

Las Positas College Puente Project

Volume 2 Spring 2026 Semester



Puente Students at the University of California, Santa Barbara hosted by UCSB Puente.

IN THIS EDITION

- Mentor Mixer 3
- Southern California Trip
- New Hawk Day
- One Love Festival
- Latine Graduation
- The Student Experience
- Acknowledgements

Looking back at Mentor Mixer 3

The Las Positas College Puente Project hosted Mentors and Mentees for their third and final meeting of the academic year. In this Mixer, led by the Counseling faculty gave students the opportunity to dive deeper with their Mentors into different career and educational...

Southern California Trip

In the early hours of Wednesday April 22, 2025 students from Puente embarked on an all-inclusive four day tour Southern California Universities paid for by the Puente program. On the first day, students toured California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo...

New Hawk Day

New Hawk Day is an annual event hosted by Las Positas College to support new students enrolling for the Fall semester. The day gives first-time students the opportunity to learn about the campus, organizations to support their success, and support when...

Honoring our Graduating Puentistas

On May 9th in collaboration with the Chicano Latino Education Association, Puente honored over 30 graduating students during the Latine Graduation. Students heard from Puente student Yazmin Martinez Portilla give an inspiring...

Mentor Mixer 3

The Las Positas College Puente Project hosted Mentors and Mentees for their third and final meeting of the academic year. In this Mixer, led by the Counseling faculty, gave students the opportunity to dive deeper with their Mentors into different career and educational pathways allowing them to put more thought into their future journey. After a presentation by the Counseling team about the differences between the California State University and University of California, Students and their Mentors were given guided questions and had the opportunity to walk around and find a comfortable place to help Students discuss their plans while their Mentor listened and gave advice to their own educational and career journey. As this was the last of the Mentor Mixer series for the 2025-2026 Cohort, at the end of the event the Mentees presented their Mentors with a gift. A touch of appreciation from the students and the program to the Mentors as a thank you for their support of our students this academic year and taking the time to support our Las Positas College community.

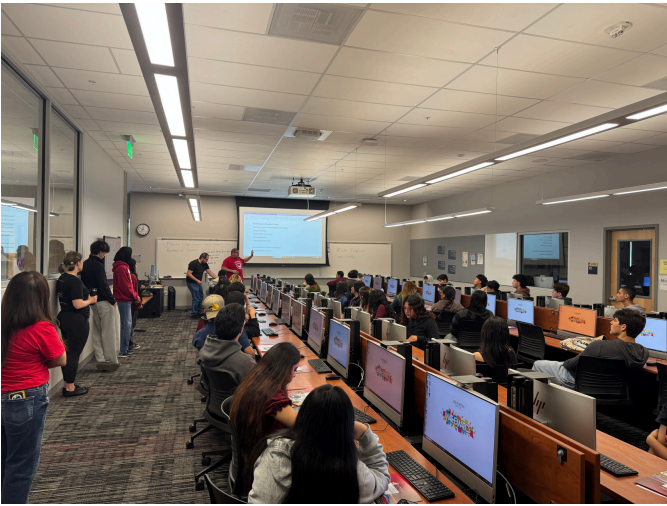


Southern California Trip

In the early hours of Wednesday April 22, 2025 students from Puente embarked on an all-inclusive four day tour Southern California Universities funded by the Puente program. On the first day, students toured California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo with tour guides from Cal Poly Puente giving our students a look at one of the top California State Universities along with resources the university has for students. On the same day, students also toured the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) with guides from UCSB Puente who gave students a glimpse into the seaside university on the beach. In addition to this, UCSB Puente organized a 5-person panel of community college transfer students which allowed our Puente students to ask questions, gain a better understanding of the transfer process, and what it's actually like transferring someone who did it before. On the second day, students visited California State University, Northridge where they received an Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) presentation by the campuses EOP staff and then proceeded to tour the campus, which is also the school Puente Mathematics Professor Alain Olavarrieta attended for his master's degree. To cap off the campus tours, students visited the #2 university in the United States, the University of California, Los Angeles where they were greeted by a faculty member and given a Student of Color School tour of the campus which highlighted resources students can utilize. Overall, Puente students were given the chance to see schools they could potentially transfer to and given additional information about these schools the and motivation to work hard.



New Hawk Day



New Hawk Day is an annual event hosted by Las Positas College to support new students enrolling for the Fall semester. The day gives first-time students the opportunity to learn about the campus, organizations to support their success, and support when it comes to registering for their first classes at Las Positas. The Puente Project had its own session where students who have expressed interest in the program can gain a greater understanding of the program. In addition to this, Puente students Scott Gerardo and Viri Gonzalez tabled for the program to support its outreach efforts during the Resource Fair, Jacqueline Navarro and Yazmin Martinez-Portilla described their experiences in how the program has supported them to the potential students during the session.

One Love Festival

The Puente Club represented the Las Positas College Puente Project at our annual One Love Festival that brings together different cultures on campus to create greater community. At the Puente booth, we played loteria which players could win a variety of prizes for winning and having fun!



Honoring our Graduating Puentistas

On May 9th in collaboration with the Chicano Latino Education Association, Puente honored over 30 graduating students during the Latine Graduation. Students heard from Puente student Yazmin Martinez Portilla give an inspiring, motivational, and tear-inducing testimony about what has kept her motivated into transferring to UC Berkeley. After the ceremony, graduating students and their families celebrated with music, food, and time to soak in the moment.



The Student Experience

Jacquelin Moreno Navarro, Phase 2 Student, Cohort 1 25-26

My experience with the Puente program has been great. I am in my first year in the program. Some good benefits I've personally taken from this program have been pre registration when signing up for classes, first dibs appointments with counselors, and most of all you take GEN ED classes depending on your major. Although besides taking classes and having first dibs you also get to meet new amazing people beginning with teachers and students even have a chance to be given the opportunity to have a personal mentor to chat with during the program to help you apply for internships and find good opportunities for us students based on our majors. Another great opportunity in Puente is the Puente Club where anybody is welcome and gets to be part of events being hosted at the campus along with being able to help and volunteer. The best part of this program, which is my personal favorite, is getting to travel to certain colleges to explore and maybe have an open option for us students to transfer after being in community college for the past two years.

Janessa Torres, Phase 3 Student, Cohort 2, 24-25

Being a part of the Puente Program it was able to give me a sense of community. Joining it my first semester at Las Positas I wasn't sure what to expect or what I would gain from it. The program was able to give me skills and set me up for success when it came time to transfer and apply my knowledge at a four year university. I was able to work with teachers that wanted to see me succeed and push myself further. Going on field trips to different universities and hearing from different college representatives open my eyes to see all the possible outcomes I could have in my future. So looking back at my first semester at Las Positas I'm so glad I was able to join the Puente Program and become a part of such a great community.

Scott Gerardo, Phase 3 Student, Cohort 1, 24-25

When I first signed up for Puente, I didn't know what I was getting into which led to me nearly dropping out of the program entirely, primarily because I was uncomfortable with stepping out of my comfort zone. I ended up sticking through with the program, which supported me throughout my time at Las Positas and led to me being able to support the program in a unique way: as a student assistant. Being able to give back the support to a community that supported me so much has been the greatest experience, especially getting to know students and learning about their experiences, it's something I will always carry with me in what I do. Supporting this program is something I've truly loved doing during my time at Las Positas. In the end, I'm glad I didn't drop Puente and have been able to support students like myself.



Scott Gerardo (second from the right) at the Puente Math and Science Academy at the University of California, Berkeley.

Yzabella Navarro, Phase 2 Student, Cohort 2, 25-26

So far, my experience with Puente has been very positive. For one, the Puente counselors are super helpful. It was nice having someone that I could rely on when it came to figuring out my major and academic plan. I also like how we were able to build a classroom community within the program. It's noticeable how the classroom dynamic changes when I'm in a Puente class versus another class that isn't related to Puente. Even though most of the Puentistas end up varying in majors, we make friends throughout the first year at LPC and continue this camaraderie throughout our time at Las Positas and outside of school.

Alexander Navarro, Phase 2 Student, Cohort 1, 25-26

I benefited from the program heavily by all the support that is offered for us, like the mentor mixers, the labs, and the motivational conference. It's also really helpful with all the networking opportunities and the counselors being there to guide you. To top that all off, the friends you make in the program are amazing! It's also good for when you need someone to have your back. Overall, the program is an amazing program and I definitely do not regret signing up for it. Thanks to my mom and sister pushing me, I was able to be a part of this great learning community!



Various students from the 24-25 Puente Cohort attempting to build the tallest spaghetti tower.



Puente students studying in the "Puente Space" located in the Cultural Community Center.



Students from Puente Club participating in a pumpkin painting event in the Cultural Community Center.

Phase 1 Student: First Semester in Puente

Phase 2 Student: Second Semester in Puente

Phase 3 Student: Third/Fourth Semester in Puente

The Student Experience

Nataly Cubias, Phase 3 Student, Cohort 2, 24-25

My experience in the Puente program was very helpful. As a first-generation college student and the oldest daughter in my family, it was difficult at first to know how to navigate community college and find the right resources. Being part of Puente made that process much easier. The program offers a strong support system through teachers and counselors who are knowledgeable, supportive, and invested in their students' success. They provide guidance with academics, planning, and future goals, which helped me stay on track. Through Puente, I was also able to make good friends who understood similar challenges, creating a supportive environment. The program offers useful resources, meetings, and trips that helped me learn more about college opportunities and transfer pathways. Overall, Puente has been a positive part of my college experience and has helped me better understand how to use available resources, stay organized, and plan for my future in higher education.

Alyseah Andrade, Phase 3 Student, Cohort 2, 24-25

Being part of the Puente Program at Las Positas College has been incredibly impactful for me. When I first came to college, I was very nervous about meeting people and feeling like I belonged, but after joining Puente I couldn't have made a better choice. Puente has opened me up to so many great opportunities that I am truly grateful. By having a helpful counselor who truly reached out and cared for their students made a big difference. This always made me feel seen and supported. Puente allowed me to connect with my culture while learning alongside others who understood my background as well. Through the program, I've gained valuable connections with mentors, classmates, and staff who have helped guide me toward great opportunities for my future career. From those connections, I also formed friendships that will last a lifetime, and I felt myself grow so much as a person. Overall, Puente has helped me build confidence, improve my academic skills, and feel like I truly belonged here at Las Positas college!

Mitiz Martinez, Phase 3 Student, Cohort 2, 24-25

Through the Puente program, I was able to obtain a lot of important information on how to apply to different colleges as well as what the requirements are to transfer into those colleges. What I really enjoyed about the program was the mentor mixer. In the mentor mixer, we were able to meet people going into the same field and we were able to learn about their experiences throughout their time in college and the opportunities they took to get to where they are at. Throughout my experience in Puente, I felt motivated and guided to continue the academic pathway that I chose.

Freddy Zamora, Phase 2 Student, Cohort 2, 25-26

My experience in the Puente Program has been amazing, I feel like I've gotten closer to my culture and has made me more proud of it. The ways I've benefited from the Puente Program are getting priority registration which helped me get the classes required for my major earlier, having a personal counselor helped me navigate Canvas and ClassWeb better and learn more about transferring, and lastly the campus field trips helped me get a feel of what being at a 4 year university is like. What I've taken from this program is how friendly everyone is, including the professors and even if you are a different ethnicity you're welcome, you don't need to be chicana/o or latina/o to be in Puente which I found really cool. I've made good friends with a group of people that genuinely make me look forward to going to school thanks to the Puente Program.

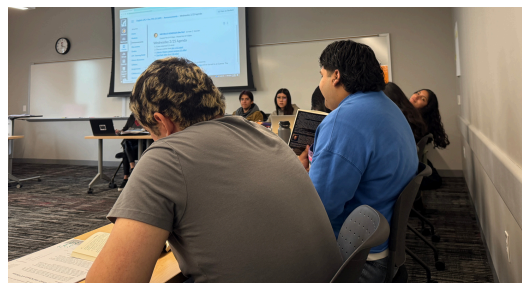
Where our Puentistas are going:

Our Puentistas at Las Positas end up at universities across California, some of our students are taking their Puente and Hawk pride to:

- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Merced
- California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
- San Diego State University
- California State University, Sacramento
- San Jose State University
- California State University, East Bay
- San Francisco State University
- New York University



Scott Gerardo photobombing the LPC Hawk holding a Puente cutout.



Student partaking in a discussion in English class.



Members of the Puente Club tabling during the Winter Wonderland Club Event.



Reyna Caranza (third from the left) at the Puente Math and Science Academy at the University of California, Berkeley.

Acknowledgements

The Puente Project at Las Positas College is made possible by our campus community.

We are grateful to the following individuals for their support:

Rafael Valle

Admissions and Records, Charlotte Kenny, and Tania Torres

Student Life, Student Government, and Josue Hernandez

Cultural Community Center and Rosa Lopez-Rodriguez

Chicano Latino Education Association

Julie Nguyen

Savannah Richardson

Kristi Vanderhoof

Andrea Anderson

Chip Worner

Carlos Hernandez

John Gomez

Maintenance & Operations AM & PM

Information Technology Services, Rachel Ugale, AJ Malaca, Christine Hornbaker, Sherman Lindsey

Business Services, Lisa High, Thomas Rothman, Sui Song, and Sharon Davidson

The Puente Club: Yazmin Martinez, Viri Gonzalez, Reyna Carranza, Regina Peña Olea, and Sofia Peña

Olea

Alberto Moreno Herrera and Vince Ortiz

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services

Campus Safety and Sean Prather

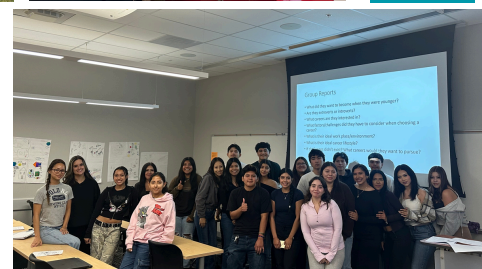
The Veterans Resource Center

Dean Gagnon, Dean Sidela, Marisol, and Sabrina

Vice President Wilson and Yvette Nahinu

All of our Campus Partners and Puente Mentors

We appreciate all the hard work our campus partners have done to support the program this year.



PUENTE

Editors:

Scott Gerardo

Viri Gonzalez

Puente Project Team