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UCSB programs for student parents and low-income scholars win NASH awards

“It is well documented that the journey to and through college is challenging for many students, but it is even more challenging for student parents as they juggle academic demands while also raising children,” said Annette Suding Muse, director of Early Childhood Care and Education Services (ECCES) at UC Santa Barbara, which has received a National Association of Higher Education Systems (NASH) Catalyst Fund award to provide child care for student parents during “Dead Week.”

ECCES is one of two programs to receive the catalyst award which is given annually to programs that remove cost as a barrier to college access. UCSB’s Promise Scholars, which provides wrap-around support for low-income, first generation and underrepresented college students, also received the award.

By providing childcare during “Dead Week,” ECCES will raise the bar in university support for student parents, who can entrust their child to an experienced caregiver while they study for and take their finals. “‘Dead Week’ is a critical time of the academic quarter and the extension of quality child care to support student parents will help make a significant contribution to their academic success,” said Suding Muse. ECCES was awarded \$5,000 toward a pilot project for UCSB in the hopes that it will demonstrate a positive outcome that helps to reduce cost as a barrier as well as the potential for the intervention to be replicated at additional institutions.

For the Promise Scholars, the NASH award will help fund the highest need student orientation fees, hire work study students to assist with our volunteer peer mentor programming during Freshman Summer Start, and help to organize, advertise and run workshops. The program has been successful in terms of retention and time to degree, said Holly Roose, Promise Scholars program director. Thanks to the UC Office of the President (UCOP), the program has expanded to include nearly all extreme low income students coming to UCSB.

“Through this expansion, and the opportunity to provide our high touch support model to well over 1,000 students, we aim to reach UCOP’s 2030 goals to close the graduation/retention gap between the demographic we serve and the larger campus,” said Roose, “The majority of students who drop out, stop out or get dismissed, do so in their first year of college. Therefore, one of the ways which would advance equitable access and address accessibility would be to provide as much support as possible at the front end of their university experience.”

The [NASH Catalyst Fund](#) encourages broad engagement of member systems in sharing promising practices that are leading to equitable student success outcomes scalable to fellow systems.

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.