TRiO Newsletter

Spring 2011

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TRiO UPDATES

We are commemorating National TRiO Day (February 26th) this year by producing the first TRiO Newsletter highlighting student and program updates.

As many of you know, the program began a new 5-year grant cycle this past fall. Working with over 160 students, TRiO’s focus is on academic and personal development with a primary focus on students completing their bachelor’s degree and pursuing graduate school or a specific career.

Our philosophy working one-on-one with students centers on self-determination (skills in: choice making, decision making, problem solving, goal setting, self-instruction, self-advocacy, self-awareness and self-knowledge) and change theory; both approaches empower the student to value him/herself, discover his/her identity, and author his/her path.

We love working with students and providing them with a wide variety of supports. At the same time, as a U.S. Department of Education federally funded grant, the program must adhere to specific guidelines that do bring a dose of reality and number-crunching to our roles.

We must serve 160 students who demonstrate academic need. 2/3 of our students must be first-generation college and demonstrate low income, or be a student with a disability. In addition, 1/3 of our students with disabilities must also demonstrate low income.

We also have specific program objectives that we must meet:

1. 75% of all students served must persist from one academic year to the next.
2. 97% of all enrolled TRiO students served must stay in good academic standing
3. 60% of all new participants served each year will graduate within 6 years

Our supports and services aim to meet these program objectives.

Happy National TRiO Day!

The TRiO Staff,
Lorri, Celeste, Charlotte, Kathy & Shakira

NATIONAL TRiO DAY

Established in 1986, National TRiO Day is celebrated on the last Saturday in February in order to:

Celebrate the positive impact of federal TRiO Programs in our communities throughout the nation.

Reflect on the importance of educational opportunity programs in creating a fairer society for all Americans.

Act to protect access to higher education for students who are low-income and first-generation college students.

“In many communities throughout America, the TRiO Programs are the only programs that help low-income Americans to enter college, graduate and move on to participate more fully in America’s economic and social life.”

-- Dr. Arnold Mitchem, President of the Council for Opportunity in Education.
Each semester our highly talented Program Coordinators, Celeste Donovan and Charlotte Caporgana-Amias, create and manage a series of workshops and events, taking into consideration TRiO required services and program philosophy.

This Spring semester’s calendar of events:

- Civil Liberties & Public Policies Program Summer Internship Information Session
- FAFSA Filing Workshop
- Planning for Graduate School
- TRiO Recognition Dinner
- Preparing for a Career Workshop
- TRiO Community Meeting
- Simple Strategies for Managing Stress in Your Life
- Naturally 7 Performance (S.T.C.C.)

**STUDENT SUCCESSES**

Students begin our program with academic challenges, but with program and campus support and personal motivation they flourish. Over the past year, TRiO students have worked very hard to accomplish the following:

**Spring 2010**

1. 28 Dean’s List students
2. Franklin J. Higgins, Academic Excellence Award, Computer and Information Science
3. Sean Clark, Academic Excellence Award, History
4. Robyn Adams, Public Service Award, Political Science, President’s Award for Excellence in Leadership & inducted into the Massachusetts Hall of Black Achievement
6. Arianne Hutchins, McNair Scholar

**Fall 2010**

1. 29 Dean’s List students
2. Paris Ortiz, Disney Program
3. Kylie Bleau, Spain study abroad
4. Joellen Broska & Karen Renda, J-term to Costa Rica
5. Debora Faustin, National Student Exchange Virgin Islands
6. Ashley Eaton, Habitat for Humanity

**NEW STAFF MEMBER**

We were thrilled to welcome aboard Shakira Alvarez-Ferrer as our new part-time Academic Counselor this past Fall.

Shakira comes to us with extensive experience as a bilingual and bicultural educator working with youth and families. She most recently worked as a Case Manager with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Hampshire County and coordinated their “Kids to Campus” youth mentoring program at UMASS, Amherst.

In addition, Shakira has developed curricula and taught college courses, including writing, Spanish, and service learning.

Shakira earned her B.A. in Educational Studies and French Language and Literature from Brown University and her M.Ed. in Bilingual, ESL, and Multicultural Education from UMASS, Amherst.

Shakira’s primary role with TRiO will be to work 1:1 with students in regard to their academic and personal development.
IDENTIFYING NEW PROGRAM STUDENTS

TRiO SSSP can't “recruit” students to the university. Students who participate in TRiO must be enrolled at the institution or accepted for enrollment. How do we “identify” new program students? We welcome student referrals at any time. In addition, we have collaborated with Sue Kmon in the Financial Aid Office and Jim Porreco in IT to develop reports that capture students who are first generation or who demonstrate low income based on their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. As a result, we proactively identify eligible students through summer mailings and student emails.

One of our primary goals is to see if the student is a good fit for our program. Ideally, this means that the student demonstrates academic need, is highly eligible, and wants to actively participate until he/she graduates - by regularly meeting with their program coordinator, attending workshops and events, and using TRiO Mentors and Tutoring Services as needed. It’s important for students to understand that we are not a “one resource stop.” Becoming a TRiO student means you are part of a TRiO community and the commitment is to participate until a bachelor’s degree is earned.

If you know of a student you think might be a good fit, please send him/her our way to complete an application and schedule an initial conversation appointment.

TRiO TUTORING SERVICES

TRiO Tutoring Services provide program students with one-on-one professional tutoring with an emphasis on building strong study skills. Using multi-modal approaches to tutoring, TRiO’s professional tutors help students understand course content as well as assist students in identifying strategies for improving learning.

Currently, TRiO employs four highly qualified professional tutors who cover broad subject areas: Crystal Ziniewicz, Sciences; Gaylord Saulsberry, Social Sciences and Study Skills Specialist; Deanna Gagnon, Math & Economics; and John Benvenuto, longtime English instructor at WSU, is our Writing Specialist.

TRiO Tutoring Services take place in the TRiO Learning Lab, located in the basement of Ely Hall. The lab is equipped with six desktop computers, a printer, a scanner, and work stations. Here, students can access educational assistive technology like Kurzweil 3000 (text scanner and reader) and Inspiration (visual mapping) software. Students Idaliz Alicea and Sasha Canzater provide valuable assistance in the Lab. TRiO Tutoring Services and the TRiO Learning Lab are for the exclusive use of program students. For more information, contact Celeste Donovan at cdonovan@wsc.ma.edu.

TRiO MENTOR PROGRAM

The goal of the TRiO Mentor Program is to support new SSSP students (first-year and transfer students) at WSU by pairing them with upperclass SSSP students who can assist them with their transition to the college and help connect them to the broader campus community and resources. For the TRiO Mentors, this experience is an excellent leadership and professional development opportunity that is also personally rewarding.

TRiO Mentors engage in activities with their “mentees” such as meeting up for a meal, studying or utilizing an academic support center, or attending a TRiO or campus-wide event. In addition to mentoring, TRiO Mentors host community-building, social events in an effort to bring students within the TRiO SSSP together.

For the spring 2011 semester we have seven phenomenal TRiO Mentors who come to the team with a wide range of experiences, majors and interests: Erica Brittle, Tiffany Carter, Sergey Chumak, Porsha Goodman, Torianna Jones, Steph Paylor, and Chris Pizarro.

For more information on the TRiO Mentor Program, please contact Charlotte Capogna-Amias at x5460 or ccapogna@wsc.ma.edu.
TRiO LENDING LIBRARY

In addition to the academic and personal supports we offer, students take full advantage of our lending library. Some of our resources include: Mac and Dell laptops, Livescribe Smartpens, graphing calculators, and introductory level textbooks. We also have reference books and study materials for graduate school, careers/life after college, personal finances, writing for resumes/cover letters, various exams (CLEP, GRE, GMAT, LSAT, and MTEL), writing and reading strategies, and study strategies. Additionally, we have resources on topics related to disabilities and a DVD/VHS collection focusing on social justice issues.

OUR NEW LOCATION: PARENZO 104

On December 6, 2010, the TRiO program moved from our long-time space in Wilson 201 and 209 to a newly renovated space in Parenzo Hall, Room 104. We’re really enjoying our new digs and welcome everyone to come check it out.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This semester Kathy Pitoniak, Project Assistant, will be attending the UMass Workplace Learning and Development workshop, Workplace Writing Skills. She will also be taking advantage of the two “New Features” classes offered by CIT, on Microsoft Office Word 2007 and Microsoft Office Excel 2007. Congratulations to Celeste Donovan for completing her Ph.D. in Art History. We are all very proud of you, Dr. Donovan!

In February, Shakira and Lorri attended a one day PERSIST Curriculum workshop at Suffolk University, Boston, MA. “PERSIST: a Comprehensive Guide for Student Success in Higher Education” is a toolkit for postsecondary educators to help underrepresented students successfully navigate the varied aspects of the college experience.

Additionally, Lorri will be presenting at two conferences this summer on the topic of Supporting College Students with Learning Disabilities - at the UCONN Postsecondary Disability Training Institute conference, Portland, ME and with AHEAD (Association in Higher Education and Disability) in Seattle, WA.