

The background features a stylized illustration of blue waves with white foam, set against a dark blue background. A large, white anchor is positioned on the left side, partially obscured by the text.

Anchors of Impact Leadership Without Titles

Classified Leadership Institute 2026

ZEFORA ORTIZ GOMEZ



NextUp Program Specialist &
Classified Senate Senator



RANA AL-SHAIKH, MA



EOPS and CARE
Program Specialist &
Classified Senate Past President

Hi, my name is Zefora.

As a first-generation college graduate, former foster youth, and San Diego native, I understand both the excitement and challenges that can come with pursuing higher education. My lived experiences inspire my commitment to helping students overcome barriers, access resources, and achieve their educational and personal goals.

At Cuyamaca College, I strive to create a welcoming and supportive environment where students feel seen, valued, and empowered. Whether I am connecting students to resources, helping them navigate challenges, or celebrating their accomplishments, I am dedicated to their success every step of the way.

As a bilingual advocate fluent in English and Spanish, I take pride in fostering a sense of belonging for students and their families. For me, NextUp is more than a program it is an opportunity to empower and uplift students as they build bright futures for themselves and their communities.

Hi, my name is Rana.

I proudly serve as a Program Specialist for Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOPS) and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) at Cuyamaca College and am a proud alumna.

In this role, I support first-generation college and single heads of household students, in addition to students who experienced foster care, unhoused youth, youth raised in guardianship, and immigrant students. Grounded in servant leadership and driven by a deep commitment to educational justice, I go above and beyond to support students especially experiencing systematic barriers. My goal is to connect students and create visibility and access with supportive student programs to enhance the Cuyamaca experience.

My work includes coordinating essential services, facilitating campus engagement, and connecting students with basic needs resources to ensure they are seen, supported, and empowered to succeed. I am passionate about building inclusive environments where students truly thrive in higher education.



DESCRIPTION & TOPIC

CLASSIFIED PROFESSIONALS ARE LEADERS IN ACTION; THE ANCHORS WHO STABILIZE DEPARTMENTS, GUIDE STUDENTS, AND SUSTAIN EXCELLENCE. THIS INTERACTIVE SESSION USES REFLECTION, ART TO EXPLORE LEADERSHIP, CORE VALUES, AND INFLUENCE WITHOUT TITLE.

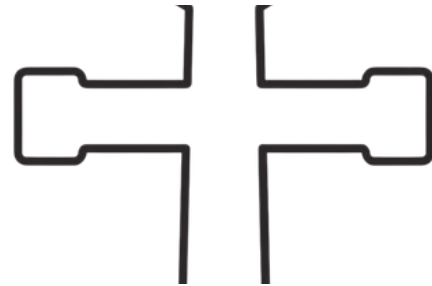
****LEADERSHIP LEGENDS - DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS, MENTORSHIP NETWORKS, AND STRATEGIES FOR CLASSIFIED PROFESSIONALS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATION SKILLS, AND CONFIDENCE NEEDED TO STEP INTO LEADERSHIP ROLES ACROSS THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SYSTEM.***

THE ANCHOR CROWN TOP



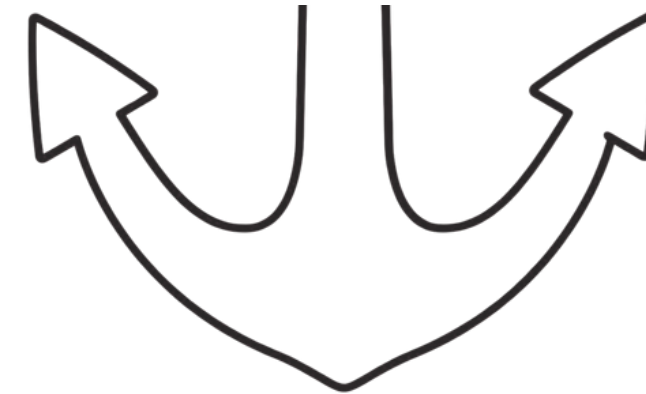
- REPRESENTS PURPOSE AND VALUES
- THIS IS WHAT GUIDES YOUR LEADERSHIP AND KEEPS YOU GROUNDED.
- CORE VALUES (INTEGRITY, COMPASSION, EQUITY, SERVICE)
- PURPOSE IN YOUR ROLE
- WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN AS A CLASSIFIED PROFESSIONAL

THE ANCHOR ARMS SIDES



- REPRESENTS ACTION AND LEADERSHIP IN MOTION
- THIS IS HOW YOU SHOW LEADERSHIP EVERY DAY THROUGH WHAT YOU DO.
- SKILLS AND STRENGTHS (COMMUNICATION, PROBLEM-SOLVING, COLLABORATION)
- HOW YOU SUPPORT STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES
- DAILY ACTIONS THAT REFLECT LEADERSHIP WITHOUT A TITLE

THE ANCHOR BASE BOTTOM



- REPRESENTS IMPACT AND STABILITY
- THIS IS THE GROUNDING FORCE YOU PROVIDE TO OTHERS.
- THE PEOPLE YOU SUPPORT (STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, COMMUNITY)
- THE STABILITY AND CONSISTENCY YOU BRING
- THE IMPACT YOU LEAVE ON OTHERS AND YOUR INSTITUTION

INFLUENCE WITHOUT TITLES

REFLECTION

01. What does being an "anchor" mean to me?
02. How do I provide a steady presence during times of change or uncertainty?
03. Who has been an anchor in my life, and how has that influenced the way I support others?

ANCHOR

AN ANCHOR IS A PERSON WHO PROVIDES STABILITY, SUPPORT, & CONSISTENCY DURING TIMES OF CHANGE, CHALLENGE, OR UNCERTAINTY. IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS, ANCHORS ARE THE INDIVIDUALS OTHERS CAN RELY ON FOR GUIDANCE, PROBLEM-SOLVING, INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE, AND A STEADY PRESENCE THAT HELPS KEEP STUDENTS AND DEPARTMENTS MOVING FORWARD.



FORMAL LEADERSHIP

- DEFINED BY AN OFFICIAL TITLE OR POSITION (DIRECTOR, SUPERVISOR, COORDINATOR, MANAGER, ETC.)

EXAMPLE:

- **RANA:**
 - CUYAMACA COLLEGE CLASSIFIED SENATE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
- **ZEFORA:**
 - CUYAMACA COLLEGE CLASSIFIED SENATE SENATOR
- HAS DESIGNATED AUTHORITY WITHIN THE CAMPUS
- OVERSEES STAFF/FACULTY/STUDENTS OPERATIONS
- RESPONSIBLE FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING
- DIRECTS WORK THROUGH POSITIONAL AUTHORITY

NON-FORMAL LEADERSHIP

- DEFINED BY EXPERTISE, CREDIBILITY, AND INFLUENCE

EXAMPLE:

- **RANA: EOPS and CARE Program Specialist**
 - UP!/RISE “PROGRAM SPECIALIST”
 - FAMILY FRIENDLY CAMPUS TOOL-KIT “LEAD”
 - MIDDLE EASTERN HERITAGE MONTH “LEAD”
- **ZEFORA: NextUp Program Specialist**
 - UP!/RISE “PROGRAM SPECIALIST”
 - PUENTE MENTOR
- LEADS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE, RELATIONSHIPS, AND TRUST
- GUIDES COLLEAGUES, STUDENTS, AND PROGRAMS
- RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING PROGRAM EXPERTISE, GUIDANCE, AND SUPPORT
- INFLUENCES OUTCOMES THROUGH COLLABORATION AND SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE

INFLUENCE WITHOUT TITLES

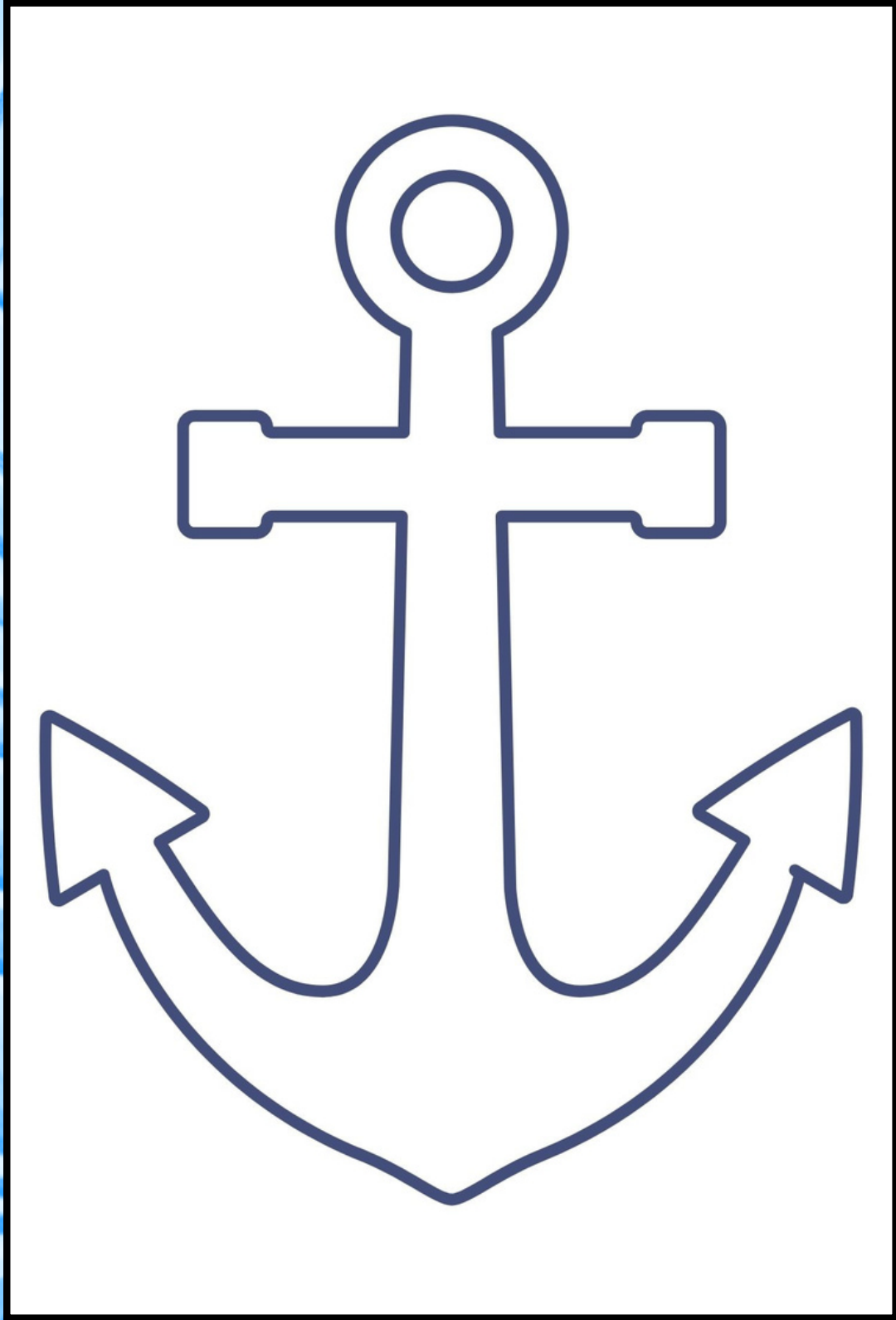
01. What formal leadership/non-formal leadership titles do you carry today?
02. What leadership characteristics represent your anchor?
03. What leadership legacy do you hope to inspire at your community college?



LEADERSHIP

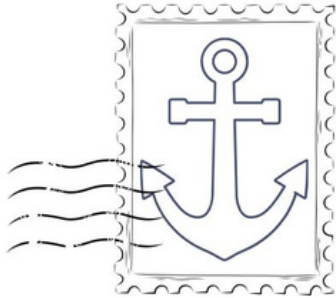
DEMONSTRATED THROUGH BOTH FORMAL LEADERSHIP AND NON-FORMAL LEADERSHIP. FORMAL LEADERSHIP IS DEFINED BY AN OFFICIAL TITLE OR POSITION OF AUTHORITY, SUCH AS A PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, DEAN, DIRECTOR, MANAGER, COORDINATOR, FACULTY MEMBER, OR SUPERVISOR. INFORMAL LEADERSHIP IS DEFINED BY EXPERTISE, CREDIBILITY, RELATIONSHIPS, MENTORSHIP, ADVOCACY, AND THE ABILITY TO POSITIVELY INFLUENCE AND INSPIRE OTHERS WITHOUT HOLDING A DESIGNATED LEADERSHIP TITLE.

THE ANCHOR OF LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE



THE ANCHOR OF LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Write a postcard to your anchor.
Your anchor can be a student, a classified staff, a faculty,
an administrator, a mentor or even yourself.
An anchor is what steadies you when things feel uncertain, what
grounds you in purpose, and what reminds you why your work
matters.
Write honestly.
Write with gratitude.
Write with intention.
Address it to your anchor.
Whoever that means for you today.



To : **My Anchor**



C U Y A M A C A
· C O L L E G E ·

EQUITY, EXCELLENCE,
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
THROUGH EDUCATION

Zefora Gomez Ortiz
NextUp Program Specialist
she/her/hers

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C U Y A M A C A
· C O L L E G E ·

EQUITY, EXCELLENCE,
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
THROUGH EDUCATION

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