Transformative Counseling Regional Convening

November 18, 2026

CLP | Career Ladders Project

Welcome Message

Welcome to the Transformative Counseling Regional Convening, a partnership between the WE Will! Collaborative and Career Ladders Project. Together, we are committed to advancing equity-driven counseling and student support practices that strengthen educational pathways across the region.

This convening reflects the WE Will! Collaborative's mission to build seamless, student-centered systems that expand opportunity and remove barriers to success. Through our partnership, we aim to uplift the transformative role of counselors, educators, and support staff in creating inclusive environments where every student can thrive. Thank you for joining us as we work to shape a more equitable future for all learners.

Diana Hernandez, WE Will! K-16 Acting Director

Outcomes for Today

Join *a regional community committed to advancing equitable counseling and student support.*
Engage *in interactive workshops on student success, counseling redesign, and dual enrollment.*
Leverage *shared expertise to drive collaboration and effective practices.*
Strengthen *capacity to deliver equity-centered student services.*
Impact *student success through actionable, systemic solutions.*

Event Agenda

Check-in & Breakfast	8:30 a.m.
Welcome	9:00 a.m.
Student Panel	9:20 a.m.
Transition to Breakouts	10:00 a.m.
Breakout Session 1	10:15 a.m.
Transition to Lunch	11:45 a.m.
Lunch	12:00 p.m.
Transition to Breakouts	12:30 p.m.
Breakout Session 2	12:40 p.m.
Wrap-up Activity	2:10 p.m.
Adjourn	3:00 p.m.

Welcome Remarks



Dr. Stuart Wooley
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Stanislaus State

Student Panel 9:20- 10:00

Facilitated by: Dr. Byron Reaves, Director, Career Ladders Project

Panel Members:

Jenny Ruelas - Modesto Junior College
Fernando Jacuinde - Modesto Junior College
Esperanza Mia Ruelas - Stanislaus State

Session 1 10:15-11:45

Intersection of Dual Enrollment and Student Support Services Strand

Beyond Access: Building a Student Support Network for Dual Enrollment Students

Room: SC 105 Stanislaus





Aaron Eubanks, Dual Enrollment Counselor/Coordinator, Reedley College (RC)
Cristina Reyna, Dual Enrollment Counselor/Coordinator, RC
Erica Sersansie, Dual Enrollment Counselor/Coordinator, RC

Dual enrollment success requires more than college access. This workshop explores how high school counselors, college counselors, faculty, and student support teams can build coordinated, culturally responsive systems that help students navigate the transition to college, persist in coursework, and develop a strong sense of belonging. Participants will leave with practical strategies for strengthening partnerships and improving outcomes for dual enrollment students.

Session 1 10:15-11:45

High Quality Advising Strand

One Team, Three Systems: Building an Integrated CCC–CSU–UC Transfer Ecosystem Through Shared Planning, Data, and Space

Room: SC 103 Leadership



Araceli Tilley, Acting Director, Career and Transfer Services, Merced Community College District (MCCD)
Christina Ortega, Career and Transfer Counselor, MCCD
Lorena Calderon, Career and Transfer Counselor, MCCD
Elizabeth Monroe, Warriors on the Way Admissions Counselor, Stanislaus State
Marita "MJ" Jimenez, UC Merced Promise Advisor/ Admissions and Outreach, University of California Merced and MCCD

This session highlights a unique California model where a community college integrates CSU and UC partners into a unified transfer ecosystem. Through shared offices, data, and cost-sharing, staff function as one team to improve transfer equity. Attendees will explore how co-planned programming and modern facilities support student pathways, while previewing a new UC Merced transfer housing initiative designed to enhance belonging and success through cross-system collaboration.

Culturally Responsive Counseling Strand

Transformative Counseling: From Good Intentions to Intentional Impact

Room: SC 104 Turlock



Tommy Reed, Umoja Counselor, Chabot College

What does it truly mean to be a transformative counselor? Are we simply helping students navigate educational systems, or are we creating experiences that set them ablaze and empower them to thrive? We are the ones holding the front door for students as they enter or re-enter their college journeys.

This interactive workshop is a space for Counselors and Educators to reflect on their current practices, challenge traditional approaches, and explore ways to become more intentional in their work with students. Through self-assessment, engaging discussions, and collaborative activities, participants will examine how their beliefs, biases, and counseling practices influence student experiences and success.

Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of their impact, renewed perspectives, and actionable strategies to strengthen their counseling practices, remove barriers, and create more meaningful connections with the students they serve.

Session 2 12:40-2:10

Intersection of Dual Enrollment and Student Support Services Strand

Building Bridges Between Dual Enrollment and Student Support **Room: SC 105 S.**



Kristi Rieg, Regional Math Coordinator, College Bridge
Ashley Ramirez, Counselor, Gustine High School
Daisy Zagazeta, Counselor, Gustine High School

Successful implementation of dual enrollment requires more than simply offering college courses. Strong partnerships between high school and college student support services are essential to helping students navigate these opportunities.

In this interactive workshop, presenters from College Bridge and the Gustine High School counseling team will share two perspectives on building and sustaining effective dual enrollment partnerships. Participants will explore how College Bridge supports collaboration between secondary and postsecondary institutions and the critical role counselors play in guiding students. Through collaborative discussions with real-world examples, participants will examine strategies for strengthening communication and creating supportive dual enrollment experiences. Attendees will leave with practical ideas for improving partnerships and supporting student success within their own institutions.

High Quality Advising Strand

Discover, Plan, Launch into High-Quality Advising using CaliforniaColleges.edu **Room: SC 104 T.**



Selma Gonzalez, Director of Engagement & Implementation, California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI)
Geraldina Espinoza, Senior Manager of Engagement & Implementation, CCGI
Ashley Shaffer, Senior Manager of Engagement & Implementation, CCGI

You've done the work to have students take assessments, now how do you use the data to develop meaningful, high-quality advising? Using CaliforniaColleges.edu, you can leverage My Career Plan and My College Plan to engage students in developing their postsecondary plans. This session will spotlight the career & college resources– including career assessments, reflection, and search tools– that help students connect their interests to careers.

In this interactive session, you will collaborate with other participants to discuss scenarios and identify useful advising strategies from a relationship-centered point-of-view. Join for an opportunity to learn and share how to help students discover, plan, and launch into their future.

Session 2 12:40-2:10

Culturally Responsive Counseling

D.O.P.E. Counseling: Remixing Our Practice Through Hip-Hop Education **Room: SC 103 L.**



Dr. Adam Freas, EOPS Counselor and HCD Instructor, Sacramento City College

What if we approached counseling as Hip-Hop artists approach their craft—with authenticity, creativity, collaboration, and a commitment to transformation? The D.O.P.E. (Develop/Define, Organize/Observe, Plan/Promote, Explore/Elevate) Counseling Framework offers a holistic, cypher (cyclical) approach grounded in Hip-Hop Education to support students' personal, educational, career, and mental health development. In this interactive workshop, counselors will explore this framework through reflection, dialogue, and creative activities, examining how their own "Hip-Hop" can inform authentic, culturally responsive counseling practices and programming. Participants will remix familiar approaches, identify opportunities for innovation, and develop actionable strategies to elevate student support on their campuses. Leave ready to produce new possibilities, challenge traditional practices, and transform counseling through the power of voice, culture, creativity, and connection.

We Value Your Feedback!

Please take a moment to fill out our post event survey.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for today's event! Your presence and energy are what make this community so special. We also want to extend our deepest gratitude to Stanislaus State for their incredible hospitality and generously sharing their wonderful space with us to make this gathering possible.

Wifi Access
Network: csus-event-26
Password: Workshop26!