

# NCHP

NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR  
HIDDEN STUDENT POPULATIONS



2024 National Conference for Hidden Student Populations

The University of Texas—San Antonio

February 28 - March 1, 2024

San Antonio, TX

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**Conference site location:** UTSA, 501 W. Cesar Chavez Blvd., San Antonio, TX 78207

UTSA Conference Center, Durango Building, Rooms La Villita, A, & C

**Conference website:** [nchp.okstate.edu](http://nchp.okstate.edu)

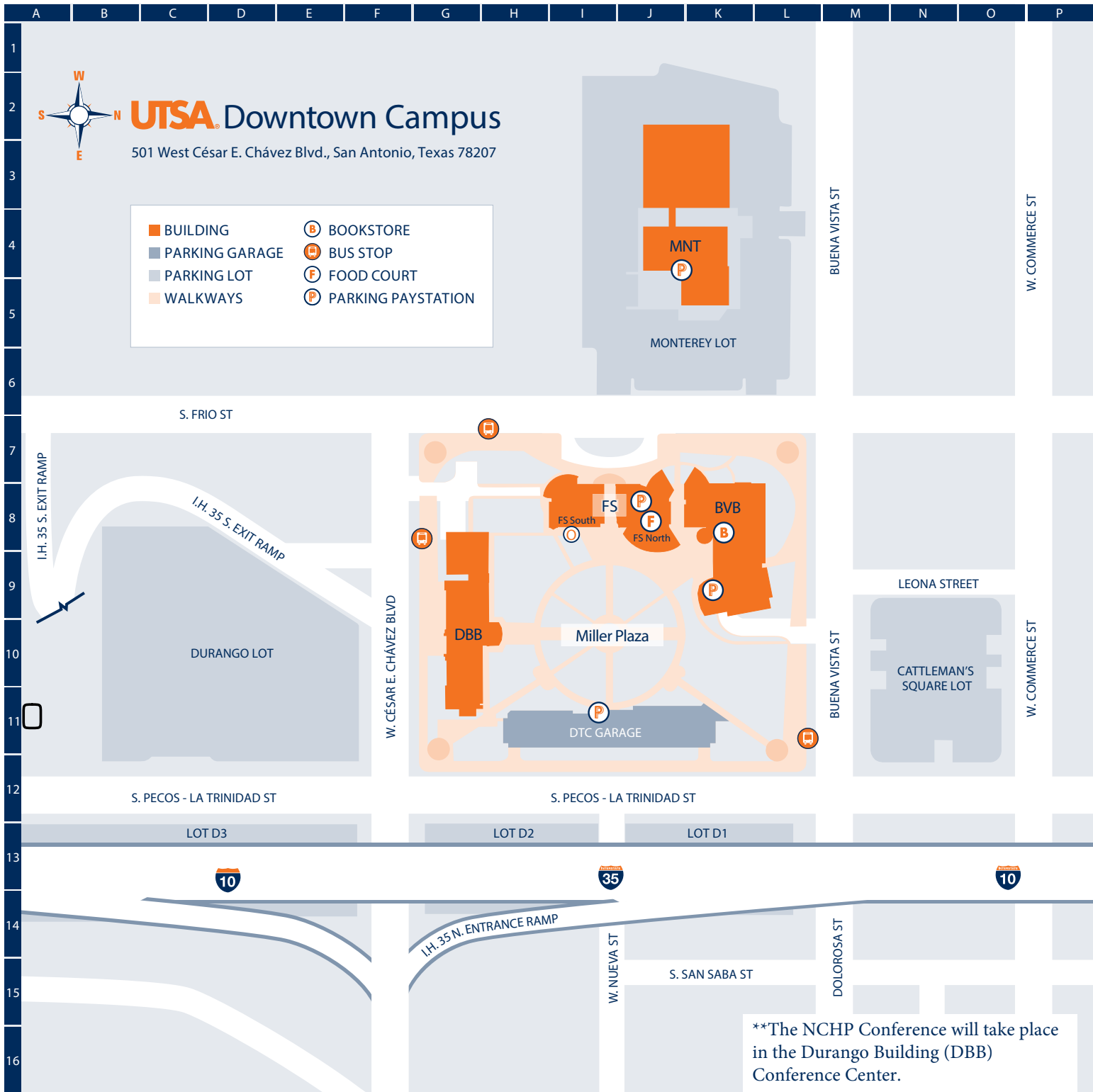
We will be providing live support during the conference.

For questions [nchp@okstate.edu](mailto:nchp@okstate.edu)

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**UTSA Downtown Campus**  
 501 West César E. Chávez Blvd., San Antonio, Texas 78207

- BUILDING
- PARKING GARAGE
- PARKING LOT
- WALKWAYS
- B BOOKSTORE
- BUS BUS STOP
- F FOOD COURT
- P PARKING PAYSTATION

**KEY**

BVB	Buena Vista Street Building	K8
DBB	Durango Building	G9
FS	Frio Street Building	I8
	NORTH WING	
	SOUTH WING	

**\*\*The NCHP Conference will take place in the Durango Building (DBB) Conference Center.**

# UTSA Conference Center Durango Building

## Legend

- Conference Venue
- Restrooms
- Welcome Desk



## 2024 NCHP Agenda

Day 1. February 28, 2024

*In Person / Durango Building / Room La Villita*

*Time Zone: CST/CSD*



## 2024 NCHP Agenda

Day 2. February 29, 2024

Presentations

*In Person / Durango Building / Room La Villita*

*Time Zone: CST/CSD*



*Hybrid (in-person & online) / Durango Building / Rooms La Villita & A*

*Time Zone: CST/CSD*





# NCHIP

NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR  
HIDDEN STUDENT POPULATIONS

***In Person / Durango Building / Room La Villita***

***Time Zone: CST/CSD***

4.00 pm – 5.00 pm

SESSION 5 COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION

5.00 pm – 7.00 pm

SESSION 6 SOCIAL & NETWORKING

UTSA Southwest School of Arts, Coates Chapel, 300 Augusta



## 2024 NCHP Agenda

Day 3. March 1, 2024

Think Tanks

*Hybrid (in-person & online) / Durango Building / Rooms La Villita & A / Online*

***Time Zone: CST/CSD***



*In Person*

***Time Zone: CST/CSD***



## “I’d Rather Rely on Myself”: Understanding Risk and Resilience in College Students from Foster Care’s Approach to Help-Seeking

**Authors:** Chloe Lancaster and Michelle Brasfield

### Empirical research

**Background/problem:** Foster care alumni have some of the lowest rates of college degree attainment compared to all other underrepresented student groups (Geiger et al., 2018). Help-seeking has been identified as instrumental to college success (Parnes et al., 2020). However, studies of youth exiting the foster system indicate that this population exhibits pseudo-independence and is resistant to help-seeking even in times of critical need (Kools, 1999). The purpose of this research was to explore students from foster care (SFCs) internalized attitudes and beliefs toward help-seeking and how these influenced their help-seeking behaviors in college.

**Methodology:** This qualitative study was conducted in a large four-year university in the southeastern United States. At the time of the study, the institution offered no dedicated services to SFC. We recruited students enrolled under the state’s tuition waiver for foster care alumni. The final sample comprised 13 junior and senior, all-female, racially diverse students. We interviewed students on Zoom following a semi-structured interview protocol. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded following Braun and Clarke (2021) six stage procedures for reflexive thematic data analysis, producing five distinct yet interrelated themes.

**Findings:** The Lone Ranger: “I’ll Figure it Out Alone”. Participants embodied multiple intersectional statuses associated with matriculation risk. Yet, their fervent self-reliance propelled them to overcome formidable barriers to college access and persistence, with a paucity of formal support.

The Paradox of Help-seeking: High risk= low service use. Service utilization revealed paradoxical elements of participants’ approach to help-seeking. Low-threshold services such as the gym, library, and wellness center were routinely utilized. Yet, students disdained campus services intended to meet more acute needs, such as food insecurity and mental health.

“I’m not like the other kids in foster care”: The survivor-thriver identity. Intrinsic to the survivor-thriver identity was a commitment to succeed, seeded by a sense of responsibility to the family and caregivers who had supported them. This self-narrative engendered adaptive help-seeking behaviors because they were determined to overcome all obstacles. However, feeling different resulted in social isolation as participants also felt disconnected from their non-foster care college peers.

Avoidant mode: Disappearing. A success narrative led to a high level of achievement yet also represented the tipping point when help-seeking could become maladaptive. Patterns of avoidance were linked to fear of being judged or evaluated as a stereotypical kid from foster.

Remove the need for help and remove the risk. Many students received services from nonprofit organizations that provided critical and timely support. Services ranged from single-service programs providing free or reduced-cost textbooks to comprehensive programs that provided housing and living expenses.

**Implications:** Results revealed that SFC are exceptionally resilient, yet their “lone ranger” mentality disconnected them from peers and created resistance to utilizing formal institutional support in times of need. Because participants gravitated to people and programs sensitive to the needs of SFC, institutions should consider providing staff and faculty training to create awareness of the needs of this hidden group and create opportunities for SFC to build community. Because SFC exhibited distrust of institutional programs and people and disliked things being done on their behalf, the institution should include SFC's voice in creating more inclusive campuses.

## References

- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative research in psychology, 18*(3), 328-352.
- Geiger, J. M., Piel, M. H., Day, A., & Schelbe, L. (2018). A descriptive analysis of programs serving foster care alumni in higher education: Challenges and opportunities. *Children and Youth Services Review, 85*, 287-294.
- Kools, S., & Kools, S. (1999). Self-protection in adolescents in foster care. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 12*(4), 139-152.
- Parnes, M. F., Kanchewa, S. S., Marks, A. K., & Schwartz, S. E. (2020). Closing the college achievement gap: Impacts and processes of a help-seeking intervention. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 67*, 101121.

## Navigating Politics While Conducting Research

**Author:** Lisa Schelbe

### Roundtable

**Overview:** How do scholars navigate politics when conducting research? This presentation will begin with examples from various studies impacted by agency and state politics. The presenter will then discuss strategies used to deal with the encountered challenging situations. After sharing examples and strategies, the presenter facilitated a discussion among participants about how the current political environments impact research and practice and how to navigate politics successfully.

## Programs and Practices to Promote College Access for Hidden College Populations

**Authors:** Kalah Villagrana, Justine Cheung, and Jennifer Geiger

### Workshop

**Abstract:** Youth in foster care (YFC) experience lower rates of high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion than the general population (Day et al., 2011). Many postsecondary institutions have developed campus-based support programs to help enrolled in college successfully graduate. However, many YFC and students from other traditionally marginalized communities never enroll in a postsecondary institution or are underprepared to attend college. To help address this issue, Arizona State University (ASU) has developed several practices and programs aimed at increasing college access and success for YFC. This presentation will describe the existing efforts at ASU, lessons learned, and recommendations for developing similar programs at other postsecondary institutions.

Bridging Success is the campus-based support program for YFC at ASU. The program expanded beyond helping current students to outreach to high school students and community members to promote postsecondary education. The program engages the community through tabling events, hosting campus tours, and one-on-one meetings with high school students and supportive adults about admissions processes and on-campus support supports. After a student applies to ASU, Bridging Success reaches out to students by text and email to help them through the enrollment process (e.g., housing, financial aid). The Empower Online Training Program is a self-paced training geared towards supportive adults (e.g., case workers, teachers) of YFC. The program includes modules on adolescent development, the impacts of trauma on learning, engagement skills, educational planning, financial aid, postsecondary admissions, and enrolling in a postsecondary institution. In addition, Bridging Success Early Start is a one-week summer bridge program offered to incoming freshmen and transfer students with foster care backgrounds. Incoming students participate in workshops on topics related to academics, psychosocial development, and relationship building to promote college adjustment and success.

Several lessons have been learned through the development of these practices and programs. Presenters will describe these lessons and provide examples, such as 1) collaborating with departments at your institution that focus on college access; 2) developing relationships with “champions” in key departments (e.g., housing, financial aid, admissions); 3) developing relationships with community partners (e.g., child welfare agencies, group homes, scholarship foundations); 4) identifying processes required for unique student circumstances (e.g., students under age 18, undocumented students); and 5) engaging current students in outreach efforts. Presenters will also guide participants in considering



how they can develop similar practices and programs to support youth in foster care or other marginalized student populations at their institutions.

**Implications:** This presentation provided several implications for practice. Participants learned about the strategies that have worked well for supporting college access for youth in foster care and ways to improve current practices. Participants also had the opportunity to evaluate opportunities for implementing similar efforts with historically marginalized student populations.

### References

Day, A., Dworsky, A., Fogarty, K., & Damashek, A. (2011). An examination of post-secondary retention and graduation among foster care youth enrolled in a four-year university. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33, 2335-2341. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.08.004>

## Academic and Non-Profit/Practitioner Partnerships: Collaborations That Can Make a Difference

**Authors:** Justine Cheung

### Presentation

**Abstract:** This session will discuss how collaborative efforts between institutions of higher education and non-profit agencies and/or practitioners can advance understanding of factors that impact hidden populations and identify best practices for providing impactful services.



## Educational Advocacy Through the College-Bound Docket

**Authors:** Megan Piel, Cindy Alvarado, Desven Greenberg, and Malorie DeLeon.

### Presentation

**Abstract:** The Bexar County Fostering Educational Success College Bound Docket is a specialty court focused on enhanced educational advocacy and support to prepare youth in foster care for postsecondary education. This session discusses preliminary findings from a qualitative study on this pre-college initiative.

## Estimating a National College Enrollment Rate with NYTD: Shortfalls and Potential Fixes

**Author:** Nathanael Okpych

### Presentation

**Abstract:** The launch of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) in 2011 was a watershed moment in the history of studying older youth in foster care. For the first time, there was the prospect of generating national estimates of key policy-relevant outcomes, such as the rate youth enroll in postsecondary education (PSE). However, there are important flaws in NYTD's PSE measure. This presentation will estimate how much NYTD undercounts the actual percentage of youth who enrolled in PSE in California. The good news: the problem is fixable. The presentation will give an example of how NYTD questions could be altered to estimate findings that will enable researchers, policymakers, advocates, and administrators to accurately gauge PSE enrollment rates, disparities, and policy impacts.

## PDQ THINK TANKS

Day 3 / Session 6

### Mattering and Socially Just Leadership

**Facilitators:** Lisa Schelbe and Lisa Jackson

**Description:** The study focuses on exploring how undergraduate students with a history of foster care, homelessness, relative care, and/or ward of the state status experience a sense of mattering by engaging in leadership embedded in an identity-based campus support program student advisory board. The purpose of this thinking group is to collect feedback about the study's conceptualization and method.

Day 3 / Session 6

### Understanding and Bridging Nurture Gaps with Students with Foster Care Experience Pursuing Higher Education: Practice- and Evidence-Informed Practice Guidelines

**Facilitator:** Maddy Day and Jamie Bennett

**Description:** This session will present a conceptual framework on Nurture Gaps and the implication for college students from foster care and higher education professionals. Nurture Gaps will be defined and explored as a phenomenon that has been observed from practice experience and touched on in various areas of literature. By centering the experience of being raised in the child welfare system, we will share the ways that missed experiences of nurturance can impact young adults' sense of belonging and identity development. We will share implications for practice and policy that higher education settings can consider to bridge nurture gaps among students from foster care.

Day 3 / Session 7

### Transition to Work

**Facilitator:** Kerri Kearney

**Description:** As researchers and practitioners we have often been critical of a child welfare system that ends support for its young people at artificial age milestones that, based upon state, range from 18-24. However, I propose that higher education uses a similar system wherein most campus-based support systems abruptly end upon college graduation. This group will discuss potential strategies and processes for making sure students can be successful after graduation.

## PDQ THINK TANKS

Day 3 / Session 7

### Reimagining the National Campus Support Program Guide

**Facilitator:** Sheila Bustillos

**Description:** Casey Family Program “Supporting Success” guide has been the essential go-to resource for professionals supporting students with experience in foster care since 2010. Since then, the guide has not been updated to reflect new research and practices that inform campus support programs nationwide. This group will outline a plan to update this essential guide to reflect current work.

Day 3 / Session 8

### Statewide Backbone Networks – Best Practices

**Facilitator:** Lori Tiller

**Description:** Over the past 15 years statewide backbone networks have formed across the country to intentionally support both the higher education professionals serving on campuses and SEFC as they transition through their postsecondary journeys. All 19 backbone networks are part of a national initiative called FAAN (Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide). FAAN is a group of state backbone network leaders who connect monthly to share best practice information, explore policy implementation in their states, and discuss how they can continue to support efforts on their state level campuses to increase access and resources for students with experience in foster care. Very little information exists on how these backbone networks form and sustain themselves. Without documenting how the movement has grown and changed over the past 15 years, there is a chance a new network may have to start from the beginning. It is important for those of us doing the work to document the work, and center it in a foundational research space for those who join the movement after we leave the leadership positions.

Day 3 / Session 8

### Brainstorming Outlets for Funding on Hidden College Populations

**Facilitator:** Jennifer Geiger

**Description:** This group will brainstorm and discuss different outlets for funding on research related to hidden populations in postsecondary education. We will discuss how we can shape our research ideas and what areas of our research might be a good fit for different federal and private funders.



Conference website: [nchp.okstate.edu](http://nchp.okstate.edu)

To join the Conference email list or for questions: [nchp@okstate.edu](mailto:nchp@okstate.edu)

