

Allan Hancock College EOPS+ Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: June 11, 2026

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location: Allan Hancock College

Meeting Called to Order: 9:03 a.m.

Attendees:

Community Members:

Frank Mejia (County of Santa Barbara Social Services/CalWORKs), Esther Herrera (Welfare-to-Work), Sandy Gomez (Department of Social Services), Monica Carrillo (Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley), Shana Pompa (Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley)

Allan Hancock College Staff:

Siboney Guardado, Rena Alspaw, David Melendrez-Romero, Stephania Mendez Machuca, Marie St. James, Ignacio Andrade, Edwin Hodges, Joanna Davis, Coryn Borges, Tyffani Hamlin, Nidya Provencio, Johnnie Owens (Dean, Student Services), Diana Perez (Cal-Soap), Kristin Milligan (Dean, Student Services)

Welcome and Introductions

Siboney Guardado called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and welcomed attendees. Participants introduced themselves. Siboney emphasized that the committee exists to strengthen partnerships between Allan Hancock College and community organizations to better serve students and increase access to educational and support services throughout Santa Barbara County.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The committee reviewed updates from the previous meeting, including the rebranding of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) program to EOPS+ and its updated mission to provide expanded student support. EOPS+ continues to explore partnerships between Phoenix Rising Scholars and trade schools. EOPS+ Counselor Juanita, who previously taught a transfer course, is now teaching two 1–2-unit courses designed to support students preparing to transfer to four-year institutions.

EOPS+ Program Presentation

An overview of the EOPS+ Program was presented, accompanied by presentation slides. During Fiscal Year 2025–2026, the program experienced significant growth, serving approximately 200 more students than in the previous year. Counseling services also saw increased demand, with more than 300 additional appointments completed. Staff highlighted the program's continued commitment to its mission of "Changing the Odds" by helping students overcome financial and educational barriers through services such as textbook assistance, grants, academic counseling, and educational enrichment.

opportunities. During the year, the program distributed approximately 300 laptops to support student academic success.

Students also participated in a variety of educational experiences and enrichment activities, including visits to California Polytechnic State University, the Disney Imagination Campus, the Justice Involved Summit, and the Spikes Season of Giving event.

Community Partner Presentations

County of Santa Barbara – Welfare-to-Work

Esther Herrera provided an overview of the County's Welfare-to-Work Program, highlighting services that support families in achieving their education and employment goals, including childcare, transportation, housing, and employment assistance. She shared that the County is implementing state-mandated changes to streamline services, reduce barriers, and improve access, including providing transportation benefits at the beginning of the month and redesigning the intake process to reduce multiple appointments. Esther noted that fewer than one percent of participants are under sanction, reflecting the County's collaborative approach. During discussion, Johnnie Owens expressed interest in expanding partnerships with Allan Hancock College career programs. Esther welcomed additional collaboration and noted that the County already works closely with Edwin Hodges, who also serves in EOPS+. She emphasized that the County's priority is to preserve services and financial assistance for families while implementing the new state requirements.

Allan Hancock College Cal-SOAP

Diana Perez presented updates from Cal-SOAP, highlighting continued student employment opportunities and past partnerships with the Grizzly Youth Academy. She invited committee members to attend the Financial Aid event on September 30, 2026, featuring Dr. Daisy Gonzales as the keynote speaker. Diana also shared Cal-SOAP's new FAFSA completion strategy, which will bring staff into local high school economics classrooms to assist students with completing the FAFSA during class, with a goal of reaching approximately 5,000 students. In addition, Cal-SOAP will expand outreach for the CalKIDS program by helping families register for and access available college savings accounts.

Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley

Monica Carrillo and Shana Pompa presented updates on Fighting Back's programs serving foster youth, justice-involved youth, and young adults. They highlighted services including conflict mediation, restorative justice, mentoring, cannabis prevention education, and reentry support to help youth transition successfully after release from juvenile detention. They also announced the grand opening of the new Navigation Center on August 21, 2026, which will provide case management, behavioral health services, workshops, and community resource referrals for young adults ages 18–24. Fighting Back invited Allan Hancock College to partner in outreach efforts, and Joanna Davis will distribute informational flyers to committee members.

Advisory Feedback and Discussion

Johnnie Owens emphasized the committee's goal of strengthening collaboration among organizations serving students and families throughout the region. Members discussed expanding partnerships to increase awareness of Allan Hancock College and EOPS+ services. Siboney encouraged community organizations to participate in future campus events to connect individuals pursuing a high school diploma or GED with college opportunities. Frank Mejia shared updates on the County's Workforce Development One-Stop Center and Cal-Learn program and recommended inviting Monica Guana to future meetings to strengthen community partnerships. It was also encouraged that EOPS+ staff participate in local coalitions and advisory groups to expand outreach. Rena Alspaw noted that funding changes have limited the Phoenix Rising Scholars Program's eligibility, underscoring the need for additional community partnerships and funding opportunities. Additional recommendations included connecting with Amy Willis at the Santa Barbara County Office of Education regarding Chromebook resources and increasing EOPS+ involvement in community organizations and restorative justice initiatives.

Committee Feedback

Committee members recommended improving future Advisory Committee meetings by providing more detailed meeting invitations, holding meetings once each semester to strengthen communication and collaboration, and considering scheduling differences between county agencies and K–12 school districts. Members agreed that future meetings should have clearly defined objectives while continuing to emphasize relationship building, resource sharing, and collaborative opportunities that benefit students and families.

Action Items:

- Recruit additional Advisory Committee members through community coalitions and partner organizations.
- Increase EOPS+ participation in local coalition meetings and advisory groups.
- Determine future meeting frequency and scheduling in consultation with EOPS+ staff.
- Continue expanding partnerships that improve student access to educational, financial, and community support services.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

EOPS+ Contact Information

Santa Maria Campus
(805) 922-6966, ext. 3214
Lompoc Campus
(805) 922-6966, ext. 5214