

Project Title: Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership: Social Work and Human Services Program

Project Lead: Dr. James Fent and Nicole Rose, Associate Professors, Behavioral Sciences Department, Social and Behavioral Sciences Division
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Project Goal: Strengthen pathways to social work and human services careers by enhancing curriculum, expanding work-based learning opportunities, and providing academic and career support for students pursuing social service-related programs.



Achievements

- Strengthened social work and human services curriculum, transfer pathways, and workforce preparation
- Expanded employer and community partnerships from 5 to 24 organizations, increasing work-based learning opportunities.
- Partnered with Palomar's Basic Needs Department to expand service-learning opportunities and student engagement.
- Hosted the Community Connections: Programs with a Purpose event to connect students with community resources and career opportunities.



Student Impact

- Expanded access to career planning, transfer guidance, and workforce support services.
- Served 457 students, including 65% first-generation and 60% low-income students.
- Provided individualized academic advising to 23 students.
- 255 students completed core Social Work and Human Services (SWHS) coursework; 20 earned SWHS degrees or certificates.



Partnerships & Collaborations

- Collaborated with the San Diego Workforce Partnership to strengthen workforce connections and student referrals.
- Partnered with 24 community organizations to expand work-based learning opportunities.
- Collaborated with Palomar College's Basic Needs Department to expand service-learning opportunities.
- Established a Social Work and Human Services Advisory Board to strengthen employer engagement and workforce alignment.



Institutional and Community Impact

- Enhanced career-connected learning in social work and human services.
- Strengthened collaboration among academic, workforce, and community partners.
- Strengthened workforce pipelines in behavioral health and human services.
- Redesigned the SWHS website to improve access to program information and resources.



What's Next?

The Social Work and Human Services program will continue strengthening employer and community partnerships, expanding work-based learning and transfer pathways, and enhancing student support services. Future efforts will focus on growing the SWHS Advisory Board, increasing outreach, updating program resources, and pursuing additional funding to sustain program innovation and student success.