

PRESS RELEASE

Office of Marketing and Communications



Mandy Heil

Associate Dean of Marketing and Communications

(928) 314-9594

mandy.heil@azwestern.edu

Contact:

Michelle Thomas

Director of TRIO Programs

Arizona Western College

Michelle.Thomas@azwestern.edu

(928) 344-7763

TRIO works in Yuma and La Paz County

Yuma, AZ (February 20, 2024) – Middle school, high school, and college-age students from Arizona Western College’s TRIO programs will participate in the **2024 AWC National TRIO Day Celebration** on Saturday, February 24, to express appreciation to the community for its support.

For millions of students from low-income families who strive to be the first in their families to attend and graduate from college, seven federally funded programs called TRIO are making a world of difference. The AWC TRIO programs will be celebrating this year’s National TRIO Day with students in their programs at various community service locations around Yuma.

The celebration will be held from 9:00am-2:00pm at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center Multipurpose Room, 300 S. 13th Ave, in Yuma. Program participants from sixth grade to college throughout Yuma and La Paz counties will provide acts of service in the Yuma community as a way to give back for the support given to TRIO programs nationwide. The students will be assigned to different community service projects ranging from Crossroads Mission, Saddles of Joy, Jessie’s Closet, Amberly’s Place, and American Veterans of Yuma.

Unlike student financial aid programs which help students overcome financial barriers to higher education, the TRIO programs have provided valuable supportive services to students from low-income and working families to successfully enter college and graduate for over 50 years.

“The AWC TRIO Programs want to give back more in 2024 to the communities in our district for all of the help and support they provide to our first-generation and low-income pre-college and college-level students,” said **Michelle Thomas**, AWC Director of TRIO Programs.

Arizona Western College has been the recipient of three TRIO grants for both pre-college and college-level students for over 30 years. Talent Search and Upward Bound are pre-college programs. Talent Search works with almost 600 students per school year and focuses on low-cost, early intervention, working with students deemed to have “college potential” in grades 6 – 12. Students receive information and assistance in applying for college admission, scholarships, and various student financial aid programs. Upward Bound (UB) works intensively with a small cohort of high school

level students and prepares them for higher education through various enrichment courses. Campus-based UB programs provide students with instruction in literature, composition, mathematics, science, and foreign language during the school year and summer. UB also provides intensive mentoring and support as students prepare for college entrance exams and tackle admissions applications, financial aid, and scholarships. The Student Support Services program (known as the KEYS Program) is celebrating its 33rd year at AWC. The KEYS Program serves 240 students per school year by offering academic support services including course selection, financial aid and scholarship guidance, career exploration, cultural enrichment, personal development and coaching, and assistance with graduation and transferring to vocational or university-level programs.

TRIO services include assistance in choosing a college; tutoring; personal and financial counseling; career counseling; assistance in applying to college; workplace and college visits; special instruction in reading, writing, study skills, and mathematics; assistance in applying for financial aid; and academic support in high school or assistance to re-enter high school.

Today more than 1,000 colleges, universities, and community agencies host more than 2,800 TRIO projects that serve approximately 760,000 young people and adults. Thirty-five percent (35%) of TRIO students are White, 35% are African-American, 19% are Hispanic, 4% are American Indian, 3% are Asian-American, and 4% are listed as “other,” including multiracial students. Additionally, approximately 7,000 TRIO students have disabilities. These demographics reflect the diversity of the student population benefiting from TRIO programs across the United States.

Background on the TRIO Programs

What is TRIO?

TRIO is a set of federally-funded college-based educational opportunity outreach programs that motivate and support students from low-income backgrounds – including military veterans and students with disabilities. Currently serving nearly 760,000 students from middle school through post-graduate study, TRIO provides academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary to promote college access, retention, and graduation. TRIO students come from families that earn less than \$36,000 a year and/or in which neither parent have earned a college degree.

Where did TRIO come from?

The TRIO programs were the first national college access and retention programs to address the serious social and cultural barriers to education in America. (Previously only college financing had been on policymakers’ radar.) TRIO began as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty. The Educational Opportunity Act of 1964 established an experimental program known as Upward Bound. Then, in 1965, the Higher Education Act created Talent Search. Finally, another program, Special Services for Disadvantaged Students (later known as Student Support Services), was launched in 1968. Together, this “trio” of federally-funded programs encouraged access to higher education for low-income students. By 1998, the TRIO programs had become a vital pipeline to opportunity, serving traditional students, displaced workers, and veterans. The original three programs have grown to eight, adding Educational Opportunity Centers in 1972, Training Program for Federal TRIO programs in 1976, the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program in 1986, Upward Bound Math/Science in 1990, and the TRIO Dissemination Partnership in 1998.

Why Are the TRIO Programs Important?

The TRIO programs help first-generation, low-income students overcome social, cultural, and academic barriers to succeed in higher education. By providing direct services and individually focused and intensive programming geared towards helping students navigate the college admissions and financial aid process, TRIO programs assist students in overcoming the obstacles they face as the first in their families to attend and graduate from college. Today, an estimated 5 million students have graduated from college with the support and assistance of TRIO programs across the country.

TRIO Programs at a Glance

TRIO is a set of seven federally-funded college-based educational opportunity outreach programs that motivate and support students from low-income backgrounds. Serving nearly 760,000 students from middle school through post-graduate study, TRIO provides academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary to promote college access, retention, and graduation.

Talent Search: Talent Search (TS) focuses on low-cost, early intervention, working with students deemed to have “college potential” in grades 6-12. Students receive information and assistance in applying for college admission, scholarships, and various student financial aid programs. Recent data indicate that 79% of TS participants were admitted to postsecondary institutions.¹

Upward Bound: Upward Bound (UB) is an intensive intervention program that prepares students for higher education through various enrichment courses. Campus-based UB programs provide students instruction in literature, composition, mathematics, science, and foreign language during the school year and the summer. UB also provides intensive mentoring and support for students as they prepare for college entrance exams and tackle admission applications, financial aid, and scholarship forms. In 2007, 77.2% of all students who participated in UB programs immediately enrolled in college in the fall following high school graduation.²

Upward Bound Math/Science: Using a model similar to the classic Upward Bound program, Upward Bound Math/Science (UBMS) aims to strengthen academic preparedness in math, science, and technology. The program assists students in a rigorous math and science curriculum in high school to encourage and enable them to successfully major in critically important science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines in college. In recent years, 86.5% of students who participated in UBMS programs went directly to college after graduating from high school.³

Veterans Upward Bound: Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) provides a unique service to veterans hoping to return to college, aiding them in the transition process through intensive basic skills development and short-term remedial courses. Additionally, participants receive assistance in navigating the services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans associations, and other veteran support organizations. Nationally, VUB has a strong record of aiding its participants in preparing for higher education. According to the National Association of Veterans Upward Bound Program Personnel, in 2010-2011, more than 60% of recent program participants were enrolled in postsecondary education programs.

Student Support Services: Student Support Services (SSS) programs help low-income and first-generation students to successfully begin and stay in college. Participants receive tutoring, counseling, and remedial instruction in order to achieve their goals of college completion. A recent evaluation of this program determined that SSS participants were more likely to remain enrolled in higher education, accrue more college credits, and earn higher grade point averages than similar students who did not receive such services.⁴ SSS participants also had a B.A. attainment rate of 38% -- 24 percentage points higher than predicted than if they did not receive any supplemental services.⁵

Educational Opportunity Centers: Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) target displaced or underemployed workers from low-income families. These centers help students choose colleges and guide them through the often confusing financial aid process. An analysis of EOC participants found that more than half (55.9%) of “college-ready” students were enrolled in institutions of higher learning and 71% of eligible EOC participants (high school seniors, postsecondary dropouts, etc.) applied to college.⁶

Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement: The McNair program encourages and prepares low-income and minority students for doctoral study and to pursue careers in college teaching. The McNair program provides research opportunities and faculty mentoring. Among active McNair Scholars in 1997-98, 95% of these students completed their bachelor’s degree by 2001-02.⁷ Meanwhile, among McNair Scholars who graduated in 2006-07, more than half (53%) were enrolled in graduate school in 2007-08.⁸

1 U.S. Department of Education, *Federal TRIO Programs, An Interim Report on the Talent Search Program: 2002-03 and 2003-04, with Select Data from 2000-02.*

2 U.S. Department of Education, *Federal TRIO Programs, Upward Bound Annual Performance Reports (APRs): 2006-07 through 2007-08.*

3 U.S. Department of Education, *Federal TRIO Programs, Upward Bound Annual Performance Reports (APRs): 2000-2001 through 2005-2006.*

4 Bradford, C., Muraskin, L., Cahalan, M., & Rak, R. (1997). *National study of Student Support Services: Third-year longitudinal study of results and program implementation study update.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

5 Bradford W. Chaney, “National Evaluation of Student Support Services: Examination of Student Outcomes After Six Years,” Westat for U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, Apr. 2010.

6 U.S. Department of Education, *Federal TRIO Programs, A Report on the Educational Opportunity Centers Program: 2007-08, with Select Comparative Data, 2002-07.*

7 U.S. Department of Education, *Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program: 1997-1998 Through 2001-2002.*

8 U.S. Department of Education, *Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program Annual Performance Reports, 2006-07 and 2007-08.*