



NEWSLETTER

February
Volume 12, No. 6

Happy Valentine's Day from CTN



Catch The Next extends heartfelt Valentine's Day wishes to every member of the Ascender's community, including students, staff, faculty, and all individuals who contribute to its vibrant tapestry. On this day of love and affection, we take a moment to recognize the importance of each and every one of you in making Ascender's a nurturing and inclusive environment for growth and learning.

To the students, your dedication to your studies and your commitment to personal growth inspire us every day. Your passion for learning fuels the very essence of Ascender's mission, and we are grateful for the opportunity to support you on your educational journey. We hope that Valentine's Day was a reminder of the love you have for your studies, your ambitions, and your fellow peers.

To the staff, faculty, and administrators, your tireless efforts behind the scenes ensure that Ascender's operates smoothly and efficiently. Your unwavering dedication to the success and well-being of our students does not go unnoticed. Your guidance, mentorship, and support are invaluable, shaping the minds and futures of those you interact with. On Valentine's Day, we express our deepest gratitude for your hard work and commitment to excellence.

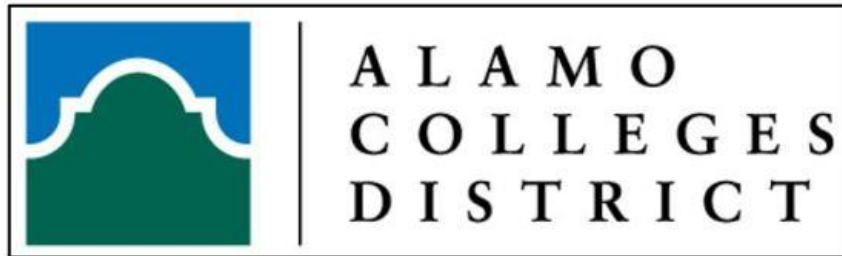
To all members of the Ascender's community, whether you're a mentor, a friend, or a supporter, your presence enriches the fabric of our community. Each interaction, each smile, and each act of kindness contributes to the culture of caring and camaraderie that defines Ascender's. As we celebrate Valentine's Day, let us remember to show appreciation for one another and continue to foster an environment of respect, understanding, and love.

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, let us take this opportunity to spread love and positivity throughout the Ascender's community. Whether through small gestures of kindness, words of encouragement, or simply taking the time to listen to one another, let us reaffirm our commitment to building a supportive and inclusive community where everyone feels valued and empowered.

From all of us at Catch The Next, we wish you a Happy Valentine's Day filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments with your loved ones. May this day serve as a reminder of the love and appreciation we have for each other and the profound impact we make on each other's lives. Thank you for being an integral part of the Ascender's family.

**Thank you to all the
CTN *Lead the Change* Sponsors
who make it possible for students to transform their lives.**

With your generous donations during our gala totaling \$8,225, CTN will be able to provide paid internships to our Ascender students.



Gold Sponsor

Alamo Colleges District (ACD) is the largest provider of higher education in South Texas. Its five independent colleges (including Palo Alto College and San Antonio College which offer the CTN Ascender program) provide two-year degrees that focus on preparing students to transfer to baccalaureate-granting institutions and workforce development programs that help build new careers and meet the needs of business; ten education and training centers that offer a wide range of education and training for the community and military; and three district support operations centers.



Silver Sponsor

Special thanks to Dr. Ruth Reinhart,
ACC Associate Vice Chancellor for
Student Support Services, who
sponsored the gala

Austin Community College is a nationally recognized college serving Central Texas as the primary gateway to higher education and technical training opportunities. Their mission is to provide open-door access to an affordable college education for students who want to earn a degree, learn a marketable skill, or advance their careers.

Individual Donors

- Norma Cantu
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- Yon Hui Bell
- Jonathan Bell
- Anna Alaniz
- Yvette Regalado
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Donations are still being accepted and are welcomed here: <https://catchthenext.networkforgood.com/even ts/47544-ascender-catching-dreams-tenth- anniversary-reception>

College News

ascender
CATCH THE NEXT



STC Ascender Students Sell Roses as Fundraiser

By: Aly Ceballos, CTN Intern

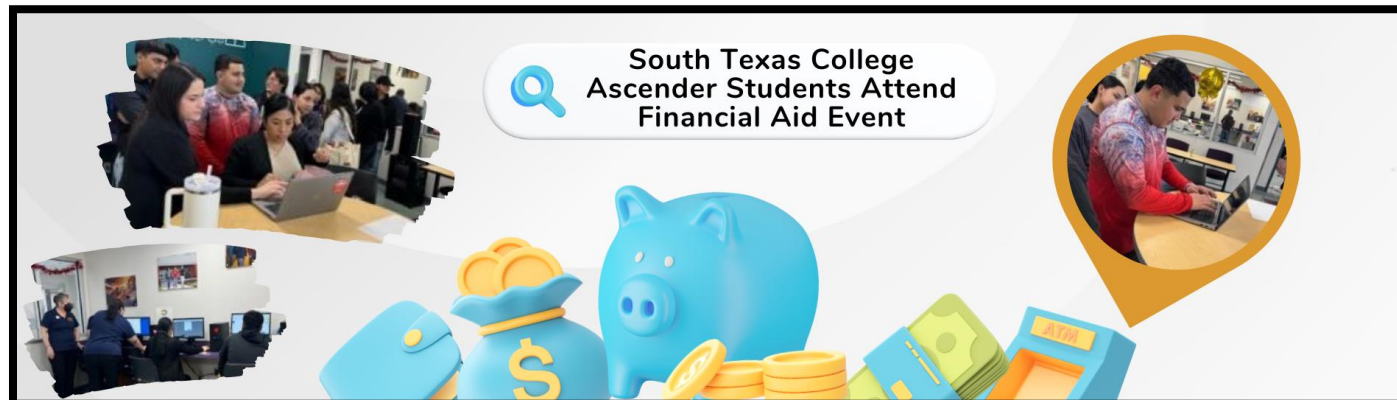


The South Texas College - Starr County Campus Ascenders Club created a fundraiser this Valentine's Day. Since Valentine's is all about giving to your loved ones, what better present than to give some roses? Students were able to say, "Hey there you're looking blooming beautiful today!" and give a flower to their special person.

The Ascender officers and students met in Dr. Anna Alaniz's office to organize the vases or solo flowers a day before Valentine's. Every office in STC was full of beautiful vases of flowers. Fifteen Ascender students participated in this fundraiser, which was enough to fundraise \$150. Each vase had a total of 3 roses for \$10 and a solo rose cost \$5. The money from this fundraiser will be go towards college trips, which allow Ascender students to explore other colleges.

STC Ascender Students Attend Financial Aid Event

By: Aly Ceballos, CTN Intern



South Texas College Ascender students from Dr. Anna Alaniz's INRW 0030 and ENGL 1301 attended a financial aid event the morning and afternoon of February 22, 2024. It was held in the financial aid office and admissions area at the South Texas College - Starr County Campus

This event, which was for "Financial Aid Week", which helped the students be able to do their financial aid application for the year 2024-2025. Many booths provided information about programs that STC has to offer. Dr. Alaniz took her students to ensure that they had their financial aid done.

The financial aid and admissions areas were filled with Dr. Alaniz's student.

STC STARR County Campus – Girls Discovering Math (Club Fair)



The Girls Discovering Math Club Fair is an excellent opportunity for students to explore the fascinating world of mathematics in a fun and interactive environment. Through various activities, demonstrations, and discussions, participants will uncover the beauty and relevance of math in our everyday lives.

This event aimed to cultivate curiosity, foster critical thinking skills, and encourage collaboration among young learners. Whether a student is a seasoned math enthusiast or just beginning their journey, there is something for

everyone to enjoy and learn from. Join the South Texas College – Girls Discovering Math Club by celebrating the joy of mathematics and the limitless possibilities it offers. Together, everyone can inspire the next generation of female mathematicians!

Girls Discovering Math 1st Club Meeting



The South Texas College - Starr County Campus – Girls Discovering Math initiative commenced its activities for the Spring 2024 semester with its inaugural meeting held in late January. This pivotal gathering marked the beginning of an enriching journey for the young participants, aimed at fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for mathematics among girls in the community.

Amidst an atmosphere charged with enthusiasm and anticipation, the attendees embarked on a voyage of exploration into the captivating realm of mathematics. Through engaging discussions, interactive activities, and collaborative problem-solving sessions, the participants were empowered to unravel the beauty and relevance of mathematical concepts in their everyday lives.

Led by dedicated mentors and facilitators, the Girls Discovering Math program provided a supportive platform for its members to cultivate their mathematical skills, build confidence, and nurture a passion for learning. By fostering a sense of camaraderie and empowerment, the initiative sought to inspire the next generation of female mathematicians and STEM leaders.

As the semester unfolds, the STC Starr County Campus – Girls Discovering Math initiative remains committed to its mission of empowering young girls through the transformative power of mathematics. With a myriad of exciting activities and educational opportunities on the horizon, the program endeavors to ignite a lifelong love for math and empower girls to excel in academic pursuits and beyond.

Girls Discovering Math 2nd Club Meeting



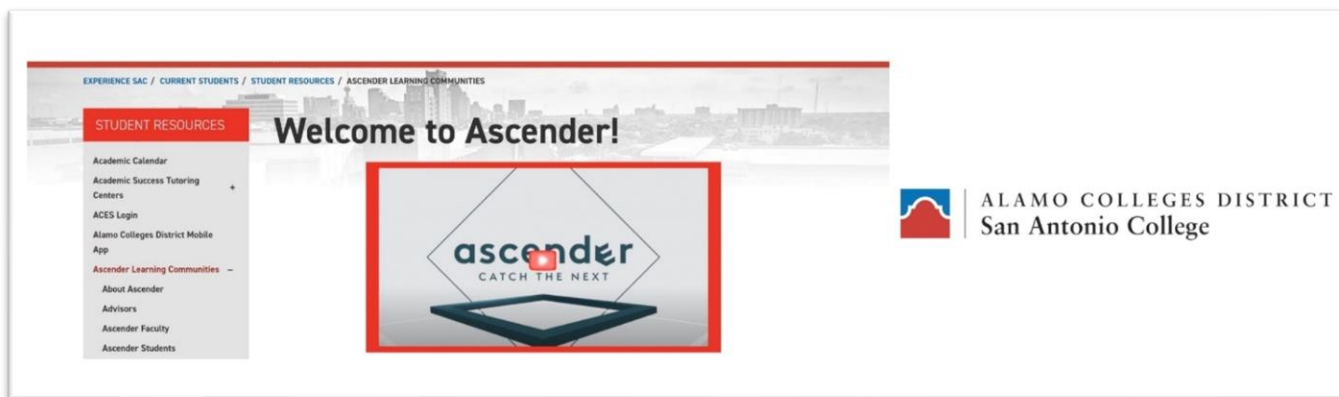
On February 21st, the STC Starr County Campus hosted the second meeting of the Girls Discovering Math Club for the Spring 2024 semester, marking another milestone in their journey of exploration and learning. The event brought together enthusiastic participants who joined hands to delve into the realms of mathematics while fostering a sense of camaraderie and empowerment.

Amidst an atmosphere of creativity and collaboration, attendees engaged in activities aimed at unraveling the beauty and significance of mathematics. They not only embraced the challenges posed by mathematical concepts but also seized the opportunity to adorn posters, symbolizing their dedication to a noble cause.

The vibrant energy and spirit of camaraderie infused throughout the gathering underscored the club's commitment to promoting inclusivity and empowerment among its members. By providing a platform for girls to explore and appreciate the wonders of mathematics, the club continues to inspire and nurture the next generation of problem solvers and innovators.

Heartfelt appreciation goes out to all who participated in the event, contributing their time, creativity, and passion to make it a resounding success. Their efforts not only enriched the experience for everyone involved but also exemplified the transformative power of education and community engagement.

As the Girls Discovering Math Club continues its journey, fueled by the collective enthusiasm and dedication of its members, it remains steadfast in its mission to cultivate a love for mathematics and empower young minds to reach for the stars. With each meeting, they reaffirm their commitment to creating a brighter future, one equation at a time.



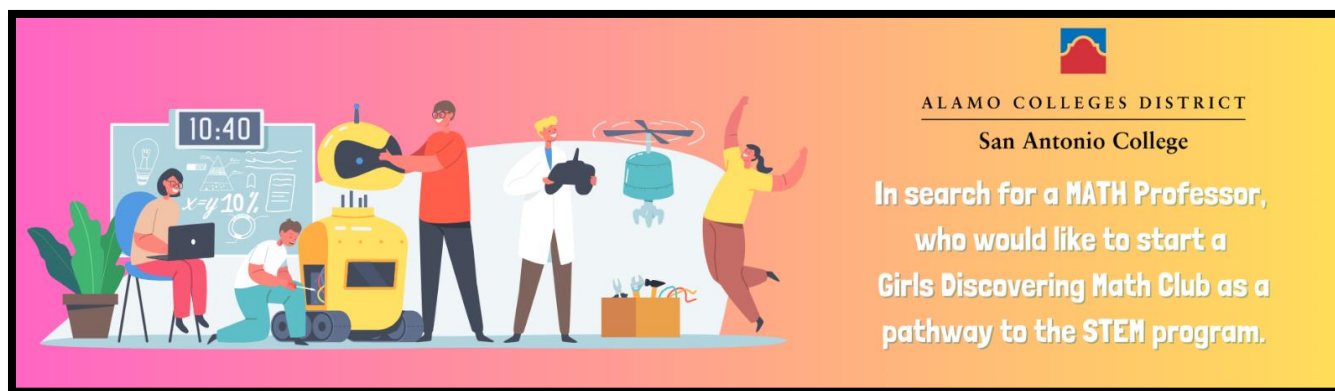
SAC Ascender Spring Noche de Familia



San Antonio College wants to invite you to participate in their Spring 2024 Noche de Familia, coming up on March 6 from 4:30 - 6:30 pm in the Fiesta Room in the Loftin Student Center. This is an event where students and their support system can come and hang out, meet faculty, play games and activities, and eat a good meal with the Ascender Familia.

If you are able to attend please RSYF at <https://forms.office.com/r/5yfaVb3EDs> . SAC does ask that if you bring family members or friends, that it is capped at 3 guests.

In Search for a Math Professor





Ascender



ACC 2024 Student and Mentor Skating



Rolling Through Mentorship with Style



At Austin Community College, a mentor and student duo recently embarked on a unique bonding experience at the local skating rink in Austin. Their adventure not only brought joy and excitement but also paved the way for meaningful connections and inspiring mentorship moments. As they laced up their skates, they embraced the opportunity to bond over shared interests, laughter, and the thrill of gliding across the rink. This dynamic duo exemplifies the power of mentorship to transcend traditional boundaries and foster genuine relationships built on trust, support, and mutual growth. Together, they demonstrate that mentorship is not just about guidance and advice but also about creating unforgettable memories and forging lifelong connections. So let's lace up our skates and join them on this journey of friendship, empowerment, and endless possibilities!

ACC 2024: Ready, Set, Ascender



Watch Today!

Tune in to the newest episode of Ready, Set, Ascender! for a comprehensive recap of the fall semester's highlights, insightful discussions on ESL & CE classes, a deep dive into ACC's Sustainable Farm initiatives, and a sneak peek into upcoming events like Adulthood 101 and Carnaval Brasileiro! The show promises a wealth of information and excitement for all viewers.

This episode boasts two captivating guests: Lavi Steffens, an ACC Business Administration Ascender Student hailing from Brazil, and Dr. Johanna Moya Fábregas, the Executive Director of Con Mi Madre, a local Austin-based organization dedicated to empowering mothers and daughters. Their perspectives promise to enrich the conversation and provide valuable insights into various topics.

Lavi Steffens brings a unique perspective as an international student from Brazil, offering insights into cultural diversity and the experiences of students navigating the educational landscape in a new country. His journey in the Business Administration program at ACC offers viewers a firsthand glimpse into the life of an Ascender student.

Dr. Johanna Moya Fábregas, as the Executive Director of Con Mi Madre, adds a vital dimension to the discussion, shedding light on the challenges faced by mothers and daughters in pursuing education and professional development. Her organization's work underscores the importance of community support and empowerment in educational pursuits.

With such distinguished guests and an array of engaging topics on the agenda, this episode of Ready, Set, Ascender! promises to be both informative and inspiring. Make sure not to miss out on the valuable insights and exciting updates by tuning in to the show.

ACC 2024 Sexucation



But first, a resounding applause echoes through the vibrant hall as the curtains draw open to unveil the 6th Annual SEXucation SEXsion stage. It's a momentous occasion, a convergence of minds and voices both in person and virtually, marking a celebration of knowledge, awareness, and empowerment. Amidst the palpable energy of the audience, a sense of gratitude permeates the air.

In the spotlight of appreciation stand two pivotal collaborators: @talkaboutit.cc and @acctrhtcenter, whose dedication and partnership have woven the fabric of this event. Their commitment to fostering open dialogue and spreading vital information on sexual health and wellness has been invaluable, shaping the essence of this gathering.

And then, there are the stars of the evening – the esteemed panelists – who have graced the stage with their expertise, insights, and unwavering dedication to the cause. Dr. Missi Patterson, with her wealth of knowledge and experience, brings forth a perspective that enlightens and educates. Casey Martinez, with her passion and advocacy, ignites flames of inspiration within the audience, urging them to break barriers and embrace change. And last but not least, Brittany Myers, whose empathy and understanding create a safe space for dialogue, enabling individuals to explore and understand their own journey towards sexual wellness.

Together, these luminaries have crafted an evening filled with enlightenment, empowerment, and empathy, transforming February 14th into a day not only of love but also of learning and growth. Their contributions resonate far beyond the confines of this event, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of all those who have had the privilege to be a part of it.

ACC 2024 Student and Mentor Health Science Open House



Mentorship took center stage at the recent ACC Health Sciences Open House, on February 24th captivating attendees with its promise of guidance and growth. The event, held this past weekend, saw eager participants gathering to explore the array of opportunities ACC offers through mentorship programs.

Amidst the bustling atmosphere, individuals from diverse backgrounds converged, all drawn by the allure of mentorship. Whether aspiring healthcare professionals seeking guidance in navigating their educational journey or seasoned practitioners eager to share their expertise, the event provided a platform for meaningful connections to flourish.

Enthusiastic voices resonated throughout the venue as attendees exchanged experiences and insights, highlighting the transformative power of mentorship in shaping careers and fostering personal development. From intimate discussions to interactive workshops, the Open House served as a catalyst for forging lasting mentor-mentee relationships.

As the event drew to a close, a palpable sense of anticipation lingered in the air, fueled by the collective determination to seize the opportunities afforded by ACC's mentorship initiatives. With each handshake and exchanged contact, attendees departed with a renewed sense of purpose, ready to embark on their mentorship journey and chart a course toward success.

ACC 2024 DACA Session



[REGISTER TODAY!](#)

March 2 Dive into the latest updates on DACA with American Gateways! In this session, representatives from American Gateways will talk about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), recent changes to the federal program, and issues impacting DREAMers.



Dallas College – Nacimiento Performance

By Laura Flores, Dallas College Senior Manager, Academic Transfer Programs



On Saturday, February 3, 2024, Ballet Nepantla visited the Latino Cultural Center of the City of Dallas to perform *Nacimiento*. The Ascender program at Dallas College assisted with providing refreshments, as well as providing a warm welcome to those in attendance.

Nacimiento tells the story of the birth of the mestizaje and the emergence of Christmas traditions in Mexico. [Ballet Nepantla](#), a professional concert dance company based in New York City, is led by award choreographers Andrea Guajardo, a native of South Texas, and Martin Rodriguez, a native of Guadalajara, Mexico. By fusing classical and contemporary ballet with Mexican folklórico, Ballet Nepantla tells stories of Mexico and its people.



Those in attendance were invited to stay for a special Q & A session to learn more about the dance company and the performance, as well as the Ascender program. Guests shared how impressed they were with this performance and their gratitude for a night filled with passion, story-telling and a renewed spirit in celebration of Mexican culture.

Individuals highlighted are: Dr. Francisco Guajardo - Serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Museum of South Texas History in Edinburg, Texas. Dr. Guajardo presented Ascender with the opportunity to collaborate. Lupe Robles – Serves as a Career & Transfer Skill Specialist and Ascender Campus Liaison for the Mountain View campus at Dallas College. Lupe goes above and beyond for our students and this event was no different – she made sure guests were well attended to and connected with some students in attendance.





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 News



Start 12 - 4 PM
Austin Community College

There will be two sessions running at the same time in hyflex-equipped rooms so faculty can join in person, online and streaming, or later as a recording.



Congratulations!
David Rice from
Austin Community College
for being selected to present!

[REGISTER FOR CONFERENCE](#)

Congratulations to David Rice from Austin Community College on the exciting achievement of having his proposal selected for the Composition and Literary Studies Curriculum Conference of Austin Community College in 2024! David's innovative use of flash fiction with Ascender students and dual credit students this past semester showcases a commitment to engaging and dynamic teaching methods. His proposal's selection is a testament to

his dedication to advancing the field of composition and literary studies, and we look forward to the insights and creativity he will bring to the conference. This recognition reflects not only David's expertise but also his impact on students, making education an inspiring journey for all.

Austin Community College: Meet The Clinicians **(South Region Mental Health Counselors)**



Name: Andrew Silver
Title: Mental Health Counselor
Pronouns: he/his
License: Licensed Professional Counselor – Supervisor, Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor
Education: Master of Arts in Professional Counseling, Texas State University
Approach to Counseling: Using heart centered mindfulness, generative states of awareness, and cognitive therapy, Andrew works collaboratively with individuals to develop a compassionate relationship with their own experience. This helps guide people on a journey of self-discovery and acceptance, alleviates suffering, and can heal relational disconnects. He works with people who are dealing with a wide range of issues including: relationship problems, depression/anxiety, addictions, recovery, trauma, panic attacks, obsessive thoughts, boundary issues, compulsive behaviors, and mood instability.



Name: Sandra Elizondo
Title: Mental Health Counselor
Pronouns: she/her/hers
License: Licensed Professional Counselor
Education: Masters of Arts in Counseling (St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Tx.)
Approach to Counseling: Sandra believes in a client-centered approach in individual and group counseling with students. She also uses cognitive behavior therapy to help students in the therapy sessions. Sandra also works at helping students explore mindfulness and to use that in helping them relax and use grounding techniques to help regulate emotions. She works on establishing a safe environment by being culturally sensitive and open to different perspectives so that individuals feel they have permission to speak about difficult issues.



Name: Ashley Chowdhury
Title: Mental Health Counselor
Pronouns: she/her/hers
License: Licensed Professional Counselor
Education: Master of Arts in Counseling, Dallas Theological Seminary
Approach to Counseling: Ashley's aim is to create a safe environment where students are able to learn tools to help achieve their goals. Ashley's approach is rooted in the integration of mindfulness, self-compassion practices, developing healthy coping skills.

[Learn More About ACC Clinicians](#)



As February unfolds, it presents an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate Black History Month. This annual observance serves as a poignant reminder of the rich heritage, remarkable achievements, and enduring contributions of African Americans throughout history.

During Black History Month, individuals and organizations alike come together to honor the legacies of trailblazers who have shaped our world in profound ways. From civil rights activists who courageously fought against injustice to artists, scientists, educators, and leaders who have left an indelible mark on society, the impact of African Americans transcends generations and inspires us all.

Throughout this month and beyond, it is essential to engage in meaningful conversations, educational initiatives, and cultural events that amplify the voices and experiences of African Americans. By recognizing the struggles, triumphs, and resilience of black communities, we not only pay homage to the past but also commit ourselves to building a more inclusive and equitable future.

As we commemorate Black History Month, let us celebrate the diversity, strength, and resilience of African American heritage. Let us honor the achievements of those who have paved the way for progress and recommit ourselves to the ongoing work of advancing equality, justice, and opportunity for all.

Thank you for joining in the celebration of Black History Month and for your commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in our communities and beyond.



There will be *no webinar in March* since we have Spring Break and the CTN Spring Seminar. We will pick back on **April 18 from 3-4pm CST** with **Dr. Stacy Ybarra** discussing artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom.

The past webinars (including January and February's) are all available on CTN's YouTube Channel. There is a playlist of videos for the 2023-2024 Professional Development Webinar speakers.

If you are interested or have suggestions for webinar speakers (or would like to present on a topic), please email Dr. Erin Doran at erin.doran@catchthenext.org. We are booking the speakers from June 2024 through the next academic year.

Past Webinar's Videos

LIVE STREAMING

CATCH THE NEXT

CHARLAS

Real-Talk - Informal Student Conversations
3 pm - 4 pm all dates below

21 FEB

Healthy Minds and Well-Being: Invest in Your Mental Health

Topic:
Community College Focus: Acknowledging the need for mental health education, wellbeing and preventative measures for community college students.

College Student Mental Health Crisis

- Prevalence and severity of mental health issues has increased, including suicidal ideation (Lipson et al., 2019)
- Persistence and academic performance were found to be hindered in college students distressed by psychological and psychosocial issues (Duffy et al., 2020; Kivlighan et al., 2021)
- Utilization of college mental health counseling services has increased (Lipson et al., 2019)
- Over 61% of College Students who seek out mental health services disclosed receiving prior mental health treatment [Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCCMH), 2024]
- Mental health services can directly support college students academic success and persistence (Aljohani, 2016; Kivlighan et al., 2021)

Empowering Community College Students: Mental Health 101 Event Recap **Submitted By Stacy Ybarra**

In today's fast-paced world, juggling academic responsibilities, work commitments, and personal life can take a toll on one's mental health. Recognizing the importance of mental well-being among community college students, a thought-provoking and insightful event titled "Mental Health 101" was organized on February 21, 2024. Hosted by Catch the Next, this event aimed to shed light on the significance of mental health and self-care strategies tailored specifically for community college students.

The event kicked off with an engaging presentation led by esteemed speakers, including Rosa Rodriguez-Alvarez and other mental health experts. Attendees were welcomed into a supportive and inclusive environment where

they could openly discuss their mental health concerns and learn practical tips for maintaining emotional well-being.

Throughout the presentation, attendees were encouraged to share their personal stories and experiences, fostering a sense of solidarity and understanding among peers. The speakers emphasized the importance of destigmatizing mental health issues and seeking support when needed. From managing stress and anxiety to practicing self-care routines, the event covered a wide range of topics essential for nurturing mental wellness.

One of the highlights of the event was the interactive Q&A session, where attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and seek advice from the speakers. The session facilitated meaningful discussions and provided attendees with valuable insights into coping mechanisms and resources available for mental health support.

Moreover, the event served as a catalyst for raising awareness about mental health within the community college setting. By addressing common challenges and offering practical solutions, the Mental Health 101 event empowered students to prioritize their well-being and seek help proactively.

In conclusion, the Mental Health 101 event was a resounding success, thanks to the dedication and expertise of the speakers and organizers. By providing a platform for open dialogue and education, the event contributed to creating a more supportive and mentally healthy environment for community college students.

As we continue our journey towards promoting mental wellness, let us remember the importance of self-care, compassion, and reaching out for support when needed. Together, we can foster a culture of mental health awareness and resilience within our community college campuses.

For more information on upcoming events and resources related to mental health, please contact Dr. Stacy Ybarra at stacy.ybarra@catchthenext.org.



On behalf of Catch The Next, we extend our warmest congratulations to Dr. Stacy Evans for your outstanding accomplishments! Your selection as a speaker for the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program and the acceptance of your manuscript by the Scientific Committee for the 8th International Conference on Advanced Research in Education, Teaching, and Learning are truly remarkable milestones.

Your dedication to scholarship and your contributions to the field of education are inspiring. We commend your hard work, perseverance, and commitment to excellence, which have undoubtedly led to these well-deserved achievements.

As you prepare to share your insights and expertise with others through the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program and at the international conference, we have no doubt that you will continue to make significant impacts in your field and beyond.

Once again, congratulations on these wonderful successes! We look forward to hearing about your future endeavors and continuing to celebrate your accomplishments.



CATCH THE NEXT

TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING INSTITUTESM

February 23, 2024 - 9:00am to 3:00pm

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who made our Transformative Teaching Track online professional development session a resounding success! Your active participation and insightful contributions truly made the event memorable.

A special thank you goes to our esteemed presenters: Dr. Maria Martha Chavez, Dr. Sonya Armstrong, Dr. Emily Suh, Yvette Regalado, and Allegra Villareal. Their expertise, passion, and dedication shone through as they shared invaluable insights, practical strategies, and engaged us in thought-provoking discussions. The knowledge and inspiration they imparted will undoubtedly have a profound impact on our work with Ascender students and our ongoing pedagogical growth.

We are immensely grateful for the thoughtful contributions and reflections from both our participants and presenters. Your engagement enriched the dialogue, fostering a dynamic learning environment where ideas flourished and connections were forged.

As we reflect on the success of this session, we are filled with excitement for the journey ahead. The commitment to community learning demonstrated by each of you is truly inspiring, and we are eager to continue this journey together. Your dedication to professional growth and student success fuels our collective mission, and we look forward to further collaboration and learning opportunities in the future.

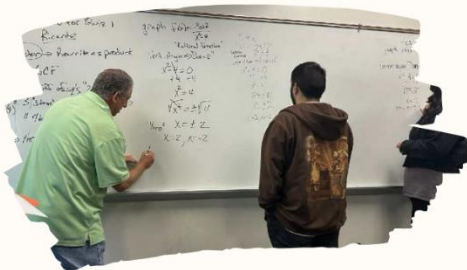
Once again, thank you for your unwavering support and participation. Together, we will continue to elevate and transform education for the betterment of all.



Site Visits



On behalf of Catch The Next, we want to extend our deepest gratitude for the extraordinary support and assistance provided during our recent college site visits to San Antonio College, Palo Alto College, and Dallas College from February 26-29, 2024. Your dedication and commitment made the experience truly remarkable.



Ricardo Pina, Math Instructor working with students.



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT

San Antonio College



Instructor PSYC 2301, Claudia Calvario discusses possible research topics with her student. Students paired to discuss their research articles.

The professionalism and expertise demonstrated by the Catch The Next team were exemplary. From the meticulous planning to the seamless execution, every aspect of the visit was handled with precision and care. Your guidance and insights not only facilitated the logistics but also enriched the overall learning experience for all participants.



AUSTIN
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
DISTRICT



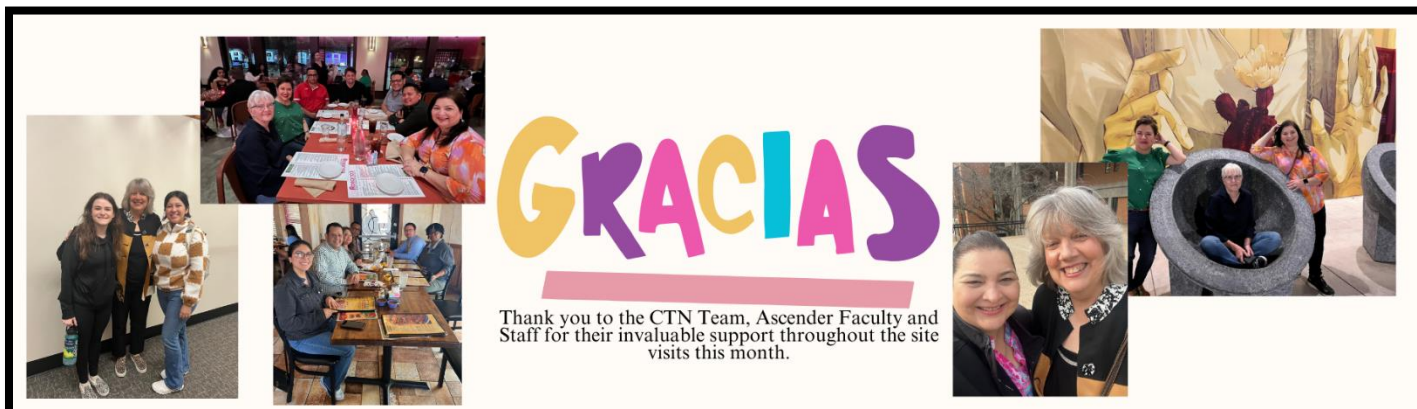
Additionally, we are profoundly grateful to the Ascender faculty and staff for their invaluable contributions throughout the visits. Their warmth, hospitality, and willingness to share their knowledge were instrumental in creating a welcoming environment for our group. Their passion for education and commitment to student success were evident in every interaction, leaving a lasting impression on all of us.



We recognize the tremendous effort and dedication it takes to coordinate such enriching experiences, and we want to express our sincere appreciation for your hard work and dedication. Your collaborative spirit and unwavering support are truly commendable and deeply appreciated.



Thank you once again for your outstanding efforts. We look forward to continuing our partnership and working together to empower students and foster academic excellence.



Thank you to the CTN Team, Ascender Faculty and Staff for their invaluable support throughout the site visits this month.

CTN UPCOMING EVENTS


CATCH THE NEXT
CONNECT AND CHAT
 FOSTERING BELONGING IN CTN

Register Now


OVERVIEW

Ascender Connect and Chat is a monthly virtual event series organized by Catch the Next (CTN) to promote a sense of belonging among Ascender Cohort Members and to address any problems of practice they may face.

These virtual office hours are designed to provide support to Ascender Cohort Members, both present and past. Ascender Connect and Chat is an online means to address real-time questions and concerns related to program logistics, curriculum, course materials, and any other issues that stakeholders may have regarding the implementation of the program on their campus. The sessions offer one-to-one/group interactions between Ascender Cohort Members and the CTN team, particularly those involved in the professional development component of the program.

3/6, 3 PM - 4 PM CST


REGISTER TODAY


LIVE STREAMING

Overview:
 Catch the Next, Inc. understands the transformative power of dialogue and the significance of student engagement in shaping educational experiences. To enhance this connection, the organization has introduced "Charlas," a student conversation series aimed at fostering meaningful discussions and promoting academic success. **These sessions serve as a platform for students to share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations, creating a supportive community that empowers individuals on their educational journey.**


CATCH THE NEXT
CHARLAS
 Real-Talk - Informal Student Conversations
 3 pm - 4 pm all dates below

21 FEB
Mental Health 101
 This presentation will delve into the importance of mental health and self-care as a community college student. Practical tips and advice for staying mentally well will be shared.

26 MAR
Roberts Rules of Order and Ascender Student Clubs
 Attend this session to see how you can create an Ascender club on campus and how to abide by Roberts Rules of Order as a student leader.

4 APR
Importance of Networking and Mentoring
 This presentation delves into the transformative impact of networking and mentoring within the context of community college. Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities that community college students face.

2 MAY
Transfer 101
 Geared towards navigating the process of transferring, this presentation, scheduled for May, aims to provide valuable insights and guidance for students. Whether moving between institutions or programs, Transfer 101 seeks to facilitate a smoother transition for students.

UPCOMING STUDENT CHARLAS

March 26, 2024: Roberts Rules of Order and Ascender Student Clubs

Attend this session to see how you can create an Ascender club on campus and how to abide by Roberts Rules of Order as a student leader.

[REGISTER TODAY: March 26](#)

April 4, 2024: Importance of Networking and Mentoring

This presentation delves into the transformative impact of networking and mentoring within the context of community college. Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities that community college students face.

[REGISTER TODAY: April 4](#)

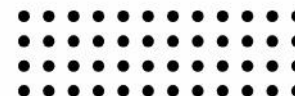
May 2, 2024: Transfer 101

Geared towards navigating the process of transferring, this presentation aims to provide valuable insights and guidance for students. Whether moving between institutions or programs, Transfer 101 seeks to facilitate a smoother transition for students.

[REGISTER TODAY: May 2](#)

Spring 2024 Seminar NOW

ascender
CATCH THE NEXT



SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE
PECAN CAMPUS

Spring Seminar 2024

Bringing together scholar mentors, educators, advisors, counselors, and trainers from across the state to discuss progress and challenges in the program and share classroom best practice.



✓ This Event Will Be Held On:



March
21-22, 2024



Time
8:00 AM-
6:00 PM

REGISTER NOW

Hotel Details



Hotel
Hotel: Cambria Hotel McAllen
701 South Ware Rd.
McAllen, TX 78501

Amenities:

- On-Site Restaurant
- Free Airport Shuttle to McAllen International Airport
- Shuttle for 5-mile radius

REGISTER TODAY

The ASCENDER Spring Seminar brings together scholar mentors, educators, advisors, counselors, and trainers from across the state to discuss progress and challenges in the program and share classroom best practices. The third and final seminar for cohort 2024, the series focuses on components of the ASCENDER Framework for Student and Faculty Advancement. The seminar will focus on the retention of students for the upcoming fall term

and the recruitment of new first-year students for the next academic year while also addressing the needs of various disciplines through breakout sessions. Additionally, we will be incorporating guidance and adaptations for technology in the delivery/implementation of our Ascender framework.

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
2/26/2024	Opportunity	<u>Communities Foundations of Texas</u> Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) is committed to increasing postsecondary access and success. They manage more than 60 scholarship funds that support deserving students in North Texas and beyond. By submitting the universal application linked below, students will be considered for multiple scholarship opportunities. The first deadline is March 1st. Apply here.
2/26/2024	Opportunity	<u>College Prep Scholars Program (For Juniors)</u> Applying to college can seem daunting, and the prospect of paying for it can seem even more overwhelming. But it doesn't have to be. The College

		<p>Prep Scholars Program equips high-achieving high school juniors from low-income backgrounds with the knowledge, confidence, and resources to apply to top colleges.</p> <p>The first deadline is March 20th.</p> <p>Apply here.</p>
2/26/2024	Opportunity	<p>The SchoolHouse Connection Youth Leadership and Scholarship Program</p> <p>This program is one of the nation's only national scholarship programs specifically serving youth that have experienced homelessness. The goal of the program is to provide financial assistance and staff and peer support to ensure that you are successful in getting to and through higher education and into the workforce.</p> <p>Apply here.</p>

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 our 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 our 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 our 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

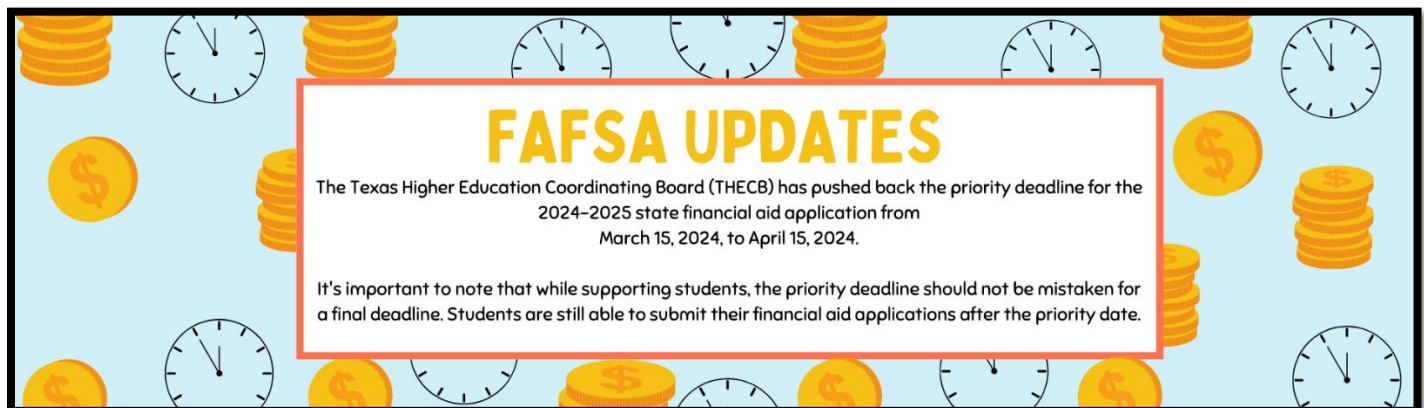
Date	Activity	Activity Description
2/26/2024	Webinars	The National Center for Teaching and Learning (NCTL): Offers free webinars on a variety of topics, including inclusive teaching practices, assessment

		<p>strategies, and online teaching tools.</p> <p>Hosts a library of resources on teaching and learning, including toolkits, case studies, and teaching guides.</p> <p>https://www.ed.gov/</p>
2/26/2024	Grants	<p>The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH):</p> <p>Offers grants and fellowships to support faculty development in the humanities, including opportunities to participate in summer institutes and workshops.</p> <p>Provides online resources such as lesson plans, curriculum guides, and digital collections relevant to various humanities disciplines.</p> <p>https://www.neh.gov/</p>
2/26/2024	Article	<p><u>Education and AI Expert David E. Goldberg on How Five Shifts Can Help Repair Higher Ed</u></p>

Helpful Resources

- **FAFSA Resources**
- **FSA ID New Details**
- **Quick Start Guide for Financial Aid Application Changes**
- **Texas OnCourse Monthly Professional Learning Series**
- **U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights Releases New Resources on Students with Disabilities**
- Today the U.S. Department of Education released a new resource – **a toolkit for the promotion of voter participation for students.**
- Article: **Transfers and Progress**
- **Texas Workforce Commission**
- My Texas Future - **Resources to plan career and education**
- Texas Direct - **Transfer Degree Pathways**
- **ImmSchools Inclusivity Poster**
- **NCAN FAFSA Tracker**

- [2024-25 FAFSA Issue Alerts](#)
- [Texas Public University Guaranteed Tuition Program Directory](#)
- [Get Schooled's Scholarship Finder](#)
- [Texas OnCourse: TASFA Resource Sheet](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection 24-25 FAFSA: Helping Homeless and Foster Youth](#)
- [uAspire FSA ID Recovery Guide](#)
- [Colleges with New Enrollment Deadlines Spreadsheet](#)
- Leading Safe, Inclusive, and Nondiscriminatory Learning Environments During the War in the Middle East: Colleges and Universities [Watch now on YouTube](#)
- Seeking Citizenship through a Fellowship Program [Apply Here](#)
- [Scholarships For DACA Recipients & Undocumented Students](#)
- Congressional Internship Program **Application Deadline:** March 1, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- Pen America Free Expression Essay Competition **Deadline:** March 8, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- NISOD's Student Essay Contest **Deadline:** March 8, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- NISOD's Student Graphic Design Contest **Deadline:** March 8, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- NISOD Excellence Awards **Deadline:** March 8, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- HACU 38th Annual Conference **Deadline:** March 8, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- Generating Powerful College & Career Advising Content **Deadline:** March 27, 2024 [Register Here](#)
- HACU Scholarship Program **Deadline:** March 31, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- NISOD's [Super Early-Bird Conference](#) **Deadline:** April 5, 2024 [Register Here](#)
- NCAN Spring Institute 2024: Pursuing Effective Advising for Every **Conference Dates:** April 15-19, 2024 [Register Here](#)
- 2024 NISOD International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence at Austin, TX on May 25-28, 2024 [Register Here](#)



2024-2025 ONLINE TASFA IS OPEN!

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board announces the launch of the 2024-2025 online Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA). The application can be found by visiting the TASFA landing page, housed on the THECB's main website. For questions, contact Financial Aid Services at 888-311-8881.



[TASFA Landing Page](#)



U.S. Department of Education @educationgov

Learn more about the SAVE Plan & how your federal student loan payment could be as low as \$0 a month: [StudentAid.gov/save](#)

#SAVEOnStudentDebt

YOUR FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN PAYMENT COULD BE AS LOW AS \$0/MONTH with the new SAVE repayment plan.

Apply at [StudentAid.gov/save](#)

SAVE studentaid An official campaign from the U.S. Department of Education and non-profit partners.




FAQ: Undocumented Students Pursing Medical School and Post-Bacc Programs 01
*Students
January 11, 2024, at 11 AM PST
[bit.ly/PHD_FAQ](#)

Creating Financial Aid Support for Undocumented Students in Dentistry 02
*Advisors, Educators, and Administrators
February 13, 2024, at 1 PM PST
[bit.ly/PHD_FADS](#)

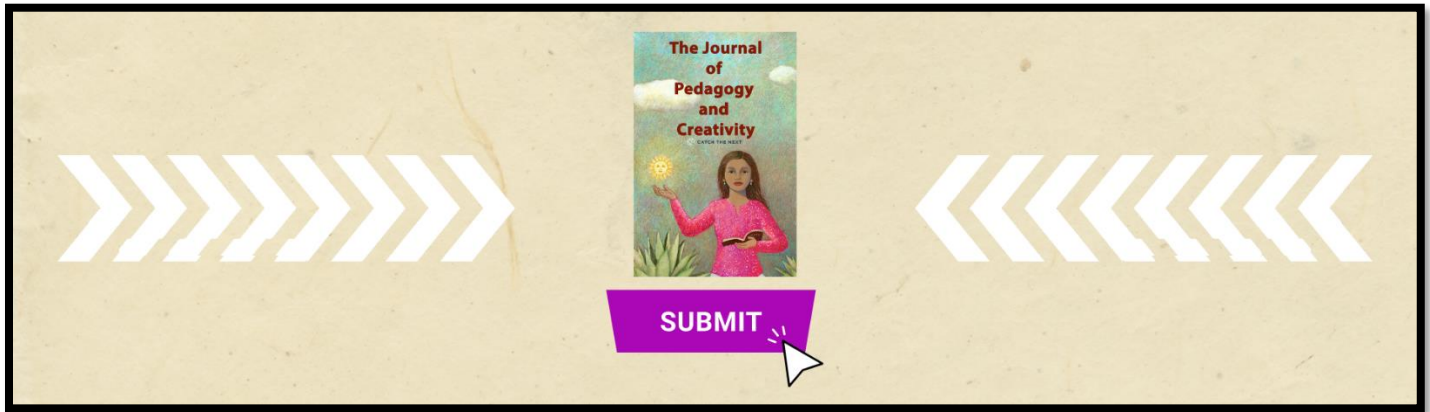
Including Undocumented Students in DEI Efforts 03
*Advisors, Educators, and Administrators
February 26, 2024, at 12 PM PST
[bit.ly/PHD_DEI](#)

Responsible Advising: Being an Ally to Undocumented Students 04
*Advisors and Educators
March 18, 2024, at 12 PM PST
[bit.ly/PHD_Advisors](#)

Building a Task Force at Health Professional Programs 05
*Advisors, Educators, and Administrators
April 11, 2024 at 12 PM PST
[bit.ly/PHD_TaskForce](#)

   @PHDPEAMERS | [phdreamers.org](#)

Journal of Pedagogy and Creativity



We are eager to share our latest journal with you. Please click the following link to explore the content and gain valuable insights: <https://catchthenext.wpengine.com/journal-of-pedagogy-and-creativity/>. Thank you for your interest.

For the next issue of *The Journal of Ideas and Pedagogy*, we invite submissions from our campus partners who want to share their pedagogical knowledge, lived experiences, and build community. As an organization, Catch the Next has steadfastly believed that our community is a treasure trove of knowledge, innovation, and reflective practice. This journal was created as a space to share best practices, innovative teaching strategies, and ideas for supporting the students we serve. As such, we are interested in pieces that consider the following questions:

- What classroom-level reforms has my college enacted in the last 5 years? How have I responded to them?
-
- What reforms have changed the delivery format of my classes (e.g., combining or condensing course sequences, reducing the number of course offerings, moving content into labs or online modules)?
- What professional development was I provided or did I participate in to adapt to changing policy?
- What has been successful for me in adapting to change? On the flip side, what has not worked?
- Who are my students and how have their needs changed in the last 5 years? How am I responding to those changes?

Pieces that consider other questions are welcome as well.

When possible, we encourage collaborations in the writing process. Faculty members may consult with their Institutional Research and Effectiveness partners to provide anonymized data to provide some deeper context about the effectiveness of a policy. For faculty who are working with a learning community or paired course set-up, we invite both faculty to present their perspectives. We also invite college teams (e.g., departments, college teams involved in implementing the Ascender model, and so forth).

We also welcome doctoral students and scholars who are interested in research on the community college sector and student success initiatives in Texas as they relate to gateway courses (e.g., developmental education, Freshman Composition, Learning Frameworks, and College Algebra). **Mentoring in the Writing Process is Available!** For first-time authors, writing for publication can be a daunting experience. This experience is meant to be positive and developmental. Please know that this issue's editor, Dr. Erin Doran, is committed to working with you to craft a piece that is of publishable quality.

[Additional Information](#)

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 Sicheloff 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.

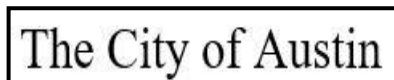
In support of his vision and our mission to empower faculty, staff, and institutions to increase the educational attainment of Latinos and other underserved communities in order to close higher education equity and opportunity gaps, we encourage you to make a commitment of support through a donation.

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



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Alamo Colleges, San Antonio

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San Antonio College

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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

A publication by Catch the Next Inc., for its Ascender Scholars

Submissions are welcomed. Please send all information to:

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Dr. Cindy Marroquin-Garza Director of Communications: cindy.marroquin@catchthenext.org



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