START YOUR EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY WITH THE OHLONE COLLEGE EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS & SERVICES (EOPS) PROGRAM

Created by: Sandy Bennett
About Sandy Bennett

Sandy has been in the field of higher education for almost 25 years, and during that time, she has held the hand of many students. As the Extended Opportunity Program and Service (EOPS), Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) and California Work Opportunity and Responsibility for Kids (CalWORKs) Coordinator at Ohlone College in Fremont, CA, she passionately walks alongside students to guide them through pathways that lead to academic success.

Sandy believes the secret sauce of success is found in building a community. Connecting, engaging, and collaborating with others can be powerful! Providing a safe place where students can land creates a sense of belonging for those who feel like a fish out of water when navigating the college experience. Her mantra is, “If you are doing it alone, you are doing it wrong.”

In addition to being a catalyst for community college students, Sandy is a bridge for adult learners who are interested in enhancing and advancing their skills as well.

As she responds to the growing needs of Ohlone’s diverse community with integrity, hard work, compassion, sensitivity, innovative creativity, and inclusion, Sandy empowers students with encouragement and a “You can do it” message. Her vision and mission are to create an experience that exceeds the student’s expectations. She is always willing to help anyone. Her student-centric concern supports the premise that every student makes the institution’s tomorrow possible.

To recognize her work in supporting students and staff, Sandy has earned numerous awards. In 2008, she received the California Community College Association Leadership Award. In 2018, she was named the Ohlone College Employee of the Year. In 2019, Sandy was one of four people in the state of California who received the California School Employee Association (CSEA) Member of the Year Award. In 2020, Sandy is one of four people in the country who received the National RISE Award (Recognizing Inspiring School Employees).

Sandy earned an Associate of Arts Degree in Liberal Arts from Ohlone College. She transferred the New College of California in San Francisco, where she earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Human Services and a Master’s Degree in Leadership and Humanities.

“Sandy is inspired to never stop learning because life never stops teaching.”

EOPS and CARE strive to meet the educational needs of students who are impacted disproportionately, first-generation, and economically disadvantaged. Also, CalWORKs is designed to lift California families out of poverty through education.

Meet the OHLONE COLLEGE EOPS CREW

Connect, engage, collaborate, and build a community with a crew of students and a team of professionals who authentically care.

Thank you, Mia Gonzales, for naming the characters. You are such a special young lady, and I am so excited you were involved in this project.

Thank you, EOPS Alumni and current students, for sharing your stories.

Thank you, Nancy Chieng, for creating the components for the Guided Pathways to Success in EOPS diagram.

Elaine Lee, with Print ‘N Graphics, you are an amazing graphic designer. We appreciate your support.

Thank you, American Printing, for designing all of the character marketing materials.

Jackie Dumont, thank you for giving your talent and time to proofread the content of this book.

Alexis Bennett and Lea Witmer, thank you for lending your eyes to help proofread as well.

Sandy Bennett
EOPS/CARE/CalWORKs
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The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) Program strives to meet the educational needs of students who are hindered by language, social, and economic disadvantages. EOPS offers a menu of programs and services that facilitates the process of supporting students in achieving their academic, transfer, personal, and career goals.

The primary purpose of EOPS is to prepare students to complete a vocational certificate or associate degree, or transfer to a four-year university, which can lead to a rewarding career as a result of their educational experience. To achieve this objective, we provide academic counseling and career planning advising.

The experience of connecting, engaging, collaborating and building a community with a crew of students, and a team of professionals who authentically care is life-changing.

Walking alongside EOPS students, and guiding them through pathways that lead to academic success is Ohlone College’s mission, vision, and goal.

The EOPS Motto is, “If students are doing it alone, they are doing it wrong.”

### EOPS Services

- **Academic Advising**
  Students receive assistance with admissions, registration, financial aid, and the development of their educational plans.

- **Financial Assistance**
  Assistance is available for books and educational supplies.

- **Outreach Services**
  Recruitment services are available to high school and community agencies.

- **Early Registration**
  Students may register early each semester.

- **Transfer Services**
  Assistance with the transfer process is one of the highlights of our Program. Applications, fee waivers and other materials are available at our office.

- **Workshops**
  Informational sessions on various topics are offered throughout the academic year.
About the CalWORKs Program

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program at Ohlone College encourages personal responsibility and accountability. It is committed to helping individuals receive an education and instruction that will provide employment opportunities.

CalWORKs promotes short-term training, as well as life-long learning. The ultimate goal of the program is to assist CalWORKs students with vocational and educational training programs, which will lead to self-sufficiency. The CalWORKs program at Ohlone has been developed in partnership with the Alameda County Department of Social Services.

CalWORKs Services

- **Academic Advising Services**
  Assist students with the development of a County-approved educational plan.

- **Career Advising**
  Help students choose from a wide range of career choices.

- **Lifting Families Out of Poverty Support**
  Provide students with assistance, guidance and support while navigating through the social services system.

- **Career Services**
  Assist students with resume writing, internet job search, interview techniques and job placement, both on and off campus.

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About the CARE Program

The Cooperative Agency Resources for Education (CARE) Program was established by Senate Bill 3103, in 1982, to assist EOP&S students who are single head of household, and recipients of CalWORKs, receiving cash aid.

The was intent of this program is to lift families out of poverty by exposing them to educational opportunities to improve skills and increase their knowledge base on career choices. This would ultimately lead them to become employable and economically self-sufficient.

CARE Services

- **Counseling Services**
  Students receive assistance with admissions, registration, financial aid, and the development of their educational plans.

- **Financial Assistance**
  Provide assistance for books and educational supplies.

- **Workshops**
  Provide informational sessions on various topics throughout the academic year.

- **Referral Services**
  Provide assistance with referral to social services, housing, childcare, 211 a critical partner to national and local companies that are committed to improving lives.

- **Support Groups (when needed)**
  To remain connected, support groups are offered.

- **Assistance with Social Services**
  Provide assistance with helping students navigate the social services system.

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Guided Pathway to Success in EOPS

**START**

Apply for admissions to Ohlone

1. Sign up for WebAdvisor and your Ohlone student email account

2. Submit an application for EOPS (online or in person)

3. Enroll in a Personal Development class your first semester

4. Submit MSPRs (Mid-Semester Progress Reports) to EOPS

5. Earn EOPS BUCKS when you participate in the above events and redeem them for school supplies and more!

6. Take an EOPS self-enhancement workshop available during the year!

7. Create an SEP (Student Education Plan) with your counselor

8. Required to complete 3 counseling appts. each semester

9. Required to complete 3 counseling appts. every semester

10. Counselors’ Office Hours

11. EPA 230/231

12. EPA 232/233

13. EPA 234/235

14. EPA 236/237

15. EPA 238/239

16. EPA 240/241

17. EPA 242/243

18. EPA 244/245

19. EPA 246/247

20. EPA 248/249

**END**

Attend the EOPS Award Ceremony

**Continue to Pursue**

Your Dreams and Goals!

1. Applying for FAFSA/CA Dream Act will make you eligible for the California College Promise Grant to cover the cost of your classes.

2. Topics include career/life planning, college success, and transferring to a 4-year university.

3. Complete the online Orientation and Placement module. Log into your WebAdvisor account, go to the Student Menu page and click on Start Here: Orientation & Placement.

4. Schedule an appointment with an EOPS counselor every semester. They are here to support you with any academic, career, and personal concerns or questions.

5. MSPR is required for EOPS. It is an important check-in to see how your classes are progressing.

6. Attend EOPS orientation. Get off to a good start and learn about the different opportunities and resources at EOPS.

7. At least two appointments must be with an EOPS counselor.

8. Qualify for the EOPS Book Grant if in compliance each semester (3 EOPS counseling contacts, 9 or more units completed, 2.0 GPA, attend an EOPS orientation, and 9 or more units enrolled for next semester).

9. As an EOPS student, you are able to register early for your classes.

10. An SEP is a roadmap to help guide you in reaching your goals. Update it every semester even if your goals/plans have changed.

11. If planning to transfer to a 4-year university such as UC or CSU, counselors can assist with the application process. Fee waivers to cover the cost of UC/CSU applications are available.
Hi everybody! My name is **Nico**. Meet **Shah Nawaz Mohammad**, and this is his journey with EOPS.

Starting college after migrating to the United States has not been easy for Shah. Along with regular challenges an immigrant faces, he was introduced to a new educational system as well. During his Ohlone College journey, he, fortunately, found the Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS).

Discovering EOPS has played a pivotal role in Shah’s progress toward his goals, and the EOPS counselors have been great advisors and mentors. From the beginning, the counselors helped him to create a tangible road map known as a Student Educational Plan (SEP). This map outlined and included every class he needed to take. While pursuing an Associate of Arts degree in Human Development and a Certificate of Achievement in Personal Development, the SEP has helped Shah to keep his priorities in mind, which has enabled him to complete his programs on time.

EOPS has offered a multitude of other valuable resources to support Shah and other EOPS students. For instance, the EOPS Academic Lending Library (ALL) helps students save money by borrowing textbooks. Another invaluable resource for Shah and others has been the EOPS Collaborative Learning Center (CLC). It is a safe place on campus where EOPS students have been able to gather, collaborate, study, print assignments for free, help each other, and learn. There have been many workshop offerings on a variety of topics designed to increase a student’s knowledge base and skillset.

In partnership with the Ohlone College Career Center, Shah and his peers have also accessed information about career counseling, career development, and job training opportunities. The array of existing services and resources has been an excellent developmental tool. EOPS and all of its many benefits will be forever etched in Shah’s memory. He is eternally grateful! As Shah has received so much support from EOPS, he endeavors to give something back.

Sandy Bennett, the EOPS/CARE/CalWORKs Coordinator, often solicits volunteers to help serve the community as a way of informing the community about the EOPS Program, and Shah has never hesitated to answer her call for volunteers. Throughout his time at Ohlone, Shah has had many opportunities to share his gifts, talents, and knowledge with the surrounding communities. He has volunteered at the following events:

- EOPS Awards Ceremony,
- CityServe Christmas Toy distribution program
- Fremont Independence Day parade
- Arrange IRUSA’s fundraising and food packing events. An active member of ICNA’s food truck project
- Food distributor to the homeless in San Francisco, San Jose, and Sacramento.

With the help and support of EOPS, in summer 2019, Shah completed his Associate degrees in Science and Human Development and transferred to San Jose State (SJSU) University in fall 2019. His future goal is to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Management Information System. His overall dream is to work in the tech industry and set up a venture capital firm.

Shah’s biggest motivation to pursue his degree has been his family and the community. He desires to provide for his parents, who have been working hard to support the family since their migration. Shah’s family has faced barriers as all migrants do. Although its improvement has been slower than he may have wanted, Shah believes that those who learn more, earn more. He hopes to contribute more towards his family and support the community. With his sphere of influence, Shah wishes not only to support his family but also to lead and guide others to greatness!

Shah is a product of EOPS. The Program was available to him, and it is accessible to you as well. **Start Your Educational Journey with the Ohlone College EOPS Program today!**
Hello! My name is Pablo, and I want to introduce you to Russell Sanchez.

I am excited to share Russell’s unique experience in EOPS that laid the foundation for his education, professional career, and overall success. First, let me share a brief background of how Russell became a part of the EOPS family at Ohlone College. He graduated from Roseville High School in 1979; that same year, he enlisted in the United States Army 82nd Airborne Division. Next, from 1983-1986 Russell worked for the Department of Defense (DOD), and in 1994 transferred to DLA as part of a cadre tasked with base closures until 1996. Upon which time, he decided to pursue higher education.

In the spring of 1996, Russell began his first semester at Ohlone College and became familiar with the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS). Along with the required general education courses, he took a particular interest in medical terminology, procedures, and patient handling. From 1997 to 2007, Russell worked towards earning an Associate of Arts degree. He increased his knowledge of medical and practicum with phlebotomy and EMT classes. In 1998, he obtained certifications in both areas.

In 2000, he kicked off the millennium earning his Associate of Arts degree and working with EOPS students. Many students were overwhelmed by schedules, coursework, homework, and study habits. As a student himself, who overcame many similar struggles, Russell could relate. As a result, he collaborated with the EOPS Counselors and staff to develop an outreach program that would encourage first-generation and underprivileged college students to pursue higher education.

Many high school juniors and seniors were able to see a path towards being college-bound under his tutelage. Russell coordinated field trips to San Jose State, UC Santa Cruz, and UC Davis—to name a few. Moreover, after being out of school for two decades, he used his experience as a re-entry student to help others with comparable challenges.

His involvement had a synergistic effect that was felt by staff and students; plus, it provided an overall boost in morale for those struggling to stay on task in a new college environment. The matriculation process and experience proved invaluable when he left Ohlone College in 2000 to pursue internships, externships, and a variety of OJT (on the job training) experiences in the East Bay medical community. The time and experience at Ohlone paved the way for Russell’s medical knowledge and skills to increase and develop so that he could embark on a medical career at the VA Hospital in Palo Alto, CA.

From 2003-2005, he worked as a phlebotomist and completed advanced courses to become a certified medical technician which served as a pathway to a coveted pathology assistant position.

Russell’s pivotal year proved to be in 2009; he trained intensively with noted doctors, surgeons, and specialized medical professionals to earn the position of a Pathology Technician Supervisor; this is the esteemed position that he currently holds.

His experience in EOPS inspired him to start an outreach program at Palo Alto, known as the Veterans Administration Pathology Program (VAPAPP). Led by Russell, in 2013, was the inaugural implementation of the first official VAPAPP course. This program became the vehicle for high school and college students seeking the necessary knowledge of practicum and practices to advance in higher requisite medical courses. These students received explicit instructions and guidance in lab procedures, pathology, organ removal, dissection, suturing techniques, and lab safety. To date, two hundred and thirty students have graduated from the program. Russell is proud that many of them have moved on to become doctors, surgeons, and healthcare specialists in the medical field.

A familiar aphorism is, “Hindsight is 20/20.” It is without a doubt the vision that Russell realized pertains to EOPS after nearly two decades. Although not clear at the me, the EOPS experience proved to be the guiding force and light that was the inspiration to press on and continue the mission of always pursuing success. Russell remains grateful to all of the great people and institutions that have served him well: public education, the US Army, DOD/DLA, and EOPS. To this day, Russell acknowledges Debbie Trigg, Sandy Bennet, Inga Bellamy, and his alma mater, the VA Hospital Palo Alto, CA.

Russell is a proud product of EOPS. The program was available to him, and it is accessible to you as well. Start Your Educational Journey with the EOPS Ohlone College Program today!
Hello! My name is Navia, and this is the story of Shawna Lujan.

When Shawna was a little girl, she had two dreams, one was to get married, and the other was to have babies, lots of them... six boys, to be exact. By the time Shawna was 24 years old, she was still unmarried, and it seemed like all of her friends were planning their dream weddings. Shawna attributed her lack of marriage to her weight. She was a chubby girl, and because of it, she had very low self-esteem.

Shawna decided to take control of her life and her destiny. She got online, went into chat rooms, and started to browse the web for her future husband. Finally, she found Anthony. Their relationship began by chatting online. Then, it led to phone calls, and finally, late one night, she heard the words that she had longed to hear her entire life, “Will—you—marry—me?” She replied with a resounding, “YES!” They made plans for him to move from Colorado to California so that they could get married. A week later, they were together and driving through the night to Reno to elope. They married, and within two months, she found out she was pregnant. Finally, her dreams were coming true... or so she thought.

Anthony became verbally abusive, and he began physically abusing her as well. Being abused became her norm. In the spring of 1999, Shawna gave birth to a beautiful 10 pound, 8-ounce baby boy, her sweet Trevor David. As she held him in her arms, she knew what true love was and knew that her sweet little one depended on her for protection, love, and life.

Months later, Trevor and Shawna were at the park; they had escaped for the afternoon. She looked at his sweet face and began to cry. Then before she knew it, she was sobbing, “I’m sorry, Trevor. I’m so sorry... I’m sorry he’s your daddy. I’m sorry... I promise he won’t hurt us anymore... I’m so sorry.... I promise I’ll find you a new daddy... one who will love you and take care of you... and me... I’m so sorry.” That moment was a turning point. In just a matter of days, Shawna finally took control and kicked Anthony out of their house and out of their lives. Anthony left – never – to – return – again.

Shawna found herself with $10 in her pocket, along with a new baby. Without a college education, there wasn’t much she could do that would earn a living wage. Shawna swallowed her pride, went to the county office, and applied for welfare. This was never part of her original dream, but she had to do what was necessary for her son and herself. She did everything the county required her to do. After failing at getting a job, the county sent Shawna to college. Here she was a divorced single mother who was much older than the traditional college student and was about to start at Ohlone College. She was terrified!

The first place Shawna was referred to was the EOPS office, and it was there that she found the educational, financial, and emotional support that she needed. Mzao (her counselor) mapped out each class she needed to take while Sandy, Inga, and Debbie cheered her on to the finish line. Had it not been for this group of people, she would never have gone beyond one class. They became her family. They loved her, and they loved Trevor.

By the time Shawna graduated from Ohlone and scheduled to transfer to San Jose State University, she was offered a part-time job in the CalWORKs program. This job would pay enough money for her and Trevor not to be on welfare any longer. Life was beginning to fall into place for Shawna and her son. She completed her Bachelor’s degree and accepted a full-time position at Ohlone College as the CalWORKs Program Coordinator. Then, she went on to complete a master’s degree.

Today, Trevor is 20 years old and a student at Ohlone. Currently, Shawna is the Division Assistant for Counseling. She has remarried to a wonderful man. She promised Trevor she would find “a new daddy” who loves and takes care of them. Together, they have a beautiful blended family with four children: Trevor (20), Corbin (14), Alyssa (12), and in 2014, they welcomed the newest member of the bunch, Jonathan David (5). This may not have been her original dream. The dream changed somewhere along the line, but she is blessed to have her new dreams come true.

Shawna is a proud product of EOPS, CARE, and CalWORKs. The programs were available to her, and they are accessible to you as well. Start Your Educational Journey at Ohlone College today!
Hi, I am **Sasha**, and this is **Vela**’s story.

Vela’s humble and tumultuous, beginning with her biological mother and siblings has been her primary motivation not only to succeed but to excel. Her mother was a drug addict who did anything and everything to get her next high. While going through this struggle, she gave birth to Vela and a crayon assortment of children. Unfortunately, Vela and her siblings were shuffled around like a deck of playing cards and passed out to new families. Consequently, Vela spent a short period in the foster care system until she was fortunate enough to join a family unit of relatives.

Vela grew up with her cousins, who soon became more like her siblings. In light of the circumstances, she was satisfied with that—at least until she started school. Children have a penchant for being adorable, but they can also be cruel. With that said, Vela suffered through a lot of bullying because she didn’t look like her newfound siblings, and she had a different last name. Sadly, bullies seek out their victims for many reasons. Unfortunately, the bullying followed Vela to high school and agonizingly didn’t stop. Painfully, the methods of bullying and intimidation merely changed.

What was next? Vela faced the big challenge of college. Although she successfully graduated from high school, she was still unprepared for college-level coursework. Nonetheless, Vela enrolled in college to please her parents. Because Vela lacked confidence in herself to do well, she flopped academically again. This setback led her to take me off from school to enter the workforce.

After some time passed, Vela decided to return to college. To avoid any skepticism from others, she didn’t tell anyone. This time, her path led to Ohlone College. The support she received was very different than when she went to college the first time. She never expected to encounter so many people cheering her on to succeed. She applied to the Extended Opportunity Program & Services Programs (EOPS) and was accepted and assigned a counselor.

Vela’s academic challenges created a deep fear in her. The dreaded thought of being abandoned, following a downward path like her biological mother and siblings, or doing something that would cause her loving adoptive family to be disappointed gave her anxiety and nightmares. Although she faced these challenges and more, her new counselor remained supportive.

When Vela felt like it was too much to handle, her counselor was a pleasant anchor. She told Vela to stand up straight with pride, respond to those who lacked faith in her with a smile, and allow her achievements to speak for her. So, she did. In a quarter of the time expected, Vela made up the missing credits and graduated before turning 19 years old. She was beating the odds, and she felt AMAZING!

What was next? Vela faced the big challenge of college. Although she successfully graduated from high school, she was still unprepared for college-level coursework. Nonetheless, Vela enrolled in college to please her parents. Because Vela lacked confidence in herself to do well, she flopped academically again. This setback led her to take time off from school to enter the workforce.

Vela’s EOPS counselor, professors, admissions and records, and financial aid staff members were the greatest motivators outside of her family. They were never too pushy but always seemed to know when to give her that nudge when she felt particularly stagnant and overwhelmed. As a result of this support, Vela received an Associate of Arts degree in Human Development in the spring of 2019. She transferred to a four-year University with the hope of earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in interior design.

Vela is hugely grateful for the love and support she received over the years from family, friends, and EOPS. She continues to declare that without them, her journey would have been much harder. Vela hopes that sharing her story will inspire others to start their path to success.

Vela is a product of EOPS. The program was available to her, and it is accessible to you as well. Start Your Educational Journey with the Ohlone College EOPS Program today!
Charleene's hard work has paid off. In spring 2020, she satisfied all of the requirements to earn an Associate Degree. Although the pandemic of COVID19 prevented her from physically walking across the stage to receive her degree, it didn’t diminish her excitement of completing her goal! Charleene’s next journey will lead to seeking employment.

Upon enrolling at Ohlone, the homeless shelter counselor told Charleene to check out the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Program (EOPS). Charleene applied and was accepted to EOPS. The application process turned out to be easier than she imagined. She thought, “That wasn’t so bad!” Charleene learned that EOPS is a state-funded program, so to ensure student success, all EOPS students are required to meet with an EOPS counselor at least three times a semester. Therefore, Charleene’s educational and EOPS journey began with meeting Mr. Mzao Waters, her new academic counselor. Mzao created a positive and welcoming experience for her. At that point, Charleene knew she was in the right place at the right time.

Mzao helped her choose classes and gave her tips on how to make a smooth transition into college. Soon, Charleene discovered the importance of scheduling appointments with Mzao. When sharing her experience with others, she said, “The counselors help students stay on top of what’s happening in their classes. They help students focus on strengths and weaknesses and give guidance on how to become a better student.” Charleene had no idea how it was working for other students, but because of the closely monitored counseling experience, she enjoyed being in college.

Charleene has grown in all aspects of her life while at Ohlone. Currently 57 years old, she admitted that returning to school was a struggle at first, but without EOPS in her corner from the very beginning, she wouldn’t have had the opportunity to achieve academic success. Consequently, Charleene is grateful to EOPS and all of its services and offerings: orientation, counseling, priority registration, mid-semester progress reports, financial help to purchase books, and so much more.

Although Charleene has faced a few obstacles, on days when she didn’t feel well and didn’t want to study due to severe pain, she didn’t allow any of it to become a barrier. Charleene has persevered through physical and medical challenges with Cerebral Palsy.

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She attributes her success to the Ohlone College EOPS program. She is a proud product of EOPS. The program was available to her, and it is accessible to you as well. Start Your Educational Journey with the Ohlone College EOPS Program today!
Hello everybody, my name is Alex, and this is Biverly and Melissa’s story. EOPS is one of the programs that supported Melissa in a variety of ways throughout her at Ohlone. From receiving book grants each semester to covering the cost of her cap and gown when she graduated. Also, EOPS was a tremendous financial help to her. Even though that was an enormous benefit, the most impactful service that carried Melissa through her journey was the EOPS counseling sessions. Many missteps could have derailed Melissa’s graduang plans – including finding out two days before graduang that she was missing a class and would not graduate. The EOPS Counselors were always available to offer advice and provide the needed informaon to get and keep her on track for graduang.

Biverly is a high school graduate of the California School for the Deaf, Fremont (CSDF). Aer graduang from CSDF, she decided to aend Ohlone College before transferring to a university in New York. Some of the reasons she chose to attend Ohlone are because of its vast Deaf community and sense of inclusiveness. Furthermore, Biverly’s mother, Melissa, is a single mom and is an Ohlone College Alumna. This is their collective story.

When Biverly entered high school at CSDF, she and her mother lived in Fairfield, CA. They commuted daily to Fremont during her first year and a half of high school. CSDF is the only Deaf school in Northern California.

While searching for work and a place to live in or near the Fremont area, Melissa decided to go back to school and complete her degree. She chose to attend Ohlone College and majored in Communication.

While attending Ohlone, Melissa shared many of her challenges and victories with Biverly. It was a huge mission to return to school as a single parent aer a 20-year absence. Some of the courses weren’t easy, like having to take algebra again. Moreover, Melissa was continuously bombarded with one obstacle aer another, which occasionally made her want to give up. For instance, during her first semester at Ohlone, they moved four times, the car was stolen, and there was a (fake) emergency scare at Biverly’s high school. They eventually moved to Hayward—a twenty-five-minute drive to Fremont. The distance was much better than their up to two hours commute from Fairfield. However, before this leg of Melissa’s educational journey was over, another car was stolen for the second time.

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Although she occasionally felt like giving up, Melissa knew that was not an option. She was a full-time worker, full-time student, and full-time single mother who prevailed and graduated from Ohlone College with an Associate of Arts degree in Communication, Associate of Arts in Human Development, and four Communication Certiﬁcates.

Melissa completed what she set out to accomplish, which was to earn her college degrees. Achieving this goal was special and meaningful because Melissa was the ﬁrst person in her family to go to college. After seeing her mother’s determinaon, Biverly was more driven than ever.

Biverly’s journey began in the Philippines. Melissa, who was also a missionary, adopted her when she was three years old. She immediately tried to enroll Biverly in multiple schools in the Philippines but was repeatedly told she could not learn. Determined, Melissa hired a tutor to teach her how to sign; then, she taught Biverly. Often, Melissa would say, “You are a fast learner.” Like a sponge, Biverly absorbed everything. She learned faster than her Mom could teach her. They moved to a city six hours away from a Deaf school operated by an American missionary. When Biverly was six years old, they moved to the U.S., where she continued her education. Eventually graduated from CSDF and enrolled at Ohlone College.

Biverly has been a part of the Deaf Studies Program at Ohlone since 2018. Whenever she has a class where the Professor is not Deaf or doesn’t speak ASL (American Sign Language), two ASL interpreters accompany her to class. Biverly loves the richness of Ohlone’s Deaf community. She has availed multiple programs at Ohlone; the courses are designed to help students succeed and reach their educational goals. Thanks to her mother’s advice, EOPS has been one of these programs. EOPS has guidelines in place, so students who are also deaf may beneﬁt from their services.

Biverly started her third semester at Ohlone in the fall of 2019. Her second semester was a little challenging, but she was determined not to give up just like her mother. She is conﬁdent the determination and drive she learned from her mother, and the advising from the EOPS counselors will carry her through from semester to semester and beyond until she achieves the goal of graduang from Ohlone and transferring to a Deaf university.

Biverly and Melissa are proud products of EOPS. The program was available to them, and it is accessible to you as well. Start Your Educational Journey with the Ohlone College EOPS Program today!
How to apply to EOPS

Check the EOPS Website for application dates and deadlines

On the EOPS homepage, click the How to apply link. Complete the fillable Ohlone EOPS online application.

There are two ways to submit your application.

1. Take a picture of both sides of the application then email to: eops@ohlone.edu

2. or Scan both sides of the application and email it to: eops@ohlone.edu

Please sign your application and tell us how you heard about EOPS.

For EOPS application questions contact us at (510) 659-6152.

STAY TUNED AS THE EOPS JOURNEY CONTINUES...

If these stories have inspired you and you want to use education as the vehicle to transform your life, please contact us: eops@ohlone.edu
For assistance or if you have any questions about EOPS, please contact our office.

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