

The CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE *for* STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS

ADMINISTERED BY CALIFORNIA COMPETES: HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR A STRONG ECONOMY AND EDTRUST-WEST

Voices of Resilience: Revealing the True Costs of College for Student Parents

JUNE 11, 2024 FROM 3:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M.

Capitol Swing Space Conference Room

Happy Hour to Follow at Thirtyfour Mexican Cantina

This event will feature a panel discussion between legislative staff and members on strategies for increasing access to financial aid and other resources to better assist student parents with college affordability.

OBJECTIVES

Attendees will:

- Understand the average student parent expenses and budgets needed to attend college.
- Learn about the process for requesting additional financial aid and how greater access to the dependent care allowance can support college affordability and success.
- Hear from student parent leaders' experiences with increasing their cost of attendance at their college.
- Share ideas and questions while building relationships with today's students.

ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

- [About The Alliance One-Pager](#)
- [Snapshot of California's Student Parents](#)
- [The Alliance Policy Agenda](#)

Please RSVP [here](#). If you have questions about the event, please contact California Competes's Policy Director AJ Johnson at ajohnson@californiacompetes.org or call (920) 471-8177.

We hope you will join us after the event at Thirtyfour Mexican Cantina at 1100 O St. #5.

This event is sponsored by Michelson Center for Public Policy.

PANELISTS



Chanel Hamilton, Student Parent at CSU Fullerton and Administrative Assistant at Long Beach City College

Chanel Hamilton is a student parent advocate and mother of two. She is committed to the advancement of systematic support for parenting students. During her time at Long Beach City College while earning an Associate's degree for Transfer in Early Childhood Education she went from experiencing homelessness to securing her future and her children's future. Her journey from poverty to self-sufficiency is a testament to the strength, resilience and potential parent students have. Through advocacy she aims to elevate the needs of parenting students and to create a more equitable environment for families in higher education.



Christina Sholars, Student Parent Graduate of Fresno City College and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

Christina Sholars was a student parent for more than ten years before graduating with her master's degree from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in Spring 2023. Despite being pushed out of Fresno State as a young mother, Christina re-enrolled and earned an Associate's Degree in Business Administration from Fresno City College while parenting. Christina credits her late mother's passion for education for inspiring her to work in higher education. Christina has previously served as a Financial Aid Specialist and a CalWorks, Foster Youth, and EOPS/CARE (CaFE) assistant at Cuesta College.



Denise Mendez, Student Parent and Student Parent Center Lead Peer Advisor at UC Berkeley and Urban Institute CalSTAR Fellow

Denise Mendez is a lead peer advisor at the UC Berkeley Student Parent Center, offering crucial support to newly admitted and current student parents. She is the founder of the Student Parent Wellness Support Program where she provides wellness scholarships, family friendly workshops and events, and healing clinics for student parents. Having become a parent at the age of 19, she experienced firsthand the challenges of navigating higher education without adequate support during her time at community college. She is committed to empowering and assisting student parents as they navigate their educational paths.



Krystle Pale, Student Parent at UC Santa Cruz

Krystle Pale is a dedicated student parent advocate committed to advancing postsecondary success for student parents through impactful leadership roles and policy advocacy through her collaborations with California Competes and Ed-Trust West through the Alliance for Student Parent Success, Generation HOPE, Sparks Collaborative and through her Masters program at the University of San Francisco, School of Education.



Maya Valree, Student Parent Graduate from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and Policy Analyst at EdTrust-West

Maya Valree joins EdTrust-West as a Policy Analyst (Parenting Students). Before joining EdTrust-West, Maya was the graduate student coordinator for the Students with Dependents program at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, where she engaged campus and community stakeholders to increase programming and institutional support for pregnant and parenting students. During her graduate studies, Maya also worked as a research assistant on Dr. Tina Cheuk's #StudentParentJoy campaign, a media and policy research program redefining what it means to be a pregnant and/or parenting student within the California State University system.



Paulina Rojas, Student Parent at UC Davis

Paulina Rojas is a PhD candidate in Ecology whose research focuses on the restoration of freshwater ecosystems, water, and the rights of nature. As a student parent, Paulina understands the unique challenges parents face in academia and passionately advocates for equity and access to education. Paulina is committed to promoting career development opportunities for all students, ensuring that personal circumstances do not hinder academic and professional growth. Her advocacy work aims to create inclusive environments that support diverse student populations.



AJ Johnson, Policy Director at California Competes

AJ Johnson leads the implementation of California Competes's policy agenda and policy research activities, including those related to student parents' needs.

