s Federal Student Aid (FSA) office is urging students to file the FAFSA

form to help defray, and in some cases completely cover, the costs of their postsecondary education. FSA has made it easier than ever for students and families to access resources at StudentAid.gov and via the myStudentAid mobile application using a computer, tablet, or mobile phone.

Organization Offers Resources for Financial Literacy

Annuity.org believes when students learn financial literacy at an early age it helps them to make astute decisions about their personal finances, smart financial behavior leads to financially secure lives. Now, more than ever, is a great time for students to hone in on this skill while they are learning from home. Their site covers things like: Budgeting -Filling out a FAFSA request for college and financially planning for your future and more. Please take a look at student resource here: www.annuity.org/financial-literacy/stu+dents/

Nonprofit Provides Free Mental Health Support to Children and Teens

[Wonders & Worries](#) is a Texas-based nonprofit that provides free, professional mental health support to children and teens during a parent’s serious, physical illness. Parents dealing with a cancer diagnosis, TBI, stroke, heart condition, neurological condition, or other physical illnesses and traumatic injuries often don’t know how to talk about their diagnosis and its impact on the family.

Wonders & Worries’ free programs ensure children and teens can reach their full potential, despite a parent’s serious illness. They do this by leading children through an evidence-based and copyrighted Six-Session Illness Education and Coping Curriculum led by healthcare professionals.

Services are always free and offered in English and Spanish at [5 Texas locations](#) and virtually in the Greater Austin, Greater San Antonio, and Greater Houston areas. They also operate a national [helpline: 844-WE-WONDER \(1-844-939-6633\)](#) available Monday – Thursday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, where parents can receive a free consultation, from one of the child life specialists, on how to talk with and support kids impacted by adult illness. Additionally, they have several resources available for [professionals](#) and [parents](#) on their website.

Professional Opportunities

The following professional development opportunities highlight Ascender grant and funding opportunities, conference opportunities, and information for theory, research and practice. I encourage you to forward any information that would provide wonderful opportunities to the team or students by emailing me at stacy.ybarra@catchthenext.org.

Thank You,
Stacy Ybarra Evans
Catch The Next

External Professional Development Opportunities

Staff Opportunities

Date	Activity	Activity Description
10/25/2023	Conference Scholarship	NISOD Conference Scholarship -Opens in January 2024 - https://www.nisod.org/face-to-face/conference/faculty-scholarships/

10/25/2023

Conference Submission

Lilly Conference on Evidence Based Teaching and Learning

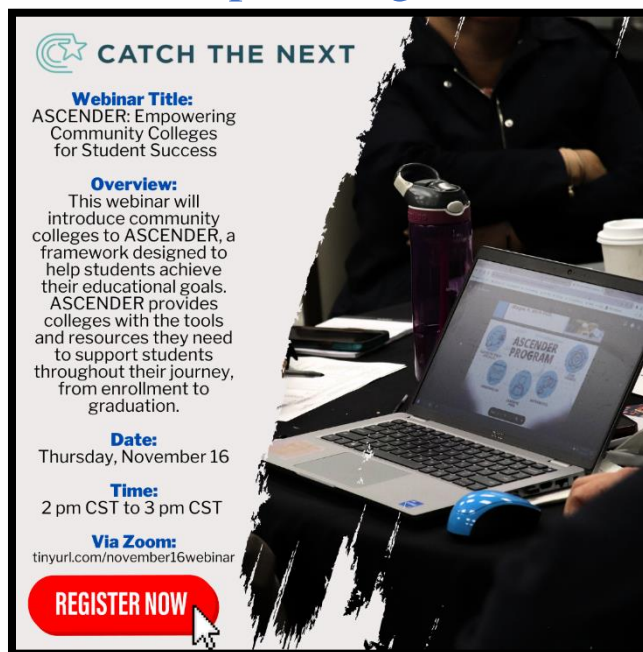
May 20 -24, 2024

<https://www.lillyconferences-tx.com/>

Helpful Information

- [FAFSA Resources](#)
- Cooke Foundation Scholarship Program: **Deadline - November 16 [Apply here](#)**
- Dell Scholars Program: **Deadline - December 1 [Apply Here](#)**
- White House Internship Program: **Deadline - November 10 [Apply Here](#)**
- [Scholarships For DACA Recipients & Undocumented Students](#)
- 2024 Preparate Conference Proposals - April 24–26, 2024 at Austin, Texas
[Submit a Proposal no later than October 23, 2023](#)
- Job Position: Immigration Support & Advocacy
Center **LinkedIn Position:** <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/3738611553>
- Congressional Internship Program **Experience:** Undergraduate Student & Recent Graduate
Application Deadline: **December 1, 2023 & March 1, 2024 [Apply Here](#)**
- Public Policy Fellowship Program **Experience:** College Graduate **Program Dates:** August 23, 2023 – May 24, 2024 **Deadline:** December 15, 2023 [Apply Here](#)
- Postgraduate Fellowship Program **Experience:** Masters or JD
Program Dates: **August 21, 2024 - May 23, 2025** Deadline: **December 15, 2023 [Apply Here](#)**
- Latino Hill Staff Academy **Deadline:** January 24, 2023 [Apply Here](#)

CTN Upcoming Events



CATCH THE NEXT

Webinar Title:
ASCENDER: Empowering Community Colleges for Student Success


Overview:
This webinar will introduce community colleges to ASCENDER, a framework designed to help students achieve their educational goals. ASCENDER provides colleges with the tools and resources they need to support students throughout their journey, from enrollment to graduation.

Date:
Thursday, November 16

Time:
2 pm CST to 3 pm CST

Via Zoom:
tinyurl.com/november16webinar




REGISTER NOW



Catch the Next Journal of Pedagogy & Creativity

Announces a reading with the poets in the upcoming issue: Jacinto Jesus Cardona, Gerardo Carrasco, Jonathan Fletcher, Alicia Z. Galvan, Suzanne Green, Carlos Loera, Laurence Musgrove, Rita Lopez Ortiz, Alex Z. Salinas, Hosts-Rafael Castillo, Fiction editor Fernando Esteban Flores, CTN poetry editor

Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Poetic Republic Coffee
2330 South Presa

Job Position: Immigration Support & Advocacy Center

IASC is a non-profit organization that provides high-quality and low-cost legal immigration services. At the moment, they focus on individuals and families with a clear path to citizenship. They also assist in processing other applications and renewals. They are located in New London CT but serve all southeastern Connecticut.

LinkedIn Position: <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/3738611553>

Free Learning Modules Available from Texas OnCourse Academy

The Academy has over 30 learning modules on endorsements, graduation plans, career pathways, entrance exams, college applications, military academies, financial aid, and more. All these free modules are available remotely, and you can review them at your own pace. The Academy is also certified to offer continuing professional education (CPE) credit. Counselors and advisers can earn up to 31 CPE credits by completing badges in the Texas OnCourse Academy.

Explore

NSF Offers Funding Opportunities to HSIs

The National Science Foundation is offering funding to HSIs for three projects:

- **Planning or Pilot Projects (PPP) track:** An eligible institution cannot have more than two active PPP awards. A new PPP proposal can be submitted by an institution with two active PPP awards if at least one of the awards has had its final report submitted before the submission deadline for HSI proposals. Institutions with an active HSI Track 1: Building Capacity award under the previous solicitations 18-524 and 19-540 are not eligible to submit PPP proposals or receive a PPP award until the prior HSI award's final report is submitted.
- **Implementation and Evaluation Projects (IEP) track:** An eligible institution cannot have more than two active IEP awards. A new IEP proposal can be submitted by an institution with two active IEP awards if at least one of the awards has had its final report submitted prior to the HSI proposal submission deadline. A collaborative award counts as an HSI IEP award for all institutions. For institutions with a current Track 1: Building Capacity award under the previous solicitations 18-524 and 19-540, each award is considered an IEP award for the purpose of calculating active awards for this track.
- **Institutional Transformation Projects (ITP) track:** One submission per institution is allowed. Previous ITP awardees are not eligible to submit a proposal in the ITP track.

For information go to: <https://beta.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/improving-undergraduate-stem-education-hispanic-serving-institutions-hsi>



Catch the Next, Inc. was founded in 2009 by John Siceloff who sought to identify and scale-up effective models for closing the opportunity gap for Latino students in the United States. His vision is what brought Catch the Next into being, and what continues to motivate us in the valuable work of empowering underrepresented students, in acknowledging that their stories matter and that they can write their future chapters.

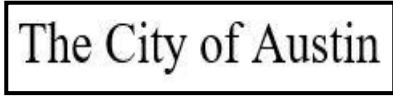
In support of his vision and our mission to empower faculty, staff, and institutions to increase the educational attainment of Latinos and other underserved communities in order to close higher education equity and opportunity gaps, we encourage you to make a commitment of support through a donation.

Donate here: <https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1217887>

Or mail your donation to

Catch the Next
18756 Stone Oak Pkwy, Ste. 200
San Antonio, TX 78258

Catch the Next Program Partners; Current and Former Sponsors



Catch the Next Colleges



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT
San Antonio College



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT
Palo Alto College



South Texas College, Rio Grande Valley

Mid Valley Campus, Weslaco
Pecan Campus, McAllen
Starr Campus, Rio Grande City

Alamo Colleges, San Antonio

Palo Alto College
San Antonio College

Austin Community College, Austin

Highland Campus
Riverside Campus
Hays Campus
South Campus
Northridge Campus
Round Rock Campus
Eastview Campus

Dallas College

Richland Campus, Richardson
Brookhaven Campus, Farmers Branch
Cedar Valley Campus, Lancaster
El Centro Campus, Downtown Dallas
Eastfield Campus, Mesquite
North Lake Campus, Irving
Mountain View Campus, Oak Cliff

About Our Newsletter

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Submissions are welcomed. Please send all information to:

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“The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Greater Texas Foundation, or any director, officer or employee thereof.”

Support CTN by donating to our organization, bringing CTN to your campus or joining us for training. For more information, go to <https://www.catchthenext.org/>