



ASPIRATIONS

Official Newsletter of APSIRE, INC.

TRIO

September—December
2010

The Utah Chapter of ASPIRE

invites you to

*“Elevate
Life!”*

by attending the

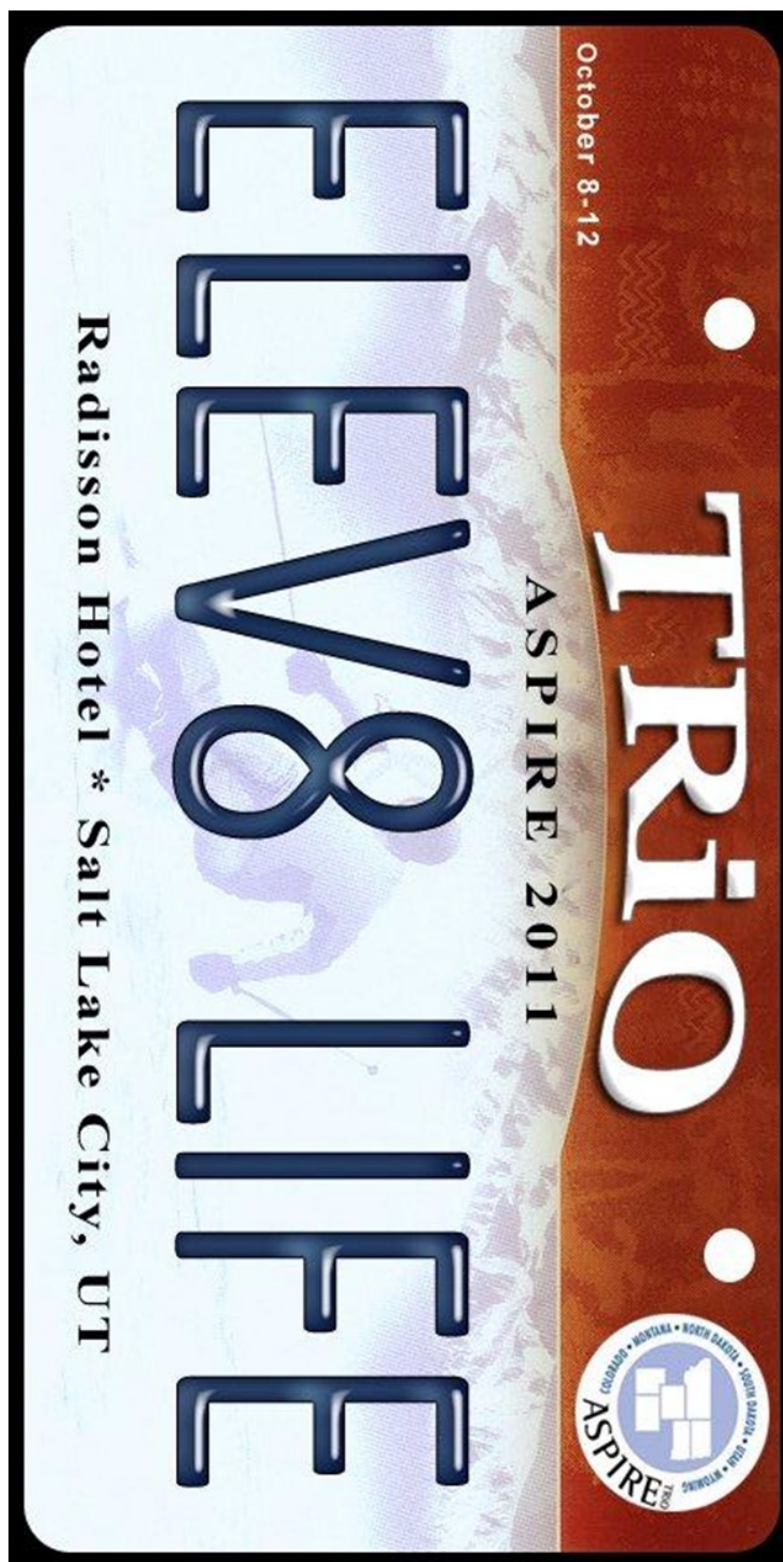
2011 ASPIRE Conference

Radisson Hotel

Salt Lake City, Utah

October,
8-12th, 2011.

See you there!





Message from the President

Hello ASPIRE!

Where does the time go? It seems like just a moment ago we were all in Cheyenne, WY, at our last regional conference. While it has been just a short time since we last met, I would like you to know that your Board and regional committees have been working diligently to conduct the operations of ASPIRE at both the state and regional levels. Since we were together in Cheyenne in October, we have had a couple of changes in the ASPIRE Board.



As you will recall, Tammy Ward was elected to the position of President-Elect for ASPIRE at the regional conference. Unfortunately, a few weeks after taking the position she was approached by her institution with an offer to accept a position outside of TRIO that was just too good of an opportunity for her and her family to turn down at the time. Because her new position did not have ties to TRIO, our operating guidelines required that she resign her position from the Board, which she did. While we were sad to see her leave the Board, we certainly wish her great success in her new position at Arapahoe Community College.

In early December Ryan Ross, Past-President, lost a family member very close to him and his family to suicide. Feeling the need to focus on putting things in order for himself and his family, he found it necessary to resign from the board. Please keep Ryan and his family in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with their loss. A message from Ryan is posted below.

With the departures of both Tammy and Ryan, we needed to fill their positions. Following our Operating Guidelines, replacements were sought from previous board members to fill the posts for the remainder of the current year. I am pleased to report that Lynne Brown from Utah accepted the position of Past-President, and Rachel Martinez from Wyoming accepted the position of President-Elect. Your ASPIRE Board for 2010-2011 is now:

Dawn Eckhardt, President	dawn.eckhardt@email.und.edu
Lynne Brown, Past-President	brown_lj@suu.edu
Rachel Martinez, President-Elect	rmartine@lccc.wy.edu
John Shafer, Treasurer	shafer@suu.edu
Lori Brown-Wirth, Secretary	lbrownwi@uwyo.edu
Nickie Archibeque, CO State President	nickie.archibeque@colostate.edu
Zach Hawkins, MT State President	zhawkins@mtech.edu
Lori Larson, ND State President	lori.larson@email.und.edu



Cody McMichael, SD State President cody.mcmichael@bhsu.edu

Lindsay Beddes, UT State President lindsaybeddes@weber.edu

Sandy Straley, WY State President sstrale2@uwyo.edu

The board met in Billings, MT January 20-22 for the January board meeting. We spent many hours discussing the regional budget, development efforts, conferences, governmental relations news and activities, and upcoming regional business items. Minutes from that meeting will be available and distributed soon. Please take a few minutes to review them when they are sent out through the ASPIRE listserv to get a full report of our activities. A few news items I'd like to highlight from that meeting are:

- Brandi Roesener and Ginny Ruckman provided a final report from the 2010 regional conference. Thanks to their leadership in providing a quality conference, and the generous contributions received through the raffle and silent auction, ASPIRE made a profit of over \$50,000.
- Jami Bayles, 2011 Conference Chair is organizing a fantastic group of people from across Utah that is hard at work developing the next regional conference. Be sure to mark your calendars for October 8-12, 2011. We'll be at the Radisson Hotel in Salt Lake City, UT.
- The site for the 2012 conference has been set for the Holiday Inn Grand Montana in Billings. It is a wonderful conference venue for us, and it will be hard to beat their hospitality. Barb Waters was elected by unanimous decision of the board as the conference chair for 2012. Thank you Barb for your willingness to take on this role. We know you are going to do a great job!
- Membership rates for Emeritous members were reduced to \$10.
- We have begun the process of thoroughly reviewing ASPIRE's Operating Guidelines. One significant change that has been approved by the board is to establish payment deadlines for conference registration fees. Fees for registrations made prior the early bird deadline of August 15 will be due within 30 days. After that day, registration fees will be due at the time of registration; either with credit card or purchase order numbers.
- Nominations for the Art Quinn Award and TRIO Achievers will soon be accepted. Please watch for nomination information, and submit your materials!
- With three positions needing to be filled in October of this year, a great deal of discussion took place to identify and encourage members to consider taking on one of these exciting roles at the regional level, and to continue developing leaders for and within our state organizations.

For those of you that have been with ASPIRE for a while, you are aware that it is standard operating procedures for the candidate elected to the position of President-Elect to automatically transition to the position of President the following year. That will not be the case this year. Because Rachel has been appointed the position, her time in office will end during the regional conference in October 2011. This will be a unique year for our traditional elections procedures in that we will need to elect candidates to the positions of President, President-Elect, and Treasurer. The position of President will be a 2-year commitment as they serve as president in their first year and past-president in the second. The position of President-Elect will be



return to the normal 3-year commitment. The position of Treasurer will be open this year for a 2-year commitment as our current Treasurer, John Shafer, will be completing his second 2-year term; the maximum allowed in our operating guidelines. I encourage you to consider running for one of these offices. All are fantastic opportunities to serve the region as well as for your own professional development.

I hope you have all been reading the action alerts from COE and responding to them as requested. As we heard from Dr. Mitchem in October, and have watched play out through the November elections, we are in a time of transition, challenges, and opportunities. If you have new congressional representation in your state, please take the time to let them know how important TRIO programs are to you, your students, and your communities. COE's annual Policy Seminar will take place March 6-8 in Washington, DC, at which time we will visit with our senators and representatives. I hope to see many of you there with great energy as we work to secure funding for these vital programs.

As we head into 2011, I would like to wish all of the Talent Search and EOC proposal writers the best of luck with your applications. I hope to hear that all current programs are refunded, and that we are able to welcome several new programs to the ASPIRE family.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your ASPIRE President. Should you have any questions about ASPIRE or its activities, please don't hesitate to contact me or another member of the Board.

Dawn Eckhardt

Colleagues,

I would like to thank you for the time you allowed me to serve and I am forever grateful for all the lessons learned, friendships made, and professional growth. In December 2010 I decided to step down from the ASPIRE board and took some leave time for work. My family and I lost a great young man to suicide. My little cousin who was and is more like a brother had some obstacles that must have been too difficult to go through and he decided to take his life while still in school at Garden City Community College. This was unexpected and definitely threw many lives in a whirlwind. In an effort to stabilize my family, do some soul searching, and to be more available to my loved ones I cut down my many extracurricular activities. I believe there is nothing more important than family and at this time this is where my focus is most needed.



I want to commend the board for not missing a beat, carrying on without me, and thank them all for the calls, emails, and prayers. I encourage you all to spend that extra moment with your students, you never know how your words can solve problems and/or enlighten some one's view. I only wish some TRIO folks were around and maybe DeV Vaughn would still be with us. Although I have taken a seat I will not stay on the sidelines, I will continue to fight for TRIO and help out in anyway I can. Support our ASPIRE board, remember your fair share, and most importantly keep your students first.

In TRIO Spirit,

Ryan Ross



Committee Reports

Financial Aid Committee *Below article submitted by Cody McMichael Financial Aid Committee Chair*

Student Aid Policy Analysis

Reasons Why Students Do Not File the FAFSA

Mark Kantrowitz

Publisher of Fastweb.com and FinAid.org

January 18, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This student aid policy analysis paper continues the work of a previous paper concerning the reasons why students do not apply for financial aid.¹ It presents several new results.

Although the *percentage* of college students failing to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) has decreased over the last two decades, this was caused by an increase in the number of undergraduate and graduate students and not by a decrease in the *number* of students failing to file the FAFSA. The number of students failing to file the FAFSA each year has remained flat for over a decade.

Of the students who did not apply for financial aid from any source,² almost all (95.3%) gave at least one of five reasons for not applying: thought ineligible (60.7%), no financial need (50.6%), did not want to take on the debt (40.2%), no information on how to apply (22.9%) and forms were too much work (18.9%). The first three reasons accounted for 92.2% of the non-applicants.

Many of these students, however, would have qualified for financial aid. About a third of these students, for example, would have qualified for a Pell Grant and about a sixth for a full Pell Grant. At least 1.7 million students fail to file the FAFSA each year because they incorrectly believe themselves to be ineligible. Of the students who thought they were ineligible for student aid, more than half (56.3%) did not express an unwillingness to take on debt. Yet most of these students would have qualified for the unsubsidized Stafford and PLUS loans, which are low-cost loans that do not depend on financial need.

Almost two-thirds of the non-applicants who thought they were ineligible or didn't need financial aid were at community colleges, disproportionately so. This may be a reflection of the lower cost of community colleges, since more than three quarters of the students were enrolled at colleges costing less than \$10,000. Less than half of students at community colleges (43.9%) and less than half of students at colleges costing less than \$10,000 (43.1%) completed the FAFSA in 2007-08, compared with much



higher rates at private colleges and more expensive colleges.

Of the students who did not apply for financial aid because they felt the forms were too much work, more than half were enrolled part-time, compared with about a third of all undergraduate students. Part-time students are less likely to file the FAFSA than full-time students.

1 Mark Kantrowitz, Analysis of Why Some Students Do Not Apply for Financial Aid, April 27, 2009.

www.finaid.org/educators/20090427CharacteristicsOfNonApplicants.pdf

2 There are two variables that measure application rates. FEDAPP reports whether the student submitted the FAFSA to apply for federal student aid. AIDAPP reports whether the student applied for any aid, including aid from non-federal sources. This report includes analyses derived from both variables.

**Full article can be found at: <http://www.finaid.org/educators/20110118nofafsareasons.pdf>*

ASPIRE Awards and TRIO Achiever Nominations

ASPIRE Awards and TRIO Achiever nomination requests will be sent out early March!

Please watch your email or the ASPIRE website for the nomination forms. The DUE DATE to submit your nominations will be MAY 1, 2011! Start thinking now of your nomination for Rising Star, Friend of ASPIRE, Champion of TRIO and TRIO Achiever!





Don't forget to make your 10 for 10 contribution!



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10 for 10 Personal Contribution Form

Must Donate at Least \$100 by June 30th each year

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\$_____

AMOUNT DONATED PER MONTH

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TOTAL AMOUNT (minimum \$100)

MONTH TO BEGIN (MM/YY)

MONTH TO END (MM/YY) or
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Please check one:

- ☐ Charge me on 1st of the month
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Expiration Date MM/YY SEC

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BRANCH (INCLUDE FULL ADDRESS)

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News from Utah

ASPIRE Utah is proud to be home to the 2010 Art Quinn Award recipient, **Lynne Brown**. The Art Quinn Memorial Award is the most prestigious award ASPIRE presents each year. The award recipient is selected by the Executive Board and is based on the following criteria:

The recipient is an ASPIRE member or retiree who has worked in TRIO for ten years or more; has excelled in providing services and or support to TRIO and or ASPIRE at the local, state, or regional levels; and demonstrates an unselfish and sincere desire to assist students beyond the general expectations of the project guidelines.

Congratulations again, to Lynne Brown of Southern Utah University.



Lynne Brown (center), with previous Art Quinn recipients, Cheryl Kingsbury and Joan Jorde

There has been some turnover on the ASPIRE Utah Board of Directors, as the State Treasurer had to step down. A new Treasurer has been appointed in her place, and the new 2010-2011 Board is:

President Lindsay Beddes, Weber State University
President Elect Craig Harter, Dixie State College
Past President Yvette Rosenberg, Weber State University
Treasurer Monique Torres-Reymus, Salt Lake Community College
Secretary Roxana Luna, Weber State University

Our 2011 Regional Conference Chair, Jami Bayles, is planning a fun, inspirational, and exciting Regional Conference. Plan on joining us October 8th - 12th at the Radisson in downtown Salt Lake City. See you there!!

Dixie State College

The Dixie State College (DSC) Student Support Services program is again fully staffed with advisors. Larry Esplin who was on an 18-month leave of absence to serve an LDS Mission to Zambia is now back as of January 7, 2011 to full time advising and teachings. In his absence, Melinda Bunker (former UB-TRIO student) worked for a year and then left for a full-time sixth grade teaching job and Daneka Souberville was hired as a part-time replacement until Larry returned. It is great to have Larry back.

Janette Stratton who has worked as the SSS administrative assistant is leaving to do her student teaching this semester and will graduate with her Math Education bachelors degree this May. Janette is a former SSS student and Utah ASPIRE scholarship winner who has served as the administrative assistant for the past two and a half years. She began college taking Math 0990 and is now certified to teach basic math through calculus II. She is proof that TRIO works! We will miss her.



Dixie State College continued

This past fall, the DSC SSS advisors taught three sections of SSC1001, Smart Start Seminar which had 110 students enrolled who are the 2010-2011 cohort. There were 122 returning students from previous cohorts already in the program.

The DSC SSS staff is working hard to see that the sophomores will complete their associates degree by the end of July. There are 90 students who could graduate with their associates this year from DSC. This could be the largest number of DSC SSS graduates in one year.

The DSC SSS program was happy to learn that they received an average of 99 on their recent grant with 15 prior experience points.

Salt Lake Community College

In October 2010, the ETS project at Salt Lake Community College took juniors and seniors on our annual Northern College Tour to Idaho State University, BYU-Idaho, Utah State University and Weber State University. During the two day trip, students has a great time touring the campuses, visiting TRIO and other programs, and meeting college students to learn more about these colleges.



Southern Utah University

The dynamic Talent Search program at Southern Utah University, directed by Tami Shugart, has gotten energetic with their fund-raising ideas. Since part of nearly everyone's New Year Resolution is to get in shape or lose weight, the Talent Search folks gave people in the Southern Utah area a chance to keep those resolutions while contributing to a great cause...college scholarships for Talent Search students!

On January 15th ETS hosted the **2nd Annual Freeze Your Buns Fun Run** in Kanarraville UT. The 5K race is the big event but for those who aren't quite up to that level there is a one mile fun run/walk. And, if you



can't muster the energy for that, you can always be a "ghost runner" and still donate to the cause. There was no excuse and you could even bring your dog to run with you! In addition to the run activities there was music, information booths, healthy snack foods, many prizes and a mechanical bull; this last activity thanks to SUU ROTC.

With 190 registrants for this year's event, Talent Search has more than doubled the scholarship funds they raised in 2010



Southern Utah University continued

-- nearly \$3,000 in 2011! The day was sunny, relatively warm (38-40 degrees) and everyone had a grand time thanks to the enthusiasm generated by Tami and the Talent Search staff and students! We can't wait until next year to make it even bigger!



University of Utah

For their December community service activity, forty University of Utah Upward Bound students helped sort toys for *Toys for Tots*, sponsored by the National Guard. The UB students were given the names and ages of several children, and then went "shopping" amongst the boxes of donated toys to make gift selections. As one student said, "It was really cool and I made sure *my kids* got the best stuff!"



Utah State University – College of Eastern Utah, Blanding

Bettina Benally, TRIO Talent Search alumna, graduated from Monticello High School (located in South-Eastern Utah) in 2009 and is now attending Utah State University – College of Eastern Utah. Bettina is pursuing a career in physical therapy, and credits the Talent Search program at USU-CEU for helping her achieve her goals.



Cheryl Johns

Cheryl Johns, alumna of USU-CEU's Upward Bound program, is currently a Talent Search advisor for San Juan High school in Blanding, Utah and Red Mesa Middle School in Red Mesa, Arizona. Cheryl credits USU-CEU's UB program for setting her on the right track. "Without Upward Bound, I would not have seen the endless opportunities there were for a person with a higher level of education."

Johns started her job with Talent Search at San Juan High school in August 2009. She very much enjoys her work, and states "I provide students with a variety of



Bettina Benally



Utah State University continued

insights about what it has to take to accomplish their goals and dreams. I love my job every day. I'm accomplishing my goal every day when I can help a student plan and succeed in their future. I know that if I didn't have the support and offer of the TRIO programs, I wouldn't be where I am today."



Seniors from Ben Lomond and Ogden High walk up to the Swanson Environmental Center

Weber State University

WSU Talent Search:

On October 1-2, 2010, Talent Search at Weber State held our 3rd annual Senior Retreat. Thirty-eight seniors from our target high schools spent the day on campus, participating in workshops with financial aid, scholarship and resume writing, healthy lifestyles and stress management, and Smart Start – WSU's Summer Bridge Program. Students also attended a luncheon where they were able to ask questions of a panel of experts from WSU's Division of Student Affairs.

That evening we took students up to the Swanson Environmental Center where we held leadership and team building activities, had a campfire, and stayed overnight at the cabin.

On December 3, 2010, Talent Search partnered with the WSU Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) to host an ACT Prep Class at one of our project high schools. We had a total of 32 students in attendance – a record turnout for an early morning Saturday event.

WSU Upward Bound:

WSU Upward Bound Alumnus **Zach Stickney** was recently featured in an article published by Weber State University, excerpts of which follow. For the entire article, including information on his recent humanitarian trip to Kenya, please visit

<http://www.weber.edu/WSUToday/122810zachstickney.html>.

"Zach Stickney's outlook on life today is a far cry from the struggling youth he was in ninth grade. Back then, Stickney experienced so much tragedy, loss and turmoil in his life, he dreamed of quitting school in Utah and pursuing a fresh start in Texas.



Zach Stickney interacting with children while on a humanitarian trip to Kenya

"Flash forward six years. Stickney has indeed traveled far from the borders of Utah, but many of those trips

Zach Stickney continued

are the result of his educational pursuits.

“Stickney credits WSU’s Upward Bound Program and its director, Dave Trujillo, for helping him replace his sense of hopelessness with a greater self-awareness and optimism. ‘Dave just had a knack for visiting me at school on the days that I felt the worst,’ Stickney said. ‘He made me realize that the biggest problem I had was really one of self-pity. The biggest thing that needed to change wasn’t my environment; what needed to change was how I reacted to it.’”

WSU Veterans Upward Bound:

For several years now, dating back to Jim Kopecky, who is a former VUB director and long time member of NAVUBPP, the Weber State University VUB program has sponsored an activity called Shoe Boxes for Veterans. In this Christmas activity the program coordinates with the community and school to collect gifts the size that will fit inside a shoe box. VUB staff members provide plastic containers the size of shoe boxes and the gifts are prepared, based on a



Matthew Glover and Randy Wilson

suggestion list, and brought to the VUB office where they are collected for later dispersal. Just before Christmas break the shoe box gifts are taken to homeless shelters and rest homes for veterans where they are provided to needy veterans and a few other residents. The program is growing in popularity and in 2010 over 300 shoebox gifts were provided to veterans in need. The investment, all through personal donations, is nominal and the need is great so we encourage you to consider such an activity in the future.



Lori Adler, Dan Czech, Yulia Goff, Jim Shepherd, Randy Wilson and Renee Verbitski. Not pictured: Matthew Glover

Westminster College

Westminster College is proud to recognize our first PhD alumna, **Dr. Sarah J. Jackson**!! Sarah Janel Jackson graduated from the University of Utah in 2005 with a bachelor’s in mass communication and African American studies; received her master’s degree in communication studies from the University of Michigan; and on December 1, 2010 she defended her dissertation, *African American celebrity dissent and a tale of two public spheres: A critical and comparative analysis of the mainstream and black press 1949-2005*, at the University of Minnesota to earn her doctorate in mass communication. We are extremely proud of her academic accomplishments and look forward to hearing about great things in her future.

We had an opportunity to ask Dr. Jackson a few questions about her educational journey and would like to share some of her responses with our ASPIRE family:



Dr. Sarah J. Jackson,
Westminster College
McNair Alumna



Dr. Sarah J. Jackson continued

How did the McNair Program help prepare you for graduate school?

"I would say the most important things the McNair program did to prepare me for graduate school were to provide me with real world academic research experience and the opportunity to present this research in academic settings. It provided me with preparation for the GRE, as well as a better understanding of how to select graduate programs and successfully apply to those programs."

Who inspired you most during your graduate career?

"The person who most inspired me during my graduate career was my adviser Dr. Catherine Squires. She not only provided me with invaluable insight into my field and various academic and intellectual topics, but also helped me navigate the political, emotional and psychological challenges of graduate education."

If you had any academic challenges, how did you overcome them?

"I had several unique academic challenges because I transferred universities mid-way through my PhD. As a result I lost one semester worth of graduate credits and I had to take preliminary exams at two different places! However, I simply understood these challenges to be part of the decision I made to transfer which was based on my desire to continue researching with my adviser Dr. Squires. I knew that even if these challenges meant I would have to take more time to earn my degree or repeat some work, that in the broad scheme of things I would be better off as a scholar and have a better graduate school experience because of my decision."

What advice do you have for our current McNair undergraduates and graduate students?

"My advice for undergraduate and graduate McNair students is not original and is simply this: Everything is possible. If you decide to accomplish something you can. The road, while difficult, will be made easier by taking advantage of the resources that programs like McNair make available, listening carefully to the wisdom of those who have come before you, striving for balance in your life, and always remembering that your worth is not based in what you do but who you are."

Snow College

Snow College Upward Bound has had a very busy season. We have been out and about visiting colleges. The sites have completed their own cultural and service activities. Our students have also been extremely busy taking part in a job shadowing/mentoring experience. Several of our Seniors applied for the Utah State Aspire Scholarship. Our seniors have begun getting their acceptance letters to the colleges of their choice. It is so exciting to see their faces now that they know this dream of a college education is going to begin in earnest.

Snow College UB has held Saturday Workshops on Financial Literacy, has held it's Student Senate and Parent Advisory Council Meetings. In addition training is ongoing for staff. Our office has two alumnae working part-time this academic year. Woot! Woot! We'd also like to thank Ron Dalley, Site Advisor, who retired after 26 years. We'd also like to welcome our new Site Advisor Melissa (MJ) Judy. She is a dynamic addition to our part-time staff.





News from Colorado

University of Colorado Denver *From Michael Mendoza, TRIO Student Support Services Participant and TRIO Club Member. Edited by Henry Ornelas.*

On November 20th, the Society of TRIO Students Club members and TRIO Student Support Services Staff volunteered at the annual “Denver Feed a Family” celebration which took place at Epworth United Methodist Church at E. Bruce Randolph Avenue and High Street. This annual event has been established to commemorate Bruce Randolph, “Daddy Bruce,” for his service of feeding hungry families that otherwise would not have the opportunity to enjoy a hot meal. Generous sponsors provided funding for over 155 tons of food to be distributed to hungry families. Hundreds of volunteers came together to help make the event possible.



Members of the TRIO Club and TRIO Student Support Services Staff contributed to the greater success of this community event. We were assigned multiple jobs including registration, data entry, answering phone calls, processing food baskets, delivering baskets to homes via taxi, and advertising free vaccinations that were being offered at the event. TRIO Club members were delighted to be a part of the big dream of feeding thousands of people for the holiday.

The baskets that were distributed to hungry families contained quite a delicious feast. Each basket weighed approximately 40 pounds and included a hearty turkey, Mac n’ cheese, cake mix, cranberry sauce, peas, potatoes, corn, and stuffing. In total, over 8,000 baskets were created and distributed and over 60,000 people were served. The event was quite a success! Thanks to the volunteers and sponsors that participated in the event, the dream of “Daddy Bruce” remains alive and well.

The members of the TRIO Club and Student Support Services staff include:

Teresa De Herrera, Henry R. Ornelas, Samantha Miles, Xee Xiong, Brenda Navarette, Alma Rocha-Vasquez, Humberto Guerrero, Melina Chacon, Daniela Castorena, Michael Mendoza, and Xai Xiong



Champion for Students Remembered as Caring, Passionate *By Laurie Marano*

Mike Doyle, a longtime Colorado Mountain College employee, died in an automobile accident on Friday, November 12. His official role was an administrative assistant for the TRIO grant programs, Upward Bound and Student Support Services. But he is remembered by co-workers as a teacher, someone who used his talents however he could to help students succeed.



News from Wyoming



UW Rainbow Resource Center receives \$580 that was donated at the 2010 ASPIRE Conference. Thank you ASPIRE!

News from Wyoming continued

University of Wyoming

Fall Connection *By Rita Burleson*

Student Success Services (SSS) hosted over one hundred attendees at the annual Fall Connection. The majority of participants were SSS first year students, followed by returning students who know a good dinner and entertainment when it comes around. The evening began with Sara Axelson, Vice President of Student Affairs, giving the welcoming address and then Sandy Straley, Project Director for SSS, introducing faculty and fellow TRIO project members at the dinner.



Brie Berwick, Advocates for Achievement (AFA) Treasurer, gave a short presentation on AFA, the SSS Recognized Student Organization (RSO). She highlighted how students could stretch their confidence with minimal risk taking by joining AFA and becoming leaders in the RSO. Next, SSS advisors recognized their December graduates: Becky Brix, BS Agriculture and Natural Resources; Angela Brown, BA Psychology; and Amy Suchor, BS Business Administration.



The finale of the SSS dinner was student presentations on their experiences studying abroad or working an internship. Spanish major Alyssa Murphy spoke of her study abroad in Chile. Not only was she able to improve her Spanish by mingling with native Spanish speakers and her house mother, she also shared the experience of living through the earthquake that hit Santiago. Even though she was farther up the coast in Concepción, she was on the eleventh floor of a swaying high rise. We're glad she made it back without injury!

Ashlee Kintzler shared what she learned during her internship with Pitchengine.com, a global company headquartered in Wyoming. Ashlee put her Journalism major to work attending sales and marketing conferences on how to grow a company.

Scott Cheney seeks to one day become a museum curator. He studied abroad in Bulgaria learning how to restore medieval church frescos. He was one of a small international team chosen for the work, and he intends to continue his research as part of the McNair Scholars Program. His work also earned him a dinner invitation from Lynn Cheney in Wilson, Wyoming, at the Scarlett family residence on December 28, as part of a fundraiser for the Cheney International Center at UW. As an aside,





Fall Connection continued

Scott does not claim direct descent from our former Vice President.

Wyoming Public Radio, UW Cultural Programs, McNair Scholars Program, Education Opportunity Center, and UW Student Activity Center sponsored the event. The dinner was held at the old downtown Union Pacific Train Station, with food by Corona Village.

Fall Summit *By Sandy Straley*

The Summit, a UW first year student transition program, helps students learn about college life and expectations and begin the transition from high school to postsecondary identities. SSS participants and staff participated in their own Summit Activity on August 21, 2010. About 30 SSS students and staff traveled to the UW Rec Camp near Centennial and then to the beautiful Snowy Range for an enjoyable day of outdoor activities. Interactive activities helped



everyone become acquainted and begin to form a supportive

group. After lunch near Lewis Lake, students divided into three groups to meet with their UWYO 1205 instructor and peer mentor. They were given an introduction to the 1205 course, the SSS First Year Experience Seminar, and learned more about their classmates and their instructor who would also be their individual SSS Advisor. The opportunity to obtain answers to their questions about transitioning to college was very helpful. Students who participated in Summit activities felt they had a jumpstart to college and to making connections with other students, plus they had a lot of fun.



University of Wyoming continued

SSS Students Meet Nutcracker Fairy!

On December 2nd, a group of thirty SSS students and two staff members attended the Nutcracker ballet on campus. Students enjoyed ringing in the holiday season with the familiar music and dance. The University of Wyoming Department of Theatre and Dance produces the Nutcracker every four years and the western-themed costumes and settings are worth the wait. We look forward to hosting more cultural events in the spring semester!



Hello, Goodbye



SSS would like to welcome our newest advisor, **Michael Terry**. Michael has been working for the past year as the SSS tutor coordinator and made the switch to advisor in November 2010. If you ask him where he's from, Michael will tell you he's a military brat and moved around quite a bit growing up. Some of the places he's lived include Arkansas, Utah, Texas, Illinois, New Mexico, the Philippines, and Germany.

Michael completed a bachelor's degree in English at the University of Central Arkansas and a master's degree in American Studies at Utah State University. Because he can't get enough of school, he's currently working on a master's in public administration.

Michael has taught and tutored writing and is very excited to be an SSS advisor. He loves living in Laramie because of its close proximity to beautiful mountains and its friendly people.

While we welcome a new advisor, we also say goodbye to **Ken Zajac**, who is retiring to "an undisclosed location." Ken has spent the last ten years as an SSS advisor helping students succeed at UW. We're grateful for his years of service and wish him well on his retirement. Ken would love to hear from you! You can email him at wyohopper@gmail.com.

Enjoy those Twinkies, Ken!





University of Wyoming continued

Getting Personal... Get to know UW SSS Students

Becky Brix, SSS Student

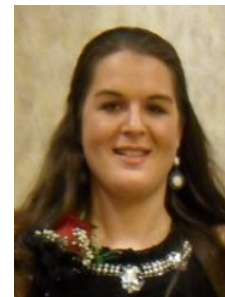


What a rollercoaster it's been! Entering UW as a freshman I had little to no self confidence. I was super shy and overwhelmed by it all. I was working four jobs, taking 15 credit hours and sleeping when I could. I definitely wasn't partying my freshman year away. It soon became clear that this was not sustainable in the long term. There was something missing. I needed a social outlet and turned to the campus community. Slowly but surely, I found my place in Collegiate 4-H, Advocates for Achievement, and the Wesley Foundation. Over the course of the past two years, I have mastered the art of time management. With this balance, I have seen many changes. I have lost over 60 pounds since 2008 and finally feel confident with who I am.

My attitude is more positive and my overall outlook has been enhanced. Needless to say, it has not always been easy and there have been rough patches where I've wondered if it's worth it. But remember it is! Don't be afraid to ask for help—reach out to the people and resources available to help you. Take it one day at a time and never forget your goals. I am proud to say that all the hard work in the classroom, workplace and within the campus has paid off. I am graduating with a BS in Agricultural Business in 3 ½ years with several prospects of employment on the horizon. I will still be in Laramie – hope to see you around!

Amy Suchor, SSS Student

My college story is about perseverance, dedication, and having the strength to continue. I started college in 2005 as a young freshman thinking college would be easy. I quickly found out how wrong I was. At the end of my first semester, I was on academic probation and scared. As all my friends were giving up and moving, I knew I had to stick to this college thing. It wasn't easy to come back spring semester of my first year and know how close I was to being suspended. I worked hard, and I made it through. Unlike most students, I declared my major in the third year of college. I couldn't raise my GPA high enough in the previous years to have a major. Finally, I decided to pursue business. It was frustrating, but it was well worth all the hard work. I finally made it all the way to the top, first getting on the dean's list, and then having a 4.0 and making it on the president's list. Those two semesters were probably the proudest of my life. I graduated fall semester of 2010 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a minor in Entrepreneurship. The little girl back in 2005 made it to graduation, and I personally never would have thought I could make it through. This story is about how, no matter how challenging college is, or how frustrating, it's worth sticking with it and making it. That's what I say to people who are struggling. I've been through what college throws at you, and I stuck with it and graduated.





Martha Ramos, SSS Student

My name is Martha Verenise Ramos. I was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. I am half way done with my junior year at UW although I'm barely half way done with my schooling. I am a Nursing and Spanish major with a minor in International Studies. SSS has been a part of my entire experience at UW and has probably been my most supportive organization throughout the last three years. Thanks to SSS I was able to accomplish one of my most desired goals which was to study abroad. I remember the day when we had Ruth come talk to our SSS class about study abroad opportunities, and that's when the seed was planted. The following semester, I remember hearing a few SSS students share their study abroad experience at the annual banquet, and I convinced myself that I had to go abroad. A year later I decided to take the study abroad preparation class, which officially began the process. After a whole lot of research and, of course, help from my SSS advisor Ken Zajac—it was official. I would study abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina! I recently returned from Argentina, and immersing myself in a completely new culture and society was the experience of a lifetime. I gained unforgettable friends and a family away from home. I look forward to achieving other great things with the help of SSS.



Melissa Snyder, SSS Student



Six years ago I came to UW with an Associates' Degree in English from LCCC. I may have lived in Laramie since I was five years old, but I truly knew nothing about the University and how it worked. I was Lost. My fiancé (then boyfriend) told me about SSS and how they might be able to help me with some of the transitions I had to deal with in coming from a community college. Bill Anderson was my advisor in SSS and while I always pushed myself on to graduate, I truly don't know how I would have done it without SSS, Bill, UDSS, and all of their help. If it weren't for Bill and SSS I would not have been in contact with Vocational Rehabilitation (who have also been a big help to me), I would not have received the two scholarships that SSS has awarded me, and I never would have been able to go to so many exciting plays and functions over the years. I will never forget the helping hand that SSS has provided me with the last four years and how that help has truly influenced my ability to graduate this December 2010.

Congrats, Graduates!

Congratulations to these SSS Students on their graduation from UW!

Becky Brix, BS Agricultural Business

Angela Brown, BA Psychology

Elizabeth Jackson-Little, BS Biology

Steven Limmer, BA Criminal Justice

Corie Owen, BS Business Administration

Melissa Snyder, BA Art

Amy Suchor, BS Business Administration

Tiffany Newton, BA Humanities/Fine Arts



News from North Dakota

Happy New Year ASPIRE! It has already been a busy year!

A major push in North Dakota this year is state initiative. Mary Fredricks, the chair for the state committee has diligently been watching what is going on with state policy relating to education and any other policy that might affect the TRIO community. She spearheaded the idea of having a mini policy seminar at the state level in coordination with the North Dakota State ASPIRE Conference which will be held in Bismarck, ND March 13th-15th.

North Dakota's state website is now up and running. I appreciate all the work that went into putting that together.

All existing Student Support Services programs in North Dakota were refunded this grant period and two additional programs were funded. Minot State University was funded as well as Sitting Bull College.

Here are some other great things that are going on around the great state of North Dakota!

Cankdeska Cikana Community College

I am pleased to inform you that Cankdeska Cikana Community College was selected to receive funding for another five years!

Our program has developed a comprehensive service program that supports each individual student in meeting their educational goals. Services include a comprehensive First Year Experience Course, Study Skills Informative Workshops, Transitioning to a Four Year Institution, Campus Tours and many more beneficial services.

CCCC has an experienced SSS staff that provides a seamless delivery of services within our institution providing a supportive environment. The SSS program is a critical element in fostering student success.

Talent Search at Cankdeska Cikana Community College has hired Melissa Brown as the Educational Advisor for the Four Winds Public Schools in Fort Totten, ND. She began employment on December 6, 2010.

Talent Search arranged an ACT Preparation Session on December 3, 2010 for juniors and seniors registered to take the ACT test. A total of 27 students attended from three schools. Instructors from CCCC conducted the instruction in their respective disciplines of English/Reading, Mathematics and Science. This was a first time session that had great attendance. We plan to continue the sessions before each test and to monitor test scores to evaluate progress/improvements made by the students.

TS Advisor, Melissa Brown accompanied the Four Winds High School student government body to Bismarck on January 6, 2011. They were invited to attend the "State of Tribes Address" given by Chairman Tex Hall of the Three Affiliated Tribes, to address the North Dakota Legislative body held at the State Capital in the Brynhild Haugland Room. A total of 11 students attended this historic event.



News from North Dakota continued

Dickinson State University

Student Support Services Program took a group of students to attend the Mannheim Steamroller concert in Bismarck.

We have a couple of workshops planned for the spring semester. One entitled “Loans, Grants, and Scholarships, Oh My!” This workshop is scheduled for January and will help students understand satisfactory academic progress requirements and other important issues regarding financial aid. Students will also learn where they can apply for outside scholarship monies. The other workshop to be held this spring is entitled “When I Grow Up I Wanna Be A... This workshop is scheduled for February and will help students discover the careers that will be most satisfying to them.

Social cultural events planned for spring are two plays one entitled “Pride and Prejudice” and the other “After Ashley Play.” The students are also planning a bowling get together in March. We will be having a spring “welcome back gathering” to help students learn about new SSS initiatives and meet fellow participants. Participants who attend are granted priority appointments for early registration.

We will celebrate TRiO Day on Friday, February 25th. Our Recognition Banquet is set for May 5, 2011. At this banquet we honor outstanding students for their accomplishments as well as recognize faculty and staff who have assisted students in their accomplishments.

North Dakota State University

Upward Bound completed the APR in January. The program has hired two new tutors: Kevin Black – industrial engineering major and Emilee Vetter – social science education major to assist students at their schools with academic need. The search process continues for the position of UB Project Coordinator. NDSU Upward Bound continues the partnership with the Red River Valley Disabled Veterans and assisted for the sixth year with the DAV Pancake Benefit. The UB students and staff served pancakes, coffee, juice and of course sausages. Reset tables and took out the trash while visiting with the Veterans and the public guests about Upward Bound. The student staff was treated to a knoepla soup supper by the director just before finals.

The students and staff celebrated the season at our annual luncheon buffet with special guest and speaker, Brittany Footit, former NDSU Upward Bound student. Brittany graduated from University of Mary in May with a four year Baccalaureate in nursing and is working at Essentia Health. Also in December, UB students and staff supported the Salvation Army as bell ringers at 3 locations in Fargo. Senior UB students participate in Bison Beginnings (early admission) at their schools.

ACT Prep Nights found students working with tutors preparing for the December test day. Fresh batteries, peppermint candies and sharp pencils were distributed to the students.

UB welcomed back Travis Dockter for his fifth year as a student staff member. Travis started as a tutor and is essential in the operation of the UB office. Introduction of new tutors at our schools, tutor schedules, training and paperwork kept everyone busy. The graduating class of 2010 had 100% enrollment in PSE for the fall of 2010.



NDSU continued

The Fargo Marathon Foundation recognized NDSU UB for the commitment to the Marathon with a donation of \$1000.00.

NDSU VUB welcomes James Becks as the Site Coordinator for the VUB satellite office at UND. James is off to a great start establishing new office and classroom space, and recruiting veterans into the project. The US Bank is donating a scholarship fund of \$500.00 to be used for scholarship support to prior VUB participants attending a two-year or four-year school. VUB is part of the new Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee. As part of the Public Affairs function, the committee strives to partner community businesses in support of local military organizations and family members.

NDSU Student Support Services welcomed a new Project Coordinator, Tiffany Dayton. Tiffany comes to us from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse where she served as academic advisor for Student Support Services. Tiffany is an SSS alum from University of Wisconsin River Falls and she brings to our team her passion and a deep commitment to the mission of our program. Tiffany coordinates our tutoring services, and assists the Project Director with project management duties.

In addition, this fall we unveiled a new Math Study Strategies course developed and taught by Ray Smith, SSS Science and Math Instructor. Math Study Strategies is a one-credit class with a focus on the basic skills needed to do well in university math courses. The course was immediately successful in that we began the year with 3 full sessions!

In an effort to continue advancing the instruction aspect of SSS, we have added a brand new classroom fully equipped with wireless network, Plasma TV and other instructional materials. This classroom provides both students and instructors will a space conducive to learning and teaching.

University of Mary

The SSS program at the University of Mary is in the first year of a new five year grant. The newest initiative that we've implemented is our \$100 book grant and \$500 merit scholarship, all funded by our institution. As part of the institutional commitment to the SSS program, the University of Mary agreed to provide additional grant and scholarship money to active SSS participants who maintain good academic standing. Our students love it and I can already see the retention strategy at work.

Another new initiative is our work experience program. Our SSS program is working cooperatively with the State of North Dakota to identify agencies who are interested in provided short term and long term work experiences for interested SSS participants. As we all know, professional development for our SSS participants can also be enhanced through out of classroom professional connections and work experiences.

We have a new person who started this fall and her name is Dr. Judi Maxwell. Dr. Maxwell has doctorates in botany and agricultural economics. Dr. Maxwell is semi-retired and will provide academic advising and professional tutoring for our SSS participants.



News from North Dakota continued

University of North Dakota

The UND TRIO Programs have had fall season full of a variety of various program activities. The Upward Bound Program has sponsored student trips such as the senior seminar (bringing seniors to campus for workshops on everything from financial aid application to “Expectations of College Students” presentations by Bridge Instructors). Upward Bound juniors also took a long weekend to attend college tours of a variety of institutions, and a great presentation on “Young Professional” careers with Microsoft. The Talent Search Program has plans in the works for a target area wide session for juniors to prepare for the ACT Test, where they will come to a central location for a day long prep session. The UND EOC Program is coordinating with the North Dakota University System in developing a state-wide plan for a network of Adult Education services, which will provide support for the EOC mission at a state level. Student Support Services was refunded and all staff are teaching classes this spring. The McNair Program secured outside funding to send seven students to The Twenty-second Annual Ronald E. McNair Commemorative Celebration at North Carolina A & T State University in Greensboro, NC. Four of the students were presenting oral research projects and three were doing poster presentations.

At UND, we also have an ever-evolving UND TRIO Alumni Association, which is establishing individual program alumni networks to better facilitate coordination of the association activities. Some upcoming alumni activities are: presenting to current TRIO students at the annual TRIO Day celebration activities concerning their educational and career journeys; advocacy for TRIO legislative issues; and attendance at the COE Policy Seminar in March.

News from South Dakota

Cody McMichael, President of South Dakota Chapter of ASPIRE, will be collecting information for the ASPIRE Regional Fact Sheet and SD TRIO Fact Book. Cody will present the fact books to the SD legislative team in Washington D.C. as part of COE's Policy Seminar in March to ensure South Dakota TRIO programs have a voice of support for TRIO programs across the nation.

The South Dakota ASPIRE spring conference will provide an opportunity for all TRIO professionals in South Dakota with valuable networking and professional development opportunities. It will be in Chamberlain, SD at the Americinn on April 10-12. Tina Hartley, President-elect of SD ASPIRE will be chairing the conference committee.

We have three new TRIO professionals in South Dakota. April Eastman has been named the Director of Student Support Services at Sisseton Wahpeton Community College in Sisseton, SD. There are two new TRIO professionals at Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD, Britt Lorenz has been named the Director of Student Support Services and Phillip Coghlan is now the Assistant Coordinator of Upward Bound.

Congratulations go out to Juli Larson, Retention Advisor, for Student Support Services at Black Hills State



News from South Dakota continued

University. Julie gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Malachi Peter Larson. November 12, 2010. Juli has been enjoying maternity leave with Malachi and will be back to work in early February.

The SD ASPIRE website will be available February 1, 2011. This website has been a priority for a few years. We encourage all ASPIRE members to visit us online. Find us at “<http://www.sdaspire.org>”!

Have a great new year! – *Cody McMichael, SD ASPIRE President*



South Dakota TRIO professionals, students, and alumni will be celebrating their success with a South Dakota TRIO Day Reception at the State Capitol in Pierre on March 1. State legislators, governors’ cabinet members and staff will be invited to the reception. SD TRIO Fact books will be provided to the legislators in the districts that have active TRIO programs and TRIO brochures will be available to everyone attending the SD TRIO Day Reception.

All TRIO professionals and students attending will be prepared with talking points about TRIO and their respective programs provided by the SD ASPIRE State President, Cody McMichael.

SD TRIO professionals will contact their local newspapers, television stations, radio stations, and college media relations offices inviting them to cover SD TRIO Day. SD ASPIRE leadership will write relevant articles reporting on SD TRIO Day and the impact of TRIO in the state for publication in state-wide newspapers.

Northern State University—Student Support Services Highlights

Student Support Services academic advisors at Northern State University began implementing StrengthsQuest with their students during the 2010-11 academic year. StrengthsQuest is a program designed to help students understand and utilize their talents. Through assessment, students are shown their key strengths. Advisors then work with students on how to highlight their personal talents for achievement in college and in the future. Students and advisors alike both have seen a positive impact from the program. “Strengths-based advising empowers students to focus more on what they do well and the inherent, potential-rich talent within them... It’s exciting to see students build self-confidence and hope by maximizing the talents they possess!” said Rosanne Rougemont, SSS Academic Advisor.



Northern State University continued

As a highlight to the StrengthsQuest program, Dr. Thom Flamboe, professional counselor and educator, presented an entertaining look at utilizing personal talents. This lecture was held during finals week for TRIO SSS students. Dr. Flamboe told entertaining reflections of his personal and professional development, showing students how his strengths assisted with his achievement and encouraging students to do the same.

During the fall 2010 academic semester, TRIO SSS at Northern State University has been working at building partnerships with campus and community connections. The program is working with TRIO alum to share their SSS achievements with current students. On campus, TRIO SSS has built strong relationships with the Counseling Center and Multicultural Office, in addition to other campus organizations. Local resources are also working with the program by presenting workshops to students. The SSS program is also hoping to increase resource accessibility this semester by utilizing many new digital programs and workshops.

Below are photos from a salsa dance event held between the SSS office and Spanish Club on campus.



News from South Dakota continued

Dakota Wesleyan University

The eight peer mentors and 51 students from TRIO LearnStrong 101 freshman experience course assisted various Mitchell organizations in the months of November and December: Salvation Army Bell Ringing, Meals on Wheels, the Abbott House Festival of Lights and the Love Feast. The Abbott House is a private charity that provides residential treatment services to girls between the age of seven and seventeen. The Love Feast is a meal provided through the First United Methodist Church of Mitchell, SD for the families in need.

Back row: Brenda Habermann, Christen Mitchell, Taylor Michalek, Chris Pritchard, Eric Boldan
Front row: Trista Schultz, Mike Lynch, Mackenzie Edgington



South Dakota State University *By Laura Kinslow, South Dakota State University, TRIO SSS*

I have always thought the best way to get to know someone is to just start up a conversation as though you and the other person are already the best of friends. With this in mind, let me do just that by thanking all of you for inviting me back, once again, to SDSU and the TRIO SSS program! I've greatly missed the college environment and the students we serve. They bring such a feeling of life and vibrancy like no other job I have ever experienced. TRIO Student Support Services has always played an important part of student success and I am very excited to be working once more in a position that contributes to the personal and academic growth, development and achievement of our students.



My family has called Brookings, SD home since we moved here in 2001. My husband, Eric, works full-time for the South Dakota National Guard and we have two beautiful children, Sadie 14 and Tobias 7. Before earning both my undergraduate and graduate degrees with South Dakota State University, I worked full-time in Sioux Falls and Brookings as a Correctional Officer and was a Supply Sergeant in the National Guard for ten years. We have a little acreage on the outskirts of Brookings that is close to becoming a small petting zoo! When I am not working, I like long-distance running, coffee, a good book, and the Pittsburgh Steelers. Go Steelers!

I look forward to meeting and share ideas with the rest of the TRIO family at our next ASPIRE conference in April! Hopefully, we will have a lot less snow by then!



News from Montana

An End of an Era *By Mary Lukin, revised January 26, 2011*

When I started this piece, my intent was to send out a notice that a program, which I nurtured for twenty-seven years, had ended. After attending my fourth funeral in as many weeks, I realized that I really needed to write the program's obituary or maybe the eulogy.

I became the Advance By Choice (ABC) Program Director, a TRIO project, in 1978 and served in that capacity until I retired in June 2005. Eventually, I will write an in-depth account of my time at MSU. In the meantime, here are a few memories of my time with the program. I treasured the times that I shared with students in realizing their academic, personal, and professional achievements. I also agonized with them when their goals were unfulfilled. The friendships of like-minded colleagues helped to make the difficult times manageable and enhanced our collective successes. Some of our successes were an ongoing network of services and programs; addressing negative stereotyping; and improving the campus climate for under-representative groups. Accolades from students, colleagues, and organizations for doing what I loved were added bonuses to my years at MSU

Last summer, MSU learned that the TRIO program (formerly Advance By Choice) proposal had not made the cut off for continued federal funding. I remember the agony of sweating out the long Federal proposal process and then stretching limited funds to fulfill the program goals and to meet students' needs. While all TRIO programs live with this possibility, it was unsettling to realize that the MSU program would close. Although the proposal was, just 0.67 points below the funding cut off, MSU's President related to me that it would have required \$6 million dollars to fund the all of proposals between the MSU proposal and the cutoff of the funded proposals. With President Obama's 2011 State of the Union proposal to freeze domestic spending for the next five years, the future seems bleak for students who are first-generation and low-income.

Just after Christmas, I found that the MSU TRIO WebPages had been disabled. Although I knew this day was coming, it was still a shock to realize that an era had really ended. I am heartbroken. While the program made a huge impact in helping students achieve so many academic and personal goals, the need for the program continues. I am also concerned how the loss of direct support for TRIO students will adversely affect their retention.

While the program doors closed after 35 years, there is some light on the horizon for some of the students, which the program served.

- President Waded Cruzado has made a commitment to improve MSU student retention and has committed a substantial one-time financial award for Native American Students programs.
- Brenda York, Director of Disability and Veterans Services committed resources to continue the math course offerings this year, and is listed as the contact/link for TRIO program information
- Tutoring will continue to be available through spring semester.

Even with these efforts, I cannot help but be concerned that access to services for TRIO-eligible students will



An End of an Era continued

suffer without staff dedicated to serve only this population. I hope the current University efforts will lessen the gap in access and services for first-generation and low-income students.

The TRIO program, its' staff and students made a positive impact on MSU. I trust that it not be forgotten.

Since mailing this piece to my e-mail list in mid-January, I have received many responses from former students, colleagues, friends, and family. The comments were great reminders of the program's impact and the need to continue the rally for access programs. I have enjoyed reading of individual student's perception of the program and their later successes, MSU colleagues' remembrances of me being resolute and single-minded on my watch. I was also reminded of the importance of public funding and concerns of others in the surviving very hard times ahead.

MT ASPIRE Sponsors the Second Annual Best Practices in the Last Best Place Conference *By Lynn Farris*

The Montana Chapter of ASPIRE broke new ground last year by sponsoring the first annual *Best Practices in the Last Best Place Conference* at Flathead Valley Community College May 20-21. The second annual *Best Practices Conference* is slated for May 17 and 18, 2011 again at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Montana.

While the target audience is Montana TRiO and non-TRiO educators, anyone from the ASPIRE region is welcome to attend or present.

The idea for the conference came during a conference call involving members of the Montana TRIO Policy Advisory Committee. As the group was discussing alternatives for more strategic involvement of Montana TRIO programs in the discussion of Two-Year Education in Montana, it was proposed that we sponsor a best practices conference and invite both TRIO and non-TRIO educators in Montana.

The conference begins Tuesday May 17 with registration at 8:00. Tuesday's agenda includes a plenary speaker from the Department of Ed (to be determined), lunch and three sectionals, and dinner. Wednesday's agenda includes break-out sessions and concludes at 1:00 after a lunch with a speaker from the Montana Commissioner of Higher Education Office.

A partial (draft) list of break-out sessions include: the Montana College!Now project; developing learning communities; disability issues in higher ed; tribal college panel; transfer issues; MCIS training; What Employers Expect (panel); study abroad; assessing student abilities; using WEAVEonline to track institutional and academic progress. Contact Lynn Farris at lfarris@fvcc.edu or 406-756-3882 if you would like to present or have a request for a particular topic.

Registration will take place on Cvent and invitations will go out to the entire region. Kalispell is beautiful in May as we watch Glacier Park wake up for the summer. Consider getting a head start on your summer by joining us in Kalispell for *Best Practices in the Last Best Place*.



I Am a High School Dropout *By Jamaica Moore*

I am a high school dropout; in fact the last grade I graduated was the eighth grade. My name is Jamaica Moore and I am a high school dropout who is now only one semester away from earning my Bachelor of Arts Major in Biology, Minor in Psychology, with three years of Spanish. Five years ago, at the age of 29, I knew I wanted more out of life than to live the “bar life.” I began working in bars at the age of 15 and became engulfed in the lifestyle and the alcohol. The only job skills I had to offer up to that point in my life, offered me no real future. I had already received my GED from the Lincoln Center, the adult education center in Billings, Montana, and I knew I was not prepared to begin college, or even how to

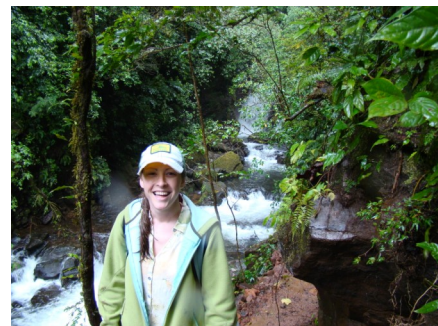
begin to apply for college. For me, the start of my college career began when I was introduced to the TRIO and EOC programs. I was directed to the TRIO representative Michelle Gasek, EOC Site Coordinator in Billings, Montana, who immediately helped me enroll in 9 months of college preparatory classes. This was only the beginning; Michelle also helped me file for financial aid and apply for admission to Montana State University- Billings. Michelle always was, and still is, willing to answer any questions, give advice from her knowledge and experiences, and, above all, has always given me encouragement to do my best. The idea of attend-



ing college was daunting enough, and to have no knowledge of the requirements, how to file paper work, or even who to speak with, I feel that I would have just been lost in the process without the guidance I received through TRIO and EOC. During my sophomore year I was proud to receive the TRIO Achiever Award from EOC, which Michelle graciously nominated me for. Since then I have faced many fears, including public speaking, and overcome many life obstacles by focusing on my educational goals. A Tropical Ecology class presented me with the opportunity to visit Costa Rica, which showed me the value of communication across cultures and prompted my enthusiasm for learning Spanish. I am not stopping with just my Bachelor of Arts,

I am applying this spring of 2011 for the Masters of Physician Assistant Studies program at Rocky Mountain College, and have been encouraged by a professor to take the Medical College Admission Test and apply for a medical school program. Five years ago I would have never imagined myself applying for medical school program, now I find it a new challenge I am excited to face. Without the help of TRIO, EOC, and the wonderful representatives like Michelle, I do not believe I could have achieved all that I have to date. A past I was once not proud of has become my inspiration to make the most of my life, and I could never fully express the gratitude I have for the help and encouragement I received through the TRIO and EOC programs. For people like me, these programs place within our reach the seemingly unobtainable and even unimaginable goals of life.

Jamaica Moore



Jamaica Moore's bio and pictures have been submitted for our EOC student profile for the Montana 2011 Fact Book. She was and is still being served by Michelle Gasek, EOC Site Coordinator in Billings, Montana.

Newest Member of the MSU-B Upward Bound Staff

Aaron Murrish joins the Upward Bound staff at Montana State University Billings. He has taken over the duties following Barb Waters move to the Student Support Services office where she is serving as the academic coordinator for the office. We will miss Barb and her contributions UB and ETS but are excited for her new TRIO adventure.



Aaron comes to our office via the University of Montana where he worked in a similar position for campus recreation. Aaron earned his degree in information systems from UM. While at UM he served on various committees and advised the Sports Club Union, the organization that guides non-intercollegiate sports clubs like rugby, rodeo, and skiing to name a few. He also served as the computer specialist for the NYSP camp when was funded through the Department of Agriculture. Welcome Aaron to the TRIO Family.

A Message from Zach Hawkins, MT ASPIRE State President

Greetings fellow ASPIRE Colleagues. I hope this message finds you and your loved ones well.

We have had an exciting year in Montana so far. Most recently, we have seen our Congressman, Denny Rehberg, selected as Chair of the House Labor, HHS and Education Committee. This is a meaningful opportunity for Montana to influence the TRIO appropriations through dialogue with Mr. Rehberg and his staff. We plan to make the case that investing in education is an investment in the future economic growth of Montana and America. We are hopeful that the logic of our argument, the lengthy and accomplished record of our programs and our individual relationships with Mr. Rehberg and his staff will result in a positive appropriation for TRIO.

Montana ASPIRE has recently secured a grant with the Montana Department of Labor to train and network with counselors all over the state to increase the use of the Montana Career Information System (MCIS.) This is an online tool that our members are already using with their Upward Bound and Talent Search students, but is not as widely used in many areas of the state. We have positioned ourselves as a vital link between the Department of Labor and all of our state high schools to help broaden the use of MCIS. It's a great opportunity for our TRIO professionals to share their knowledge with the rest of the education community in Montana and help bolster our legitimacy as a professional organization.

Recently, I attended the ASPIRE Board Meeting in Billings, the site of our 2010 ASPIRE Conference. We have selected the Holiday Inn Grand as our host hotel and are excited to offer this venue. Billings is a good location in Montana as it is fairly centrally located for the rest of the region. Additionally, Montana TRIO has a large and visible presence in the community. Barb Waters from MSU Billings has graciously agreed to be our conference chair and we are delighted that she accepted. She has proven to be a valuable leader in Montana ASPIRE and we are confident that she will make our conference a success.

Lastly, I am proud to announce that Montana has met its Fair Share goal this year for individual donations! We are the first state in the ASPIRE region to do so. Thanks to all the folks from around Montana who have chosen to give to COE.

I hope to see all of you in Salt Lake in October and that the rest of your year goes well.