



## EOPS Celebrates 55th Anniversary

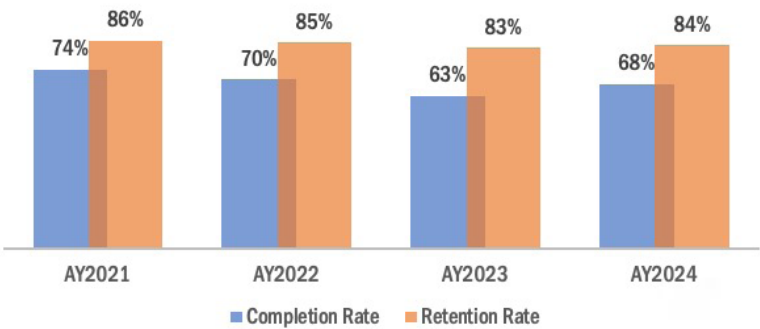
This year marks the 55th anniversary of California Senate Bill 164 being enacted into law, establishing the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) program in community colleges across the state. Berkeley City College EOPS/CARE & NextUp Coordinator Ramona Butler will join colleagues from Laney, Merritt, and College of Alameda to celebrate the founding of this transformative program born out of the Civil Rights Movement at the April 8th Board of Trustees meeting.

The goal of EOPS is to serve low-income low income and academically disadvantaged by breaking down barriers to accessing higher education with dedicated counseling, priority registration, book vouchers and financial aid, and tutoring and career mentoring. Over the years, EOPS has been augmented by sister programs CARE and NextUp, expanding services for single parents and foster youth with resources specifically tailored to these student groups. For 55 years, EOPS has played a crucial role in empowering students from underserved backgrounds, helping them succeed in college and beyond.

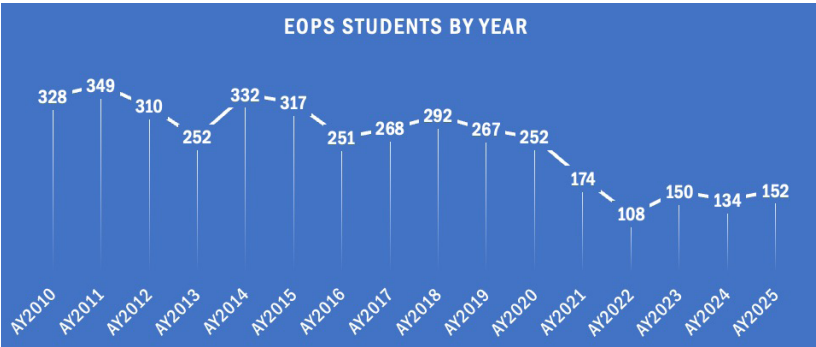
Berkeley City College’s EOPS program is not only committed to providing these essential services, but to building community. It’s important to Berkeley City College EOPS/CARE & NextUp Coordinator Ramona and counselors Alejandra Oseguera, and Guadalupe Jimenez Martinez to build a positive learning environment. Walk into the EOPS offices on the 3rd floor and you will find relaxing music, snacks, and study spaces filled with students. EOPS also offers Art Meditation workshops and special holiday celebrations at the end of the semester. “We are able to provide students with a safety net for their academic journey,” said Ramona. “That little bit of service we can provide to a student can keep them excited about their education.”



EOPS Completion and Retention Rates



EOPS STUDENTS BY YEAR





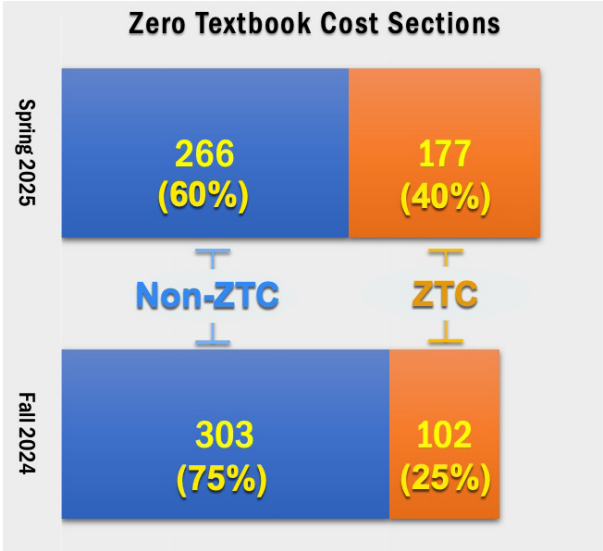
# Berkeley City College Embracing Zero Textbook Cost Sections

Jenny Yap, Library Department Chair

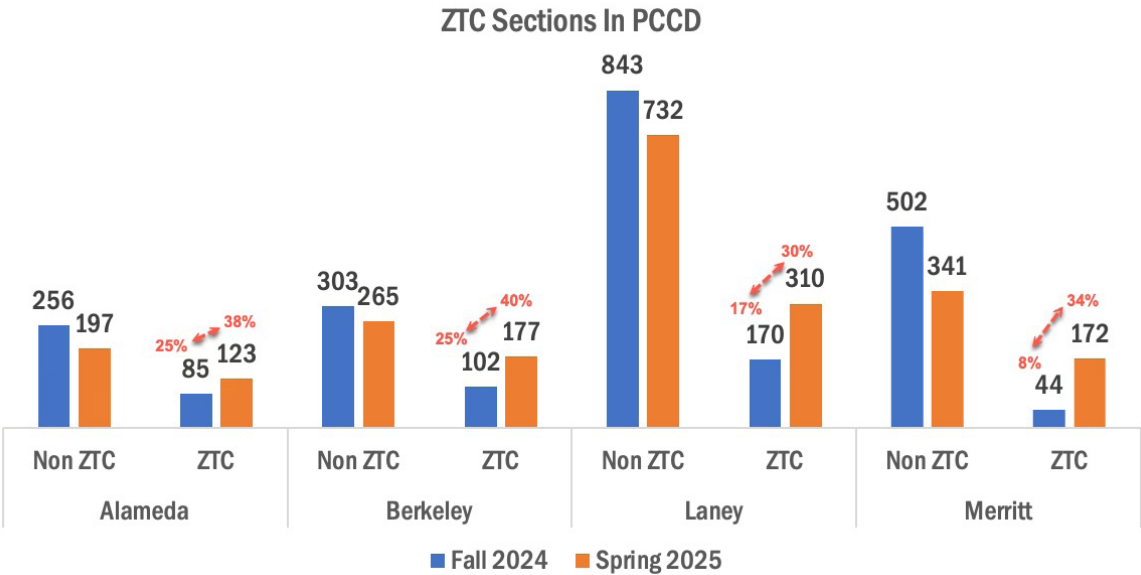
The BCC Library for many years has supported students by buying textbooks and loaning them to students and we saw the impact that high textbook costs had on students. In fact, college tuition has risen over 167% in the past 20 years whereas textbook costs have increased 1,401% between 1977 – 2015.

Our Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) journey began in 2016 when BCC librarians Heather Dodge and Jenny Yap applied for and received a \$20,000 grant from the College Textbook Affordability Act (AB 798) which incentivized community college faculty to adopt free and Open Educational Resources (OER). With that little bit of money, we educated faculty on why choosing OER was important, we collaborated with departments and helped faculty find OER and free materials, we held an OER institute where we provided professional development for faculty across all 4 colleges. Since then, we’ve received about \$355,000 total in grants for OER and ZTC activity.

In 2018, we were tracking carefully how much money we had saved students by helping faculty choose OER and ZTC materials. We estimated that we saved students over \$250,000 from ZTC/OER classes in just 2 years. Our initiative has grown tremendously, and we estimate that we’ve saved students \$4 million in textbook costs. In Spring 2024, 29% of total course sections offered at BCC had no textbook and no course materials cost for students.



ZTC work continues on three fronts. First is participatory governance work. Faculty, administrators, and staff convene once a month via the Affordable Educational Materials (AEM) Committee, a standing committee under the college’s Academic Senate. The AEM Committee promotes awareness of course affordability as a driver of student success and supports the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER), among other goals. A second area of activity is ongoing coordination of college-wide efforts to convert courses to ZTC. Political Science instructor and OER creator, Charlotte Lee, joined Heather and Jenny as a ZTC grant coordinator and with her help, they have supported faculty in converting their general education courses to ZTC. At present, BCC’s Political Science AA-T and several certificate programs are fully ZTC. An additional four degrees (History, Studio Art, Biology, and Multimedia Art Film, Television, and Electronic Media) will be ZTC by Fall 2025. Students can also complete the IGETC requirements with ZTC courses. Third and finally, college faculty have been active in the ASCCC’s OER Initiative (OERI), serving as regional leaders and creating OER in fields ranging from ESOL to Global Studies. This important work is ongoing as faculty continue to explore avenues for driving down classroom costs in support of student success. [You can hear the impact ZTC is having on BCC students in this video interview produced by ASCCC OERI.](#)





## Building Community at the Veterans Resource Center



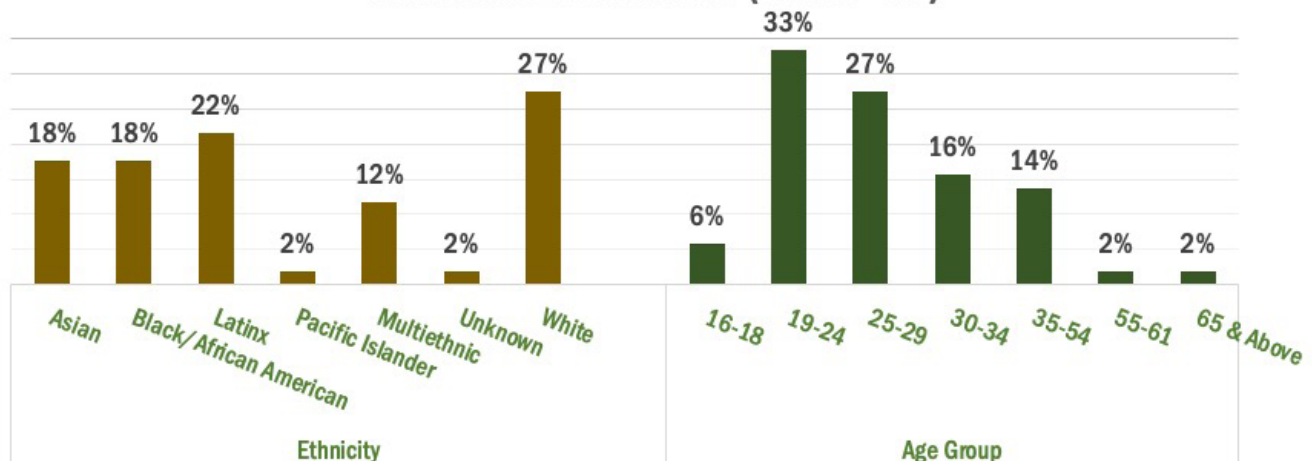
Joseph Mazariegos is currently majoring in Computer Information Science at UC Berkeley, transferring from Berkeley City College in Spring 2024. His journey to Cal began in July 2022 when he left the Marine Corps and started to explore higher education opportunities. His sister attended Laney College and told him about her experiences, and his brother introduced him to CIS as a career option. After doing some research, he found Berkeley City College and was connected to the Veterans Resource Center by referral from general counseling.

While the military provides informational sessions for outgoing veterans, the VRC Coordinator Jeejun Bertuso and Counselors Cynthia Park Chai and Roberto Alvarenga work one-on-one with veterans to provide in-depth support with all the benefits available to veteran students. “A lot of information is thrown at you about what’s available for veterans leaving the military, and sometimes it’s hard to retain it all,” said Joseph. “Jeejun is super knowledgeable, so once I started talking to him, he told me all about Chapter 31 benefits and everything that veterans can take advantage of.”

The Veterans Resource Center is also a space for veterans to study and get to know other veterans on campus. “Building community is huge because even though it’s a small room, there were always people there consistently. We were able to support each other,” said Joseph. VRC Counselors also regularly spend time in the VRC offering counseling and reminders for veterans to fill out proper forms to get assistance. Coffee, snacks, and music make for a welcoming environment.

“The most important thing a I would say to potential student when they get out (of the military), would be to point them in the direction of the VRC, just like the first counselor did with me,” said Joseph.

### SPRING 2025 VETERANS (TOTAL = 51)



# P2P Social Media Push Increasing Awareness



The Wellness Center's Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Mental Health Ambassadors help students achieve success in their academic journey by providing free mental health support with compassion, respect, and help accessing campus resources. This semester, P2P has made a serious push into creating Instagram Reels with the aid of talented student workers. This has lead to an increase in awareness and clients.

You may have seen P2P Ambassadors Jessie Skeva and student workers Yabsira Alemu and Ariam Fekadu around campus conducting "man on the street" interviews of students covering topics ranging from stress management, self-care, and reaction to current political and environmental issues.

"When we do get someone who's willing to volunteer for a video, we tell them about the wellness center because they then are kind of incentivized to check out our Instagram since they're going to be on it," said Jessie Skeva. "So, the goal is to increase that awareness." P2P has seen a steady increase in clients at listening sessions from 5 in Spring 2024 to 10 in Spring 2025. While P2P does not track drop-ins to the Wellness Center, they say it averages 3 per week and foot traffic to the Wellness Center has increased.

Over the past month, the P2P Instagram has reached an average of roughly 1000 unique users and 1,500 unique views. The team showcases a fun side as well – the most viral post has Mental Health Counselors Janine Greer and Jess Cruz "Gen-Z"ifying mental health support language.

The student-led marketing team grew from the Peer Health Internship through the City of Berkeley. Jessie, Yabsira, and Ariam completed the 6-week internship under the City of Berkeley and were hired as student workers by the BCC Wellness Center, earning real world experience in marketing and social media. The work also exposes the students to new experiences and interests. Jessie is studying sociology, Yabsira is studying CIS, and Ariam is studying biology. "I now have an interest in public health. It's very exciting and interesting to work with people," said Yabsira. "It's new to me because I'm studying computer science, but since I've started working here, I love going out and asking people about what they think."

The team is continuing to evolve and generate content twice per week. Give them a follow [@P2P\\_BCC](#).

Number of Wellness Center Visits

