



## National Conference for Hidden Student Populations

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<https://nchp.okstate.edu>

### Current Hidden College Student Populations

May include those who have foster care histories, justice-involved experiences, who are survivors of sexual violence or sex workers, recovering substances addicts, who face housing insecurity, who have sought/seeking abortion care, or who have undergone or are in the process of gender reassignment.

### NCHP Conference Fellows

*Dr. Nathaniel Brown,  
Johns Hopkins University*

*Dr. Jennifer Geiger,  
University of Illinois, Chicago*

*Dr. Royel Johnson,  
University of Southern California*

*Dr. Kerri Kearney,  
Oklahoma State University*

*Dr. Megan Piel,  
University of Texas, San Antonio*

*Dr. Lori Tiller,  
University of Georgia*

*Dr. Lisa Will,  
Oklahoma State University*

**The Scholar-Practitioner** is a monthly publication of research summaries that targets the research-to-practice-to-research gap for U.S. scholar and practitioner advocates for hidden college student populations.

This publication reinforces the work of the **National Conference for Hidden Student Populations (NCHP)** by providing a space to share research applications for practice. **NCHP** was the first research conference dedicated to this multidisciplinary area of study.

In February 2025 was held the **NCHP**, and in this issue we bring you a brief description of it. Next year, in February 2026, the **NCHP 6th conference** will be held at the University of Georgia.

## 2025 National Conference for Hidden Student Populations

The 5<sup>th</sup> **NCHP** was held on February 19 and 20, 2025. The conference was conducted virtually bringing together researchers, practitioners, recent MS and doctoral graduates, and doctoral students. The conference included activities for a diversity of interests, such as **an online session for doctoral students and recent graduates on mentoring and networking**.

Space was again given to work in progress. Three **think tank sessions** were held on the first day of the conference for individuals to gather feedback from the **NCHP** community regarding their work.

**But What Happens After Graduation?: A Think Tank Exploring How to Support Students During Their Transition After Graduation.** *Facilitator: Dr. Lisa Schelbe*

**A Landscape Scan of Research on the K-12 Education of Young People in the United States Who Experience Foster Care, Incarceration, and/or Homelessness.** *Facilitators: Maddy Day, MSW & Stephanie Malia Krauss, MSW*

**Education Reach for Texans: A Moody M-Pact Initiative Supporting Lived Experience Experts.** *Facilitators: Dr. Sheila Bustillos, Brenda Sweeten, MSW, Dr. Toni Watt, & Kayli Lord, MA*

The 2025 **NCHP** also included **seven presentations**; five resulted from the research work and practice projects of **NCHP**-affiliated Teams. Below is a brief description of the presentations.

**Exploring Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Identity Development Among Diverse Post-Secondary Students with Foster Care Histories.** *Presenters: Dr. Sheila Bustillos, Dr. Nathaniel Brown, Dr. Blayne Stone, Jr., Kayli Lord, MA, & Dr. Brenda Morton.* This proposed qualitative research study explores the racial, ethnic, and cultural identity development of young adults with foster care experience who are enrolled in post-secondary education.

**A Systematic Review of Educational Outcomes of Students with Experience in Foster Care.** *Presenters: Maddy Day, MSW, Dr. Nathanael Okpych, Dr. Kenyon Lee Whitman, Lisa Jackson, MSW, LCSW, Dr. Liz Neria-Piña, & Jane Lee, MSW, MBA.* The goal of this study is to fill the gap in the literature of no definitive publication that reports secondary and postsecondary education rates based on best available empirical evidence. This accomplished by reviewing methodologically sound studies with SEFC published between 2000 and present.

**Smile, You're on Camera: Using Video Notification to Enhance Student Engagement with Vulnerable Populations.** *Presenters: Dr. Victoria McWilliams, Dr. Layonda Bennett, and Niki Lang.* This is an experimental design to evaluate an intervention with two-year community college students with lived experience in the foster care system using videos as the communication format.

**From Foster Care to College: Understanding the College-going Motivations of Black Foster Youth.** *Presenters: Dr. Blayne Stone, Jr. & Dr. Kenyon Lee Whitman.* There is a dearth of research on Black college-going foster youth. We add to this growing body of

research, in doing so we counter the deficit discourses that frequently represent this specific group. More critical qualitative research is essential.

**The Prevalence of ACEs and Self-Identifying Members of Hidden Student Populations at Land Grant Universities: Academic Implications.** *Presenters: Dr. Kerri Kearney, Dr. Kayla Loper, Dr. Lisa Kerr, Dr. Lisa Will, Mallory Shuler, LPC, Dr. Sarah Gordon, & Dr. Liz Neria-Piña.* This study explored the presence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including students who self-identify as members of hidden student populations, generally defined as college students with experience with socially stigmatizing trauma, at three land grant institutions in the south/southeastern region of the United States.

**Understanding Fosterphobia and What it Means for Higher Education.** *Presenters: Dr. Kenyon Lee Whitman & Dr. Blayne Stone, Jr.* We unpack how foster youth experience stigma, marginalization, prejudice, and dehumanization because of their foster care status. We explain this oppressive ideology as fosterphobia.

**Building a Data-Driven Future: Updates from the Embark Georgia Research Consortium.**

*Presenters: Dr. Katherine Adams, Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams, Dr. Renni Turpin, & Dr. Lori Tiller.* The presentation highlighted findings from two completed studies—ETV program outcomes and summer programming impact—while offering insights into the Consortium's ongoing research and next steps.

Additionally, the **NCHP** continues to support collaborative work for research and other projects through the **NCHP** Teams. The five teams that were formed during the conference in 2024 will extend their work for a further period. These are multidisciplinary teams formed by researchers, practitioners, and doctoral students. Some Teams will continue with ongoing projects and others will initiate new research.

Next year, the conference will take place in **February 2026** and will be hosted by the **University of Georgia**. Call for proposals will open in May. For more information, visit our website: [nchp.okstate.edu](https://nchp.okstate.edu).

**2026 NCHP**

*See you at*

**University of Georgia  
February, 2026**

More information: [nchp.okstate.edu](https://nchp.okstate.edu)