



ASPIRATIONS

Official Newsletter of APSIRE, INC.

TRiO

May—August 2011



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

I remember as a child listening to my parents talk about how much faster the current year had flown by as compared with previous years. Quite frankly I thought they were a little batty for their line of thought. After all, there were still 365 days in the year, and 24 hours to the day... just as there was the year before. Well, as my term as your ASPIRE President draws to a close, I now fully understand those odd words heard oh so long ago! In fact, I would like to apologize to them for thinking they were batty. This year as your President has been an amazing journey, and it seems like just yesterday the year began and here it is time to pass the torch on to new leadership. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve this region, and know the next person to step into this role will do an amazing job in representing this region at the local and national level.



I would like to congratulate all of the Talent Search and EOC projects that were successful in the competition process this year. After all the submission delays, last minute changes, new requests and requirements, and of course the uncertainty and painful delay in notification for EOC projects, it was a strenuous process. We did, unfortunately, lose one Talent Search project, but thankfully retained all EOC projects! I know our Upward Bound and McNair projects have been watching these competitions to garner information about what may be coming for them. I hope you will all take advantage of the opportunities provided through the region, COE and the Department of Education to gather the information you need to be successful in the next round of competitions. I certainly wish you all much success.

Our annual conference is right around the corner, and I look forward to seeing you in Salt Lake City, Utah! Jami Bayles has done a fantastic job of leading a dynamic group of people from across Utah to develop our regional conference. Their hard work has provided opportunities for professional growth, networking, and exploring the wonderful location of Salt Lake City. I hope you will join us for this conference and take full advantage of the opportunities provided.

Oscar Felix, Andrea Reeve, Kathy Felker, and Amy Verlanic have joined forces to provide our annual Leadership Development Institute. This year the LDI program will feature Ray Carlisle and Jonathan McKenzie along with important sessions to strengthen our region by providing the historical perspective of our region as well as the critical information that will help participants understand the issues facing our programs and the opportunities to charge forward to keep TRIO and GearUp programs alive and strong. If you have never been to an LDI workshop, or it's been a while and you would like a refresher, please consider registering for it. This year the workshop will be held on Saturday, October 8 and Sunday, October 9.

As I'm sure you are all aware, we've had a few unexpected changes in the makeup of our regional board this year. As Ryan Ross (Past President) and Tammy Ward (President Elect) stepped down from their posts early in our board year, I was so thankful to have Lynne Brown and Rachel Martinez accept the offer and challenge of filling in as your Past President and President Elect for the year. They were both wonderful resources for me and assets to the Board. As we approach the time for election of new regional officers, I think it is important to remind everyone that this year we are in a unique position that we will be electing a new President Elect, Treasurer, and President. Because Rachel Martinez is filling the role of President Elect on a one-year replacement term, she will not automatically come into the role of President. That will take a vote of



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the members which will take place during the business meeting at the regional conference. Nominations are being accepted for all three offices. I encourage you to consider running for one of these positions.

All of the committee chairs and Board members have done a wonderful job this year, and I thank all of you for your service. Our membership and participation in ASPIRE at all levels continues to keep this a dynamic and important organization for all of us as TRIO and GearUp professionals. While we likely will face additional challenges in the months to come as our legislators work through the federal budget development process, remember that together we are a loud and forceful voice. We have faced challenges in the past, and we rose up to not only face but to overcome them. Please continue your work to convince Congress that TRIO and GearUp programs not only need to continue so that we may serve our participants, but that they must be expanded so that others may benefit from these services.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the ASPIRE region this past year. I am truly humbled and grateful, and look forward to seeing what the future brings for us all.

Dawn Eckhardt





News from Utah

State Update

Are you ready to be inspired? Everyone in ASPIRE Utah has pulled together to plan a fantastic, exciting, and beneficial Regional Conference! We will see you in Salt Lake City in October.

ASPIRE Utah is pleased to announce that all of Talent Search applications were successfully funded! Congratulations to Talent Search students and staff at Dixie State College; Southern Utah University; Salt Lake Community College; Utah State University – College of Eastern Utah, San Juan Campus; Utah Valley University; and Weber State University!!

Also of note, ASPIRE Utah now has a fully functioning website. To view more stories and pictures of our students, please visit www.ASPIREut.org



Salt Lake Community College

For the past three years, Student Support Services at Salt Lake Community College has held a TRIO Student Conference prior to the beginning of Fall and Spring Semesters. The theme for Fall 2011, "Your Life is Calling: Will You Answer?" helped students understand how intentional decision making will lead to academic and personal success. Because creating pictures subconsciously helps to make decisions that lead to success, students created Vision Journals to track their successes and keep focused on reaching their goals.

"I try not to miss any of these conferences because it helps me feel relieved to know that everybody there is in the same boat as I am. We are all trying to succeed and get what we want out of life. These conferences give me an opportunity to help define my vision for success." said Maria Medina, TRIO Participant.

Part of being successful is living on a student budget and this year's "Family Feud Financial Literacy" was a great opportunity to learn and laugh together. Dani Saucedo, TRIO Participant, shared his thoughts. "It was a fun and easy way to learn very valuable information."





Salt Lake Community College continued

SSS: Quest, the TRIO/ Student Support Services summer bridge program at Salt Lake Community College, concluded its 11th year with 20 participants successfully completing the program. Julie Jackman, Program Coordinator, said “What started out as ‘an idea’ has developed into a true opportunity of access and success for TRIO students.” Team building begins before the semester starts with a day of ‘Fear Factor’ for the Quest group. They are introduced to each other and to a group of Peer Mentors who previously completed the program and work in the TRIO office. The core of the program is a Learning Enhancement ‘Essentials of College Study’ class (LE 1020) which includes curriculum



specifically designed for first generation, low-income college students. In addition, bridge students attend weekly seminars to introduce them to other opportunities on campus and provide additional information that will enrich their experiences. “Quest meant a lot to me. It gave me a chance to attend during summer semester and also make friends so that I felt more comfortable and confident,” said Tuyet-Tram Phan a 2011 Summer Bridge graduate. At the end of Summer Term, Quest student success is celebrated at a luncheon with family members who have supported them in their endeavors.

Snow College

Student Support Services

Congratulations to Susan Johnson for her hard work. Susan was adopted by a Utah family from an orphanage in Liberia at the age of 14. She has overcome many obstacles in her life and she is truly deserving of this scholarship. Susan is an inspiration to all of us in SSS.





Weber State University

WSU Talent Search

This summer, Talent Search hosted two summer day camps for our rising 8th and 9th graders. Students had the opportunity to choose either a “BOT Build” workshop, where they built their own fully functioning robot, or a “Dissection” workshop, where they learned about the parts of the eye and did hands-on dissections of cow eyeballs. In addition to the workshops, students did some team building exercises on the “WSU Rocks” climbing wall and took a tour of campus. In total we had 42 students



WSU Upward Bound

Throughout our six week summer program, Upward Bound students participated in a variety of community service activities. Students helped sort clothes and landscape at Deseret Industries, raked leaves and made the grounds look nice at the Ogden City Cemetery, stocked shelves with food and diapers at Catholic Community Services, and put on a talent show at Crestwood Care Center.

In addition, students did something new this year. As part of our curriculum, four student groups, headed by trained student leaders, attended service learning classes, where each group designed and implemented a service learning project. These projects included the collection and donation of books to Ogden Regional Hospital, the delivery of handmade flowers and cards to the George E.

Wahlen Veterans Home, the collection over 270 bags for the students of the MaRaFiki International Schools, and

the collection and donation of art supplies to Primary Children's Medical Center. All of our student groups received much thanks for their hard work and thoughtfulness.





Westminster College

McNair Scholars

In August, ten Westminster College McNair Scholars presented their summer research projects at the 19th Annual Ronald E. McNair California Scholars Symposium at the University of California at Berkeley. Everyone in the group had spent June and July conducting individualized research guided by faculty mentors from either Westminster College or the University of Utah. Before the Symposium started, they toured Stanford University and listened to several presentations on graduate school preparation. Among these was a graduate student panel that included our very own Vanessa Seals (2010 McNair graduate), who is now a second-year PhD student in English at Stanford University. The next three days were full of research presentations by McNair Scholars from across the country. The Westminster McNair Scholars continued a tradition of quality: they did a wonderful job both presenting their work and answering questions. For some, it was their first academic symposium; they now have a taste of the networking and intellectual camaraderie that take place at conferences. As always, the Berkeley Symposium concluded with a cruise around the San Francisco Bay-- the students enjoyed dinner, dancing, and relaxing while they cruised by Alcatraz and the Bay Bridge.



News from Colorado

New TRIO Staff at Community College of Denver

TRIO Family Please help me in welcoming the TRIO Leadership at the Community College of Denver! Please reach out to them like only the TRIO Community can! Thanks!

The Community College of Denver Student Development Division is excited to introduce you to our new TRIO Leadership. These two leaders are committed to access and equity and have hit the ground running!



(DENVER, CO) **Khara O'Connell, M.Ed.**, has accepted the position of Director, Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) at Community College of Denver (CCD). O'Connell earned a Masters of Higher Education from Arizona State University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication from the University of Arkansas. In her new position O'Connell will coordinate the services of the EOC to provide training and assistance to students who are first-generation, low income or disabled and who have the potential or desire to pursue a college degree. Most recently O'Connell was Academic Coordinator and Educational Case manager at CCD Student Support Services/TRIO Scholars, where she worked closely with students, helping to assure their college success. Both The Educational Opportunity Center and Student Support Services are a part of the TRIO family at CCD. Involved in the community, O'Connell is representative-at-large on the executive board for Colorado ASPIRE, the professional organization for TRIO programs. Khara O'Connell can be reached by calling 303.629.9226.



(DENVER, CO) **Theresa R. Gatewood, M.Ed.**, has joined Community College of Denver as Director, Educational Talent Search. In her new position Gatewood will coordinate the services of Talent Search to identify qualified youth with potential for education at the post secondary level. Gatewood holds a Masters of Education in Organizational Leadership, Performance, and Change from Colorado State University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from University of Northern Colorado. Previously, Gatewood served as School Partnership Manager for College Summit Colorado working closely with school districts providing educational access and opportunity for low income, first generation students. Active in the Denver community, Gatewood is a committee member for the Denver Foundation and is assistant basketball coach for Denver School of Science and Technology. Theresa Gatewood can be reached by calling 303.629.9226.



News from South Dakota

Dakota Wesleyan University

Dakota Wesleyan TRIO SSS Welcomes a New Staff Member

Hi! I'm **Donna Dunn** the new TRIO Tutor Coordinator and Office of Disabilities Coordinator. I'm excited to be back on the DWU campus. I earned my undergrad degree at DWU and my masters in Adult and Higher Education Administration from the University of South Dakota. While earning my undergraduate degree I worked part time in the Layne Library in Smith Hall, so being back in the library in TRIO is somewhat full circle. I am coming back to DWU from the public sector. I've spent the last fourteen years working in the telephone industry. It's a great and exciting change to be in higher education. On a personal note, my husband and I have two children, Samantha is a senior English major and James is a Freshman Landscape Architecture major.



DWU TRIO Staff Strengths

Dakota Wesleyan University is a Gallup Strengths Based Campus. We focus on helping DWU students, staff and faculty develop their natural talents into Strengths. Every year we include Strength of the Month in our newsletter and highlight student's strengths in our office. This year we decided to kick off another year of celebrating Strengths by sharing our TRIO SSS staff's talents.

Donna Dunn, TRIO Tutoring Coordinator

Top 5 Strengths: Communication, Adaptability, Achiever, Futuristic, and Woo

"One of my top five strengths is Futuristic. This theme states that I'm inspired by the Future, which I am. I look to the future and see great things for the students of Dakota Wesleyan University. The students I have met and continue to meet make me feel excited about the future of our world. I also look to changes in my future as I'm newly an empty-nester. This is really an exciting time for me and my husband as we enter the next phase of our future." ~Donna

Gretchen Rich, TRIO Writing Center Specialist

Top 5 Strengths: Ideation, Input, Learner, Connectedness, and Intellection

"My favorite strength has to be Connectedness—even though it is #3 in my list. I believe in the concept of connections between things and people. I know that many things lead one to the other and that they make us into the people that we "could" be as well as those we "should" be. I believe in the spiritual connection between people as well—we share ideals and beliefs, but in addition we often share dreams and goals. These connections make us into the people we "want to be" and help us become strong." ~Gretchen



Sally Wickware-Thompson, Campus Counselor

Top 5 Strengths: Connectedness, Ideation, Strategic, Maximizer, and Adaptability

"I have the Strength of Adaptability that helps me meet whatever needs are most important whenever they are happening! Being flexible means that I can change my plan and quickly be comfortable with a new one. This is especially important because high-need situations (crises) rarely happen on a schedule, so I can be ready and willing to meet with students on a moment's notice." ~Sally

Kate Miller, Director of TRIO Student Support Services

Top 5 Strengths: Input, Learner, Intellection, Relator and Achiever

"My most useful strength is Achiever. It keeps me on track, working hard and moving toward my goals. I will always be a Learner but Achiever is what motivates me to put my learning to good use. I love to cross things off of my To Do list " ~ Kate

Tina Ludens, TRIO Peer Mentor Coordinator

Top 5 Strengths: Intellection, Empathy, Input, Relator, and Context

"I use my Context strength a lot! Whether I'm connecting with a student, planning an event or making important decisions, looking at the whole picture and knowing background information makes my goal much easier to accomplish. Yes, I was a history major" ~Tina

Angie Van Pelt, TRIO Administrative Assistant and Data Specialist

Top 5 Strengths: Connectedness, Relator, Input, Developer, and Arranger

"Connectedness is my top strength. I definitely believe everything happens for a reason. We are still responsible for our own choices, but those choices effect other people and other things around us. I believe everyone is connected, whether you're rich , poor, or from another part of the world. We are all connected." ~Angie



From L to R: Donna Dunn, Gretchen Rich, Sally Wickware-Thompson, Kate Miller, Tina Ludens, Angie Van Pelt



Northern State University

The TRIO Student Support Services program at Northern State University started the fall 2011 semester with a SSS pre-orientation program held August 25-27, 2011. During the two day pre-orientation program, new SSS freshman attended sessions on student success, motivational speakers, and participated in several community building activities.

The goals of the SSS pre-orientation were to create a stronger sense of identity with new students and to create success and goal plans for new SSS participants prior to the start of the academic year. From both SSS staff and participants' perspectives, the program was very successful! Students have been much more receptive to services and interventions, and are equally excited to celebrate their achievements with staff. Residential peer mentors also report that SSS students who participated in the pre-orientation are much more active in campus life as a whole.

Highlights from the TRIO SSS pre-orientation program include:

- Introduction and use of StrengthsQuest program, which highlights and celebrates students' individual talents;
- Individual SSS advising appointments and goal planning sessions;
- Review of services and a SSS parents' program;
- A presentation by motivational speaker and chalk artist, Bob Upgren;
- Numerous community building and cultural activities.

The SSS pre-orientation program culminated with collaborative project with the local Fall-Out art community. With the assistance of the Fall-Out organization, SSS students created a large mural that is now hanging in the TRIO SSS lab. The mural symbolizes academic, social and personal growth students experience at Northern State University and as part of the Student Support Services program.

Following the SSS pre-orientation program, students transitioned to the Wolf Pack New Student Orientation program held for all new students at Northern State University.





More than 300 students to attend Upward Bound Olympics

By Elissa Dickey, American News reporter

Aberdeen News

2:29 p.m. CDT, June 23, 2011

More than 300 regional high school students will be at Northern State University this weekend for the Upward Bound Olympics.

Students from Upward Bound programs at Black Hills State University, South Dakota State University, the University of South Dakota, the University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University and the University of Mary are scheduled to attend, said Rocky Burkett, NSU Upward Bound coordinator. The annual Olympics rotates among institutions, Burkett said.

The event begins Friday afternoon with campus tours, followed by a welcome from NSU President Jim Smith, an admissions presentation and Twin Cities motivational speaker Craig Hillier.

Students will then walk over to Melgaard Park for activities such as volleyball and tug of war. Saturday's events include an ultimate Frisbee contest, math contest, track relays and a quiz bowl, Burkett said.

Upward Bound is a federally funded educational program with the goal of supporting teens through high school and preparing them for college, he said.

Upward Bound is eligible to ninth- through 12th-grade students from a disadvantaged background or who are first-generation college students, he said.

NSU has 65 students in its program, Burkett said. Even if students are in Northern's program, they can go to any college, he said.

Upward Bound includes a six-week summer program where kids take classes and stay on campus during the week, and program officials also work with students during the academic year, he said.

Two students in the NSU Upward Bound program have received honors: **Jennifer Michlitsch** of Webster, who will be a freshman at NSU this fall, was named a Dell scholar and was awarded a \$20,000 scholarship, he said. **Chelsea Holmes** of Aberdeen, who will be a freshman at the University of Minnesota, won the Gates Millennium scholarship, which covers all college costs not met by financial aid.

Sisseton Wahpeton College

Sisseton Wahpeton College SSS Program Welcomes New Staff

The Sisseton Wahpeton College TRIO department welcomed Delbert "Roly" Hopkins, Jr. as the new Academic Counselor in July 2011. Roly is a Tribal College alumni and received both his undergraduate and MSW



graduate degree from the University of North Dakota

Sisseton Wahpeton Student Success Stories:

TRIO congratulates two Practical Nursing students, **Laurie Banderet** and **Keith Chitwood**, for passing their nursing boards on the 1st attempt! They are continuing students working towards their Associate's degree in Nursing.

Greetings , my name is **Denise Riffey**, I am currently a sophomore at Sisseton Wahpeton College and I am studying Cross-Cultural Chemical Dependency Counseling, working towards my Associates Degree. I started in the fall semester of 2010 and I remember I had a lot of fears and worries, as a non-traditional student returning to college. But with the help of Student Support Services and the TRIO program, I realized I had help! All I had to do was register for my classes, sign up for TRIO, attend workshops, visit with my mentor and I was welcome to stop in any of the TRIO staff offices for direction or answers to my questions or concerns. I attended a cultural workshop last spring and I learned about the old days when tribal members gathered, from near and far, to participate in hand games to sing and socialize. I signed up to visit the college campus of University of Minnesota, Morris. I enjoyed visiting on the way there and back, meeting new students, both here and there. The information I gathered is very important for my decision making when it comes to choosing a four year institution after completing my studies here at SWC.

I received a grant aid award, which helped me tremendously! I was able to stay in school. This was a huge stress reduction in my life that I will be forever grateful for. Thank you TRIO staff members for all your assistance.

Greetings, my name is **Rhonda Fatland**, I am a sophomore this year at SWC, as well as a peer mentor for TRIO. There have been a few times when I wanted to throw in the towel and drop out of school. Being a full time college student and a single parent of three is not always easy, but TRIO has helped me with tutoring, workshops, and social skills. One time I needed help with a class and the TRIO staff found me a tutor immediately, within minutes! I was impressed and I am still shocked over how fast they helped me. There have been many occasions where I just needed to vent some of my frustrations, and every one of those times someone from TRIO has been available to listen and to provide me with advice and support I needed to continue. I received a grant aid award and I was able to use it towards expenses I needed to stay in school.

I've attended many TRIO workshops and activities; financial aid workshops, cultural workshops, campus visits to the University of Minnesota, Morris and Mount Mary. Both of these campuses are within an hour away from SWC, which makes it more realistic to transfer as a single mother. TRIO staff is caring and confidential and it feels good to know there is somewhere to turn to when times get rough. TRIO has truly been a blessing in helping me achieve my educational goals!

News from Montana

University of Montana Western

Josh VanWoert, University of Montana Western alum, is quoted in the current (May/June) issue of Montana Outdoors, official magazine of the Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. The article, “Check Out This Rod” details the Fish Wildlife and Parks fishing gear loaner program for kids. As an intern for the FWP, Josh helped run the program for children who love to fish but don’t have access to proper equipment. “Just because someone doesn’t own a fishing rod doesn’t mean they shouldn’t be able to go fishing. We want as many kids as possible to be able to get out and fish, no matter where they live,” he is quoted as saying. Josh, a TRIO participant, is a 2010 UMW graduate with a degree in environmental sciences.

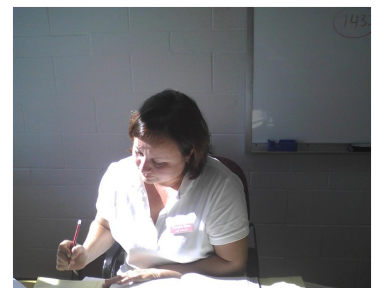
Fort Peck Community College SSS

Fort Peck Community College TRIO students spent an afternoon in Fort Peck, 50 miles from Poplar, to tour the dam, have supper at “The Best Dam Restaurant/Bar” and attended a play at the theater.



Flathead Valley Community College SSS

Vanessa Botts is our new Instructional Tutorial Specialist in the Math Lab. Vanessa was raised in Louisiana and moved to the Flathead from Lewiston Idaho with her husband Robert. Vanessa enjoys reading and going for walks in addition to, yes, you guessed it, math.





Op-Ed By Montana ASPIRE State President, Zach Hawkins.
Printed in the Helena Independent Record

College help for low-income students good investment

By ZACH HAWKINS

In what is sure to be a devastating fallout for low-income Americans and their families across the country, on July 31 the U.S. Senate, House, and President Obama came together on a compromise debt ceiling package that will most certainly include large cuts to discretionary programs that matter most in our low-income neighborhoods. However, Montanans are fortunate because our senator, Max Baucus, who has fought for low-income Montanans for his entire 33-year career, has been selected for the Select Committee on Deficit Reduction — the committee that will recommend \$1.5 trillion in cuts by Nov. 23.

One item that is sure to be targeted by Republicans on the committee is the successful and critical TRIO program. Every year, Montana TRIO helps over 10,000 low-income and first-generation students, students with disabilities, and veterans in their pursuit of a college education. TRIO has a long-term record of reducing dropout rates, increasing postsecondary enrollment, and raising postsecondary degree attainment among Montana's underprivileged students. Low-income students who are enrolled in a TRIO program in Montana are over three times more likely to earn a postsecondary degree or certificate than the national average among their cohorts. Obviously, graduating more students can only make Montana more prosperous and economically viable in the future. The president and members of both parties in Congress have routinely stated their goal of returning America to the top of the world in postsecondary degree attainment. So why are cuts being aimed at these proven successful programs that are so crucial to the advancement of our students?

Thankfully, Sen. Baucus has routinely fought for a more educated and prosperous nation. One recent example of this was his willingness to co-author an appropriations letter with Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, which requested a \$12 million increase for the TRIO programs for FY 2012. This takes true political courage in a rhetorical environment where any spending increases are characterized as unnecessary and wasteful no matter how modest or beneficial.

Of course, I agree with the need for greater fiscal responsibility, but not at the expense of our most vulnerable populations. We must work together to lift our fellow citizens out of poverty, not hold them down. Additionally, we must look at increasing revenues in the future in addition to making cuts if we are going to get serious about deficit reduction. The average college graduate will pay about \$250,000 more in taxes over their lifetime than a non-graduate. Therefore, \$20,000 spent helping a student earn a college degree will likely result in a net revenue gain of \$230,000.

I want to commend Sen. Baucus for standing up for education and understanding the role programs such as TRIO play in economic development and long-term deficit reduction. We are confident he will continue do what's right for Montana in the tough negotiations ahead.

Zach Hawkins is president Montana Association of TRIO Professionals.