



## 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

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**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.

The **NCHP 5th conference** will be held February 19 - 21, 2025, at Oklahoma State University-Tulsa. [Registration and call for proposals are now open!](#)

## Student Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Collegiate Recovery Programs and Collegiate Recovery Communities

Herold, M. A. (2023). Student perceptions of the effectiveness of collegiate recovery programs and collegiate recovery communities. [Dissertation, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley]. Scholarworks UTRGV. <https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/etd/1474>

This mixed-method study explored the extent to which students perceive that their Collegiate Recovery Programs/Communities (CRP/CRCs) are effective in promoting their recovery from substance abuse disorders as well as their quality of life. CRP/CRCs are campus-based programs and communities that support college students in recovery in what has been termed an "abstinence-hostile environment" at many colleges and universities. The following questions guided the study:

### Quantitative

- Is there a difference between students' perceptions of self-efficacy in avoiding substance abuse before and after participation in a CRP/CRC?
- Is there a difference between students' perceptions of quality of life before and after participation in a CRP/CRC?

### Qualitative

- What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the CRP/CRC in supporting their recovery from drugs and alcohol?
- What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the CRP/CRC in improving their life in general?
- What do student recommendations for changes and improvements to the CRP/CRC reveal about the potential to reach more students?

Quantitative data collection involved thirty undergraduate/graduate students participating in CRP/CRCs. Participants completed two instruments through Qualtrics in a retrospective pre-test/post-test design. They first responded as they would have prior to participating in their CRP/CRC, and then from their perspective after having participated. Qualitative data collection involved semi-structured, virtual interviews with five volunteer participants.

A paired samples t-test of quantitative data revealed a significant difference at the .05 level between the pre- and post-test scores for both instruments, suggesting that members of CRP/CRCs do perceive a positive impact on their ability to maintain abstinence in triggering situations and their overall quality of life. Interview responses were transcribed and analyzed through qualitative coding to develop core themes and subthemes. The following core themes and subthemes emerged from responses related to the CRP/CRC impact on recovery:

### Protection in an Abstinence-Hostile Environment

Sober alternatives – Social gatherings like 'sober tailgates' without the risk of exposure to alcohol/drugs.

Recovery meetings – Easily accessible campus-based meetings, such as 12-step or All Recovery.

Staff support and resources – Staff are often licensed professionals and/or are in recovery. They provide emotional and practical support, including advocacy and resource referrals.

Safe spaces – Dedicated gathering space without exposure to the broader pro-substance campus culture and the concept of an 'emotional safe space' in the community.

Peer support – Frequent, direct, and informal support among members.

Peer success – Observing peer success motivates personal recovery.

### Skills and Tools

Coping skills – For triggers and urges to relapse.

Preparing for triggers – Preparing for exposure to substances.

Behavioral contracts – Written agreements between members and staff regarding sobriety, participation, and academic achievement.

Academic support – Advising, tutoring, and educational materials.

Technology – New technology, like Zoom, allowed more convenient and frequent attendance of recovery meetings.

### Social

Mutual success – Mutual understanding of working toward similar goals.

Risk-free socializing – Building social networks without exposure to substance use.

Relatability – Members feel understood without guilt, shame, or judgment.

The following core themes and subthemes emerged from responses related to the CRP/CRC impact on quality of life:

### Skills and Tools

Coping skills – For stress and mental health.

Identifying core issues – Underlying issues contributing to substance use.

Boundaries – Distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Professional engagement – Work experience in a safe environment by working for CRP/CRC.

Academic support – Culture of academic success.

### Social

Connection on campus – Feel connected to a larger campus community.

Belonging – Identity and bonding.

Larger recovery community – Connection to other CRP/CRCs and local recovery community.

Healthy relationships – Improved relationships in multiple contexts.

### Personal Growth

Mental health management – Co-occurring disorders.

Traits and strengths – Improvement in self-efficacy and self-confidence.

The following themes emerged from participant recommendations to improve CRP/CRCs:

Visibility and recruiting – More visible presence on campus and structured avenues for recruiting members.

Recovery-informed – Campus-wide initiatives to educate other providers, faculty, and staff.

Staff in recovery – Promotes a nonjudgmental environment, but risk of blurred boundaries, especially if staff participate in recovery meetings.

Recruiting approaches – Expecting current members to recruit can be empowering but can also feel like pressure.

Nesting and oversight – Often part of a larger department, resulting in counterproductive oversight or unwelcoming environments.

Funding sources – Donor campaigns, grants, and increased institutional funding.

New/Prospective member engagement – Phone lists and open recovery meetings.

This study expands on quantitative research that has shown that CRP/CRCs are effective in increasing retention rates, GPAs, and sobriety rates for this population. The findings suggest that different elements of these programs are effective in different contexts, but there are still many improvements that could increase recruitment and effectiveness.

## NCHP

Save the date!  
Feb 19 - 21, 2025  
OSU Tulsa

Register [here](#)

Call for Proposals **NOW OPEN!**

**Team Leader** - Become a team leader of a multidisciplinary research team. Deadline October 1, 2024 (notifications by November 1)

**Team Member** - Become a new multidisciplinary research team member. Deadline October 31, 2024 (notifications by December 1)

**Presentations** - Present an original empirical work or practice. Deadline January 10, 2025 (notifications by January 21)

**PDQs** - Lead a think tank discussion. Deadline January 10, 2025 (notifications by January 21)

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

To sign up for ongoing email updates about the 2025 national conference and/or for archives of The Scholar-Practitioner, go to: <https://risforthursday.okstate.edu>

