



# ASPIRATIONS

Official Newsletter of APSIRE, INC.

**TRiO**

September-December 2014

**CELEBRATING  
ASPIRE HISTORY 2015  
CREATING  
MOMENTUM**

ASPIRE 2015 Regional Conference  
October 4-7, 2015  
Rapid City, SD



## *Message from the President*



Hello ASPIRE and welcome to the 2015 Spring Semester. I hope that you had a restful winter break and that you were able to spend quality time with your family and loved ones!

I do not know about you but I enjoy and look forward to the Spring Semester. Many of our students are applying for entrance into college/universities, while other are applying to into Engineering, Medical, and other programs, and most importantly - graduation! It is great to attend graduation ceremonies and that feeling of being “proud” of the students, their accomplishments to get to this point. How great is that?!!!

The ASPIRE Board had a very successful Winter Meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming January 26 – 28, 2015. With a very ambitious agenda, Board Members were energetic and provide some wonderful recommendations to include the introduction of new Strategic Plan for 2015-2016, Code of Ethics for Board Members, updates to ASPIRE's Operating Guidelines, and few surprises that will be announced in the near future as it relates to our student participants. I will be sending out an email later during the month of February with updates from the Board Meeting, so stay tuned ...

Thank you for the opportunity to be your President and allowing me to with an outstanding group of professions on the ASPIRE Board. Each person is there working on the behalf of your students and programs; you could not ask for a more dedicated group!

Have a successful spring semester and thank you for dedication in helping our student's goals and dreams become reality!

Jamie Manzanares



## ***News from North Dakota***

### **North Dakota Hosts ASPIRE Conference**

The 32nd annual ASPIRE Conference was held in Grand Forks, North Dakota at the Canad Inn and Alerus Center. There were 166 registered to attend the conference from each of the states in the ASPIRE region. Thank you to all those who attended.

This year conference attendees could make a donation to the CVIC, an organization that helps women and families escape from unhealthy situations such as domestic abuse. As a community service project, donations of pajamas and toiletries were collected in addition to monetary donations for the CVIC. A total of \$155 were collected for donations and 35 pajamas were donated to the CVIC.

A letter from the CVIC director, Kristi Hall-Jiran states: "Gifts to the CVIC make such a difference, helping to change danger into safety, fear into assurance, and despair into hope." With the help of the CVIC many of their clients are able to find the courage to not only leave a violent relationship, but also to embrace change that comes with renewed confidence and hope for the future.

The following is from the CVIC website:

We at CVIC truly believe that we can build a violence-free community by working together for justice, peace and the elimination of oppression, by upholding human dignity and by simply believing that it is possible to change the world – one person, one community at a time.

One of the most fundamental callings we have is to help people restore the belief in their value as human beings. This runs as a common thread through all of our programs and inspires us as we work individually and collectively to give voice to the voiceless and involve the community in our efforts to end violence.

More photos and information about the conference can be found online at <http://aspireonline.org/aspire2014>





## PCL Makes a Really Happy Holiday for UND Student's Family

*Grand Forks, December 17, 2014:* Staff from PCL, the Construction Services and Community Contractors for the University of North Dakota new Medical School chose to donate gifts for a family in need during the holidays. The family of Michael Jordan, a student at UND and participant in the Student Support Services TRIO Program were the recipients of the kind gesture of the staff of PCL.

Jordan is a military veteran and father of two, and will be graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation and Tourism studies. His wife Josie is a graduate student in the Counseling Program at UND. They have two children, a boy, two-years-old and a girl who is seven years old.

PCL Construction Services is a national, employee-owned firm based in Minneapolis, Minn. Community Contractors is one of Grand Forks' largest general contractors and provider of construction management services. They have formed a joint venture partnership specifically for this project, bringing national knowledge and local experience together for the mutual success of this new facility.



## UND TRIO/SSS Student Receives Award

The Grand Forks Chapter of the American Association of University Women presented their 2014 Outstanding Senior Woman Award to UND TRIO/SSS student, Dawn Nygaard-Koplin at their meeting on May 3, 2014. Attached is a picture of Dawn accepting her plaque, accompanied by SSS advisor, Mary Fredricks. Dawn was selected for outstanding academic achievement and service to the UND and Grand Forks community. She graduated magna cum laude in May 2014 with a degree in Social Work and is working on her Masters in Social Work at the University of North Dakota.



## News from Wyoming

### Upward Bound

Last fall the Laramie Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math and Science programs received a donation from the Wyoming Humanities Council of 15 different book titles, for a total of 150 books, to begin a book club with the students. The books range from novels to autobiographies and cover a range of topics including the American Civil War, the American West, gender issues, and politics. The Humanities Council previously used these books for book discussions they hosted across the state and in the future books retired by the Humanities Council will be offered to UB/UBMS.



The students are able to check the books out from the program and then participate in group discussions. Emily Jelly, the Laramie UB/UBMS coordinator facilitates the conversations amongst the students. Students are also encouraged to select a book outside of those available through the program and have a one on one discussion with Emily.

The purpose of the book club is to help students with their reading comprehension but also to encourage them to become comfortable discussing what they have read with others. The book club will, hopefully, help to improve ACT scores and also prepare students for literature based class discussions once they enter post-secondary education. Studies show that reading also increases empathy which will make students more compassionate and active members of their community.

### Educational Opportunity Center

#### ***Wyoming Educational Opportunity Centers Student Graduates Casper College December 2014***

Laura was a single mother of two young girls, living in Casper Wyoming in May of 2012 when she first stopped by the Casper Educational Opportunity Centers office. Laura had a great support system at home, but needed guidance in navigating the college process as an adult and also as a transfer student. Fall 2012 was Laura's first semester at Casper College – she enrolled as an Early Childhood Education major. December 2014 Laura received her Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education from Casper College – on behalf of Wyoming TRIO programs we would like to congratulate Laura on receiving her degree!





## McNair Scholars Program

### It's time to get **SMART** about summer school

This entry was posted on December 16, 2014 by [BCM Office of Communications](#), in [Education](#) and tagged [Baylor College of Medicine](#), [BCM](#), [biomedical sciences](#), [SMART program](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#). [Leave a comment](#)

Each summer, the halls of Baylor College of Medicine are filled with undergraduate students from around the country who are taking advantage of an opportunity to get hands-on research experience. The [Summer Medical and Research Training \(SMART\) Program](#) recruits about 80 students from undergraduate institutions around the country for nine weeks of paid biomedical related research. Many have chosen to come back to BCM for their graduate training.

Take **Bonnie Youmans**, for example. Originally from Wyoming, Youmans was a McNair Scholar at her undergraduate institution. While at a graduate school recruitment fair held during a McNair conference, she learned about Baylor and the SMART program. Although Baylor had never been on her radar, the recruiter convinced her to apply to the summer program. She was placed in the molecular virology and microbiology program and describes her experience that summer as “amazing.”



Bonnie Youmans

“It felt like an actual rotation where I got to do hands-on work, not just watch someone else do it,” she said. “It gave me the confidence that I could do this.”

Youmans also enjoyed the daily lunchtime seminars where researchers from various departments discussed their work, as well as the GRE preparation courses provided to the students in the program, who stay in dormitories at Rice University.

After that summer, she knew that the [Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Baylor College of Medicine](#) is where she wanted to be for her graduate training.

“Why would I want to go anywhere else?” she said. “The SMART program made me realize that the training at BCM is unlike any other program. Everyone knows one another in the department, which is not true for other programs. It gave me a good idea of the environment I would be coming into.”

Her graduate work in virology and microbiology at Baylor was related to the [Human Microbiome Project](#). She worked to identify bacteria that live in the gut and how they’re affected by disease, specifically traveler’s diarrhea. Youmans’s lab was next door to the lab where she did her research in the SMART program.

“The program made BCM go from not even being on my radar to being my top choice for graduate school,” she said.

Youmans won a national fellowship that helped fund her Ph.D. education and also recieved a \$3,000 a year

Dean's Award at Baylor.

Her advice to undergraduates who are considering a career in scientific research is to start early – try to get in two internships before applying to graduate school.

“Don’t be afraid to do it,” she said. “It will benefit you more than you know.”

Today Youmans is a postdoctoral associate in Dr. Tim Johnson’s lab at the University of Minnesota. She is applying her experience in human microbiome research to a condition in turkeys known as Light Turkey Syndrome.

“We hypothesize that this syndrome is related to the development of the gut microbiome in turkeys. We’re working to modulate the commensal organisms to increase growth performance, or bird weight, in commercial flocks,” she said.

For more information about the SMART program and to apply, visit the [SMART program website](#).

By [Dipali Pathak](#)

## Student Support Services

### “The Nutcracker” Cultural Event at the University of Wyoming: a magical merging of program partnerships

In December, three of the federally-funded programs within the Student Educational Opportunity department at the University of Wyoming partnered for a cultural event.

Student Success Services, together with the McNair Scholars program and Gear Up Wyoming, hosted a pre-performance event to enhance the interest in a classic holiday story. The programs met at the historic UW Alumni House, where participants had an opportunity to converse with one another and develop a perspective about the rich history of UW Alumni. Additionally, they became serious competitors in a “Nutcracker” trivia game, which culminated in a team rendering of the main character. Laughs and good memories were shared by all who attended. The group then proceeded to the Arts and Science Auditorium to partake in viewing a magical performance by the UW dance and music students, with supplemental roles from local community members.



## News from Montana

### MONTANA ASPIRE

Happy 2015 ASPIRE! Montanans are staying warm by the fire as SSS programs diligently focus on proposals for the upcoming competition due February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Upward Bound programs are strategically planning their summer programs and work in their perspective schools. Talent Search programs may be planning campus visits and Bozeman's McNair Program their APR. EOC centers and Veteran's Upward Bound are gearing up for the start of a new semester or quarter engaging Orientation activities in Billings and Great Falls. Isn't it awesome to think about the presence TRiO programs have in Montana? Twenty six programs, serving over 9,000 students!

Montana is also proud of our own Dan Benge, Director of Upward Bound at MSU, Billings!



What brought such a great smile on Dan's face in this picture? At our recent regional conference in Grand Forks, ND, Dan was awarded the 2014 Art Quinn Award for exemplary service and leadership as a TRiO leader at the state, region and national level. Recipients of the Art Quinn Memorial Award are nominated and selected by the Executive Board. Nominees are professionals who have shown a long term dedication to assisting TRiO-eligible students in a manner that extends well

beyond general expectations and project guidelines.

Quotes from nominees:

*"The recipient is very direct, doesn't mince words, and expects as much from others as they do from their own efforts."*

*"The recipient has made a tremendous contribution in moving ASPIRE toward a higher degree of professionalism and accountability, and is part of the reason ASPIRE is so highly regarded through the country."*



**CONGRATULATIONS DAN!**

### What makes Montana ASPIRE so great?

Montana will celebrate National TRiO Day on Friday, February 20, 2015 by engaging each project to take on the challenge to implement a day of service in their perspective cities. A prime example of Montana Tech's Talent Search and Upward Bound program's activities include a campus tour of Carroll and Helena Colleges; a trip to the Capitol to meet with Governor Bullock and Assistant Lieutenant Governor, Angela McLean, and service to local Food Share, Humane Society, and other organizations. What has your project planned?

### 10-for 10 Campaign

It's not too late to make your personal contribution to COE! Payments can be a one-time or monthly plan, and projects can "team up" to donate to make up a \$100 donation. Consider the important work and support COE does for us! A small investment makes us a stronger organization! Questions; contact Dan Benge ([dbenge@msubillings.edu](mailto:dbenge@msubillings.edu))



## UPCOMING TRIO CONFERENCE

A unique partnership is brewing up a great opportunity for professional development and networking at our annual conference to be held in Helena, Montana, on April 8-10<sup>th</sup>. This year's theme, "Agents of Change" is a great collaboration of programs including TRIO programs, MCAN – Montana College Access Network and Montana Association of Financial Aid State Administrators (MASFAA). Register by March 7<sup>th</sup> to get the early bird registration! Reservations can be made at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel.

## TRIBAL COLLEGES

Arrays of upcoming Tribal College Fairs in Montana are taking place in the early part of this year.

### MT Tribal College Fairs:

Blackfeet Community College - February 2, 2015 from 11 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Stone Child College** - February 3, 2015 - 11 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Aaniih' Nakoda College** - February 4, 2015 from 11 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Fort Peck College** - February 5, 2015 11 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Chief Dull Knife College** – Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup> 11:00 a.m. -2- p.m.

**Little Big Horn College**, Tuesday, February 10, 11 am – 2 pm

Montana Indian Education Association Conference – April 9-12, 2015 – Billings, MT

## McNair Scholars Program

Montana State University ~  
Mountains, Minds & McNair Scholars:



The McNair Scholars Program (MSP) at Montana State University-Bozeman is one of the premier and nationally recognized undergraduate programs on campus. The essence of our program is to successfully combine faculty mentoring, undergraduate research, and academic support services for students whose families have not traditionally participated in post-secondary education. We are very proud of the MSP's success; we are embarking on our 6th year at MSU in preparing talented students for graduate school. Already it is clear that structured undergraduate research and scholarly experiences provided through programs like MSP are a superb way to engage students academically and encourage them to successfully pursue doctoral endeavors with competence and confidence. Before the fall semester started, our program accompanied 8 students to the University of California, Berkeley's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ronald E. McNair Scholars Research Symposium (July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014).



Our McNair Scholars attending this conference brilliantly and professionally presented their summer research findings in oral presentation formats. Congratulations to Kendra Teague, Melissa Emery, Erica Dunn, Tanner Lineberry, Madison Martin, Josh Gosney, and Martina VanHoy. Thank you to all of their faculty mentors for all of their guidance and support of each of these scholars research success: Dr. Harmon, Dr. McLaughlin, Dr. Handley, Dr. Wiesler & Dr. Brooker, Dr. Flenniken, Dr. Heys, and Dr. Broderick & Dr. Wilking. One important preparatory aspect of the program is to provide opportunities for participants to share their research at forums and national McNair research conferences. With this conference opportunity, students were able to travel and interact with other scholars from around the nation, discuss research, visit potential graduate school programs and network with potential faculty mentors.



*MSU McNair Scholars (Kendra Teague, Melissa Emery, Erica Dunn, Tanner Lineberry, Madison Martin, Josh Gosney, and Martina VanHoy) enjoying all academic and cultural aspects of the UC Berkeley's McNair Scholars Symposium, July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (Photos by Hogan).*

## **Highlights from MSU's McNair students who presented their research at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium, Fall 2014 graduation and other scholarly endeavors:**

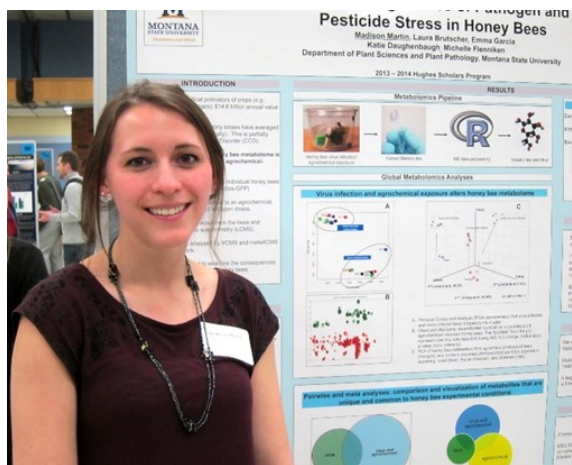
**Madison Martin** was thrilled to be graduating from Montana State University on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014, when she became the first person in her family to earn a college degree. "I am so ecstatic," said Madison, 23, a microbiology major from Laurel, MT. "A lot of undergraduates do not think it's a very big deal, but I do. It's a huge accomplishment, especially in the sciences and in my family."

Madison is one of 25 students in the McNair Scholars Program, a federal program designed to help students who are first-generation college students, low-income or who are underrepresented minorities.

Madison said she dreams of earning a Ph.D. – despite what she calls her “love-hate” relationship with scientific research. It’s often frustrating when you have to wait for results or do not get the results you want, she said. Still, “it’s so very rewarding in the end and makes me want to come back to the lab every day.”

As a McNair Scholar, Madison conducted research on honey bees. She said she did not know much about bees when she first walked into her research mentor Dr. Michelle Flenniken’s laboratory, but “I stuck around and I learned how important honey bees are for our lives and how crucial the research is.” Her family was in attendance with pride and excitement at the Fall 2014 Commencement when she graduated with honors from MSU, she said. “For the longest time they thought I was studying to be a beekeeper.”

U.S. commercial bee colonies are seeing one-third of their bees die off each year – a number that’s grown in the past seven years, Madison said. As a McNair Scholar, she has had the opportunity to travel and present presentations on the role pathogens and pesticides play in bee metabolism at national conferences in Berkeley, California, and Colorado, all of which helped her to be a very competitive candidate for various graduate school programs that she applied to. She will start her graduate school tenure at the University of Utah next year and continue to conduct research in the area of microbiology and immunology while on her quest to attaining her doctorate. Madison said, “That the McNair Scholars Program gave me the confidence that I could go on to graduate school and provided me with essential financial support to complete my undergraduate degree.”



*Madison Martin at the 2014 McNair Scholars Research Symposium (left) and Madison conducting honey bee research (right) Photo by Hogan.*

One McNair student who was not able to be at the poster showcase in person was **Michael Ruiz**, who’s temporarily on a university student exchange program at the State University of New York at Stony Brook to pursue his interest in forensic archeology. His research and poster titled, “Dead Men Do Tell Tales,” investigated a more efficient way to use bleach to remove flesh from human remains. He presented his research last May at Harvard Medical School and had his paper published in the International Journal of Arts and Sciences. Getting his paper accepted for publication was “a dream come true.”

Ruiz, 26, dropped out of high school in Los Angeles and was homeless for four months in North Dakota,

income, a first-generation college student, first-generation Mexican-American and gay. Ruiz said that thanks to Dr. Shelly Hogan, McNair Scholars director, and others, the McNair program helped him find research funding, a mentor scientist, a laboratory to work in, interviews at graduate schools and the chance to meet a Nobel Prize winner.

"I don't think there is a word strong enough that reflects how much the McNair Scholars Program has helped me," Ruiz said. Back in Los Angeles, his friends and family thought success was landing a desk job in a bank. Now his dream is to have a career in scientific research or medicine. "I made the decision to better myself," Ruiz said. "I can't turn back now." Accepted into MSU's Honors College, he plans to graduate in 2016.



*Michael Ruiz presenting at the 2014 MSU Student Research Celebration in April, photo by Hogan (left) and conducting his research at MSU. Photo by Kelly Gorham (right).*

Other McNair students presented their research at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium on such topics as grandparents raising grandchildren, licorice extract's effect on bacteria, reviving Native American languages, art history and promoting safe teen driving.



*Student presenters at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 (Photo by Hogan)*



On October 9th, 2014 the MSU McNair Scholars attended the annual Margaret Alderson Etiquette Dinner. This dinner is sponsored by MSU's Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success: Career, Internship & Student Employment Services. Each year, this etiquette and interview dinner is the kick-off for Career Week at MSU. McNair Scholars and other participating students from across campus had the opportunity to gain interviewing experience and learn the "how to" of formal dining. The evening included a four course meal, small group etiquette instruction, and mock interviews.



*McNair Scholars attended the annual Margaret Alderson Etiquette Dinner on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (Photo by Hogan).*

## Tribute to Montana Upward Bound Projects and Dr. Florence Garcia

### **Helping Students Succeed, a 50-year Upward Bound Legacy**

**MSU BILLINGS NEWS SERVICES** — Florence Garcia was full of angst as she packed her bag for a six-week Upward Bound summer camp at Eastern Montana College. The camp was some 300 miles away from her home in Wolf Point, and would mark the first time she had ever left home.

The shy, high school sophomore knew she was embarking on a journey that could change her life forever. At stake was a chance to be the first of her family to attend college.

That was 46 years ago—long before she became the associate dean of City College at Montana State University Billings—yet she remembers it like it was yesterday.

“Upward Bound came in at the very perfect time for me,” Garcia said, beaming while describing her experience. “I always thought high school was the finish line. But, Upward Bound changed that and opened so many doors for me in terms of experiencing the world.”

Now in its fiftieth year, Upward Bound is an outgrowth of the Lyndon B. Johnson administration’s War on Poverty and is one of several college access programs known as TRiO that emerged from the Economic



Opportunity Act of 1964 in an effort to remove barriers to access and success in post-secondary education.

In its first year, Upward Bound served 2,061 high school students with 17 pilot programs, according to the Council for Opportunity in Education. Last year, the program served about 76,000 students at more than 1,000 locations in 50 states.

Designed to build access to higher education for high school students who are low-income or first-generation, Upward Bound has opened doors for more than 2 million students.



Those doors were first opened to Garcia when her high school guidance counselor handed her the program application. She was told that if accepted, she'd join other students around the nation in preparing for college through tutoring and other academic services. She'd be required to participate in the intensive six-week residential summer camps held on the EMC campus as well participate in after-school programs in Wolf Point.

Before that pivotal day in 1967, Garcia didn't think college was an option for her. It wasn't because her family didn't value education. On the contrary, the importance of education was instilled in her and her eight younger siblings at a very young age.

"Even though my mom and dad didn't go to college, they were very intelligent people who saw how education changed lives," Garcia said.

While she had the moral support of her parents on her side, she faced the many disadvantages that often prevent high school students from having access to higher education, such as poverty and being a first-generation college student.

Her mother worked at a diner as a waitress and her father laid bricks, and they struggled to make ends meet for their nine children.

"They were very, very hard working people," Garcia said. "We had no running water, but my mom always made a home for us no matter how tough times would get."

And, being an American Indian woman in the 1960s was a unique challenge in and of itself, Garcia said, who is a member of the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes.

"The home and community I come from provided me with a sense of spirit and culture, both values that are amazing gifts," she said. "But there were also challenges that existed there, such as alcohol abuse, poverty, and health problems that affect Native people at a disproportionately higher rate."

Despite the obstacles—or perhaps because of them—Garcia continued her high school years in Upward



Bound and became the first in her family to graduate college.

Some of her Upward Bound peers went on to careers in healthcare and law. Florence Garcia became an educator.

"I loved education so much, I asked myself, 'why not share that with others?'" she said.

She received her bachelor's degree in 1974 in secondary education and her master's in 1980 in special education, both degrees from what was then EMC and is now MSU Billings. She earned her doctorate in adult and higher education from Montana State University in Bozeman in 1999.

She has worked as a teacher, a dean of student services, and, most recently before joining City College, served for two years as the president of Fort Peck Community College.

Garcia's connection to Upward Bound never wavered. She served as TRiO Student Support Services director at both MSU and MSUB as well as at Dawson Community College during her career. In 1984, she was named a National TRiO Achiever.

"It's a small program that does really big things," she said. "It impacts people far beyond data and numbers."

There are five Upward Bound programs statewide and roughly 400 students served each year. Of those, MSU Billings serves 75.

That is down from nine programs just two years ago following a five percent federal budget cut, resulting in loss of services to 245 students in 20 high schools, 28 percent of whom are Native Americans.

The decision to limit funding was clearly not based on Upward Bound's effectiveness as a program. In fact, the Education Department's data have shown that more than 75 percent of all students who participate in Upward Bound programs go on to college after high school.

"Unfortunately, the program only serves about six percent of the eligible population," MSUB Upward Bound Director Dan Benge said. "But we do a lot with the resources we have and are a good return on the investment."

Benge said Upward Bound students are 50 percent more likely to attain a bachelor's degree than their counterparts. And some, like Gracia, go on to graduate programs, he said.

Across from Benge's office desk hangs a photo collage of his Upward Bound students, spanning his 17-year career as the college's program director.

"As I look at all these Upward Bound success stories, there is a common theme with each," he said. "It's always that one person, that one happenstance, that changes and impacts a life forever."

For Garcia, that one happenstance was Upward Bound.

"I'm sure I would not be here if it weren't for Upward Bound," she said. "In fact, I might not be here at all."

## News from Colorado

### University of Colorado Denver, TRiO Student Support Services Program

*Keith Sherin Global Leadership Program*

The TRiO Student Support Services program is happy to highlight Ernesto Rodriguez in the ASPIRATIONS newsletter. Ernesto participated in the Keith Sherin Global Leaders, "Spanish Language and Culture in Salamanca" study abroad trip sponsored by the Council for Opportunity in Education and the General Electric Corporation from May 30th to June 28th. A group of 20 TRiO Student Support Services and McNair students from across the country had an exciting international learning opportunity. In this fast-paced one month-long study of Spanish language and culture, students had the opportunity to explore one of Spain's most spectacular cities. Students who attended chose among classes that focused on Spanish history, cultures, and literature. The program is competitive, so it is exciting that Ernesto was one of the few selected to participate in this opportunity. As part of the program, Ernesto received a \$2,300 scholarship which helped to fund almost half of the total costs. Students must have demonstrated leadership ability and potential as well as having good academic and social standing within their institutions.



Ernesto is majoring in Marketing with a minor in Economics. When asked, what was the biggest thing he learned about himself, he stated, it was the courage it took to step away from his comfort zone and family to travel to a different country that he was unfamiliar with. Meeting different people that he otherwise would have never met made him realize the courage he has and what he is willing to do in order to be successful. His favorite experience included seeing all of the historic monuments and locations from cathedrals to castles and knowing the history that dates back hundreds of years ago. The culture was definitely different; from having siestas in the middle of the day, (which he did not mind) to their different types of dishes that he enjoyed.

Ernesto would encourage other students to travel abroad. He says, "Go For It." He was nervous at first. Completing the application and going away for a month from friends and family seemed scary but afterwards he was glad he had the opportunity. He states, "Being away from everything you know and meeting people from a different country gives you a different perspective in life. Knowing that there is a world to be discovered that is different from yours makes you look at the world differently, which is a good thing."



The classes he took helped him with his Spanish, which is something he can apply in future job opportunities but ultimately the friends and different people he meet from not only Spain but from Brazil, England, France, India, and Germany made him want to visit other places in the world and to continue to broaden his knowledge of other cultures around the world. He would like to say that he is glad he went through and applied for the study abroad trip in Spain. If he had never done this study abroad program, who knows if he would have traveled to a different country in a different continent to meet the people he did.

### *Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's 2014 Fall Internship Program*

The TRiO Student Support Services program is happy to highlight **Jennifer Villalobos** in the ASPIRATIONS Newsletter. She was selected to participate in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's 2014 Fall Internship Program in Washington D.C. She will be completing duties as an intern in Senator Michael Bennet's office. The purpose of the Congressional Internship Program (CIP) is to expose young Latinos to the legislative process and to strengthen their professional and leadership skills, ultimately promoting the presence of Latinos on Capitol Hill and in Federal Agencies. Currently, Jennifer is working a minimum of 32 hours a week in a congressional office assignment. She is participating in all CHCI sponsored activities including orientation, weekly leadership development sessions, and a community service project. She is receiving a stipend and housing accommodations while in Washington, D.C.

Before her CHCI experience, Jennifer traveled to the United Kingdom, specifically Scotland and England for the CU Denver Winterim Program from December 26, 2013 to January 12, 2014. Jennifer is a Public Health and Geography major. She participates in extracurricular activities on campus. She is a member of the Society of TRiO Students Club, which promotes cultural and social development for other low-income, first-generation students, and students with disabilities. She is also a member of the Explore Public Health Program. This experience gives her the opportunity to explore Public Health careers. She also completed an internship with AmeriCorps. Her duties included working with students from K-12 to educate them about the importance of energy efficiency through presentations. One of her goals is to attend graduate school and she has already started to explore several programs in Public Health. We hope to nominate her as a TRiO Achiever one day.



*Submitted by Henry Ornelas, CU Denver, TRiO SSS Academic Coordinator*



## From immigrant to college graduate



*Juliana in her busy office with her two computer monitors.*

(Alamosa, Colo.) Hungry for education, **Juliana Chaparro** was 19 when she moved to the United States from Bogota, Colombia, and she didn't speak English. After completing two semesters of college in Bogota, she migrated to the US to live with her aunt in New York City. She landed a job at Tavern on the Green, a five-star restaurant in Central Park. She had no idea that she could earn money checking coats, and thankfully it required little speaking. She was making good money but she was longing to further her education. She didn't want to be doing the same job 30 years down the road.

Her boyfriend, Miguel, joined her in New York. He was born in the US and moved with his family, who speaks both Spanish and English, to Bogota when he was one year old.

After six months they were married and soon moved to the San Luis Valley where Miguel could attend Adams State College (now Adams State University). He had heard of Adams State when he was attending school in Bogota.

Compared to the hustle and bustle of New York City and the public transportation there, Chaparro did not like this isolated rural area at first. It took her awhile to adapt to Alamosa. Her husband had been accepted at ASU but she would need to either complete her GED or take a comprehensive English Exam that could prove she could understand, talk and read English. Instead she registered for GED classes at Trinidad State and a year and a half later successfully took the exams in English. She graduated from that program in June 2003 and began college at Adams that fall. "The beginning was rough and I was scared to death and very frustrated when I understood only half of what was said in the classroom," said Chaparro.

She would wait until she got home after class to ask her husband the questions she could not bring herself to ask in the classroom. "Without my husband's support, I wouldn't have been able to do this," said Chaparro.

She completed her prerequisites at Adams State and then transferred to Trinidad State to pursue a nursing degree. (Nursing was not available at Adams then.) After a week, she learned they would be having clinicals in a couple of weeks where they work face to face with patients and that meant talking to them. She didn't feel



ready.

She withdrew and returned to Adams State to complete the psychology degree she had started. As she was walking down the hall, she passed a classroom where the instructor was speaking Spanish. It felt so good to hear her native language that she waited until the instructor was through with class and then approached her. Their visit led to a double major for Chaparro – psychology which she knew she wanted, and Spanish.

She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in both Psychology and Spanish and a minor in Art in 2009. In May of 2012 she earned her master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. "I didn't want to leave school because I loved it," said Chaparro, who became a US citizen in 2006.



*Affirmations cover Juliana's office wall - a testament to her positive approach.*

Just two months after graduation she was hired to work as the Transfer Coordinator for the TRiO program at Trinidad State which currently assists 140 students. "I love it here. It is a perfect fit," said Chaparro, "I was a TRiO participant at Adams State." To be in the grant funded TRiO program a student has to either be the first generation in a family to go to college, or have a low income and/or have a disability. The first two qualifications were true for Chaparro.

"Students can save a lot of money if they take their general requirements at a community college," said Chaparro who assists students with transfers from two-year to four-year colleges. She also coordinates TRiO activities and the tutor program at Trinidad State. Her experience of being a tutor for seven years at Adams State helped to prepare her for the added responsibility in which she hires, trains and supervises tutors. Currently she is responsible for 10 tutors. Working with the students and watching them progress is tremendously rewarding for her. "When I got the job as a transfer coordinator for TRiO at TSJC, I felt like I was returning home, like the circle was complete. In the same classroom where I studied for my GED I am now helping other first-generation students from disadvantaged backgrounds pursue their dreams of completing college – just as Anna Mae Rael Lindsay, who runs the Trinidad State GED program, helped me to pursue mine," said Chaparro.

Her mother, who lives with her now and has only a third grade education, always told Chaparro that her education will become her wings to fly. And it certainly has. With an insatiable appetite for education, Chaparro is now enrolled in the HEAL (Higher Education Administration and Leadership) master's program to learn about administration and management at post-secondary institutions.

As a former Trinidad State GED graduate, Chaparro was invited to speak at their 2013 graduation ceremony. She quoted Oprah Winfrey: "It doesn't matter who you are, or where you come from. The ability to triumph begins with you." Chaparro went on to say, "We only truly succeed when we help others and now I have found that opportunity at Trinidad State."



## Colorado State University Health and Exercise Science student offered competitive internship with SAMHSA

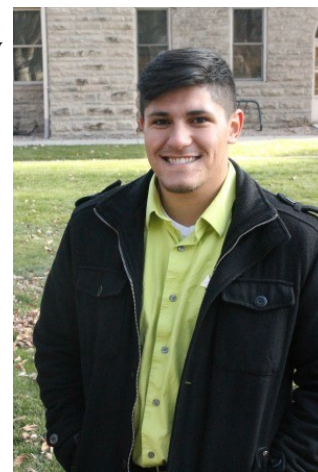
College of **Health & Human Sciences**

**Colorado State University**

December 29, 2014

[Health and Exercise Science](#) senior Joseph Espinoza's journey brought him from a small town in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, to Colorado State University, and now to Rockville, Md. Espinoza has accepted a prestigious offer for an internship with the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), just outside the Washington D.C. area. Espinoza faced a great deal of competition with students from across the country who also applied for these positions.

Hailing from Romeo, Colo., a small town of 375 inhabitants located in the San Luis Valley, Espinoza came to CSU in 2011 as part of the [Key Explore Community](#): a residential learning community which offers guidance to students by helping them explore their options at CSU. After gaining a holistic look at health care, he decided his focus at CSU would be on health promotion. Espinoza is still humbled by the opportunity that has been presented to him. When asked what he did to stand out among other candidates, he attributed his success to extracurricular activities that have expanded his experience. "I've attended leadership retreats while at CSU, and take advantage of any opportunities I can. Getting involved with professional organizations, such as the Academic Advancement Center, has been very helpful." The Academic Advancement Center is a student support services program that helps low-income, first-generation college students, foster youth, and students with disabilities stay in college until they earn their baccalaureate degrees. Having early exposure to leadership is also a factor in his success, says Espinoza. "Being a part of the Beta Gamma Nu fraternity has gotten me involved in community organizations and helped me to development management and leadership skills."



Working has also been vital in helping Espinoza set himself apart in the candidate pool. "I've had a job every year since I've been at CSU, I also had the opportunity to fulfill HES practicum requirements," Espinoza said. "A big reason I applied for the SAMHSA internship was because I was gaining experience from the CSU Health Network practicum, where I had the opportunity to work in mental health, which is a step to working with substance abuse prevention."

According to Espinoza, the 15-week internship will give him insights into progressive work being done in his chosen field. It will also give him a first-person perspective on the government's role in dealing with behavioral health disorders, an aspect that Espinoza has not dealt with much up to this point in his education. He is also enthusiastic to be learning from his supervisor, who currently serves as the special assistant to the director of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

The SAMHSA Internship Program works to help students recognize the value of ensuring that all individuals live a productive life within a community. The interns gain their experience in the program through practical application in through projects, special assignments, or research that support federal, state, and community-based programs, policies, and best practices in the prevention and treatment of substance abuse and mental illness. While working 40-hours a week, students will not only draw from the knowledge they have learned in their formal education, but gain experience through applied projects and real-world interactions.

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UNIVERSITY of  
NORTHERN COLORADO

HACU

**TRiO**  
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

## Center for Human Enrichment

### What is HACU?

HACU (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities) was established in 1986 with a founding membership of eighteen institutions. Today, HACU represents more than 400 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain. HACU is the only national educational association that represents Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

Source: hacu.net

### 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

HACU hosts an annual conference aimed at providing a unique forum for the sharing of information and ideas for the best and most promising practices in the education of Hispanics. The conference goals are to showcase successful, effective, and exemplary programs and initiatives of HACU member institutions. This year, the Center for Human Enrichment (CHE) was fortunate enough to support 9 students' journeys in **applying** for the conference, **attending** the Student Track, and **networking** with professionals from the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) campus community.

### Student Track

Every year, HACU offers Student Track Scholarships that help cover the cost of student conference attendance. The HACU scholarship covers students' airfare, lodging, and conference attendance fee. This year, two of our CHE students received this prestigious scholarship. Danny Garcia received the full student track scholarship, and Enkhamar Amarsaikhan received partial student track funding. Additionally, 7 of our CHE students were sponsored through a collaboration between UNC's Graduate School and Enrollment Management.



CHE Participants & Staff with HACU President Antonio Flores



CHE Participants with other UNC students and staff

## News from Utah

### Southern Utah University Talent Search News

ETS at Southern Utah University had a fantastic 2014 and we are looking forward to an even better 2015! The year has been filled with engaging college prep workshops, fun-filled college campus visits, and students that continue to amaze us in all that they have accomplished and all that they inspire to do in the future.

November was a busy month as it was crunch time to apply to colleges by the priority deadline of December 1<sup>st</sup>. We were so impressed by how many of our ETS Seniors applied to colleges during November. Our ETS advisors were busy helping 70 of our 77 seniors apply during November for college application week! That's pretty impressive!!! Now, we need to work on the other 7.



We have been busy hauling our students around the state to introduce them to all their postsecondary options. In September, our high school students attended "The Eagle Experience" at Utah State University–Eastern. This was a 2 day event that allowed the students to truly experience college life. The students had a great time! In October, our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students visited Dixie State University and Dixie Applied Technology College. After the awesome campus tours, we spent a little time

wearing them out at The House of Jump, an indoor trampoline park. In November, our high school students traveled to Utah State University, Weber State University and LDS Business College. We had a fun time that night cheering on Weber State's women's volleyball team. We have many more exciting travels coming up this year. It is such a great time to get to know our students better, and the students love checking out all the college campuses.

**SUU**



## USU Blanding Campus - Talent Search News

### Students Attend 2014 National Student Leadership Congress

Four seniors from Grand County High School recently participated in the annual National Student Leadership Congress in Washington, D.C. Tyson Saggboy, Cheyenne Shumway, Dorje Honer, and Richie Cordero were among 200 high school juniors and seniors from the 50 U.S. states, Puerto

Rico and Guam selected to attend the six-day event, held June 7-12 at American University. For the 25<sup>th</sup> year, the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) sponsored the National Student Leadership Congress (NSLC), which provided training and educational opportunities for low-income high school students who are the first in their families to go to college.



The four students were nominated by their Grand County High School ETS Advisor, Tamara Larsen. The Director of the USU Blanding Campus ETS program, Jami Bayles, provided transportation for the four students who live approximately five hours from the nearest national airport in Salt Lake City. It was the first time that three of the four had ever boarded a plane or visited the nation's capital. During the six-day residential event the Grand County students took cultural trips to D.C. monuments and museums, met with members of Utah Congress and their staff, and participated in a Mock Congress. They also attended workshops on leadership attributes, public service, and diversity. This year they heard from two members of Congress, one of whom is an alumnus of a TRIO program — Representative Steven Horsford of Nevada, and Representative James Clyburn from South Carolina. "Our goal is to create emerging leaders who are more attuned to the legislative and political process as a consequence of spending almost a week in the nation's capital," said Heath Alexander, Director of COE's State Outreach Initiatives and the NSLC. "We want students to be more knowledgeable about major public policy issues and more conscious of the impact they, as students, can have in the world."



## USU Eastern – Blanding Campus Upward Bound News

Ernesto grew up on the Navajo Reservation in Red Mesa, Arizona and what an incredible delightful young man he is. His family struggled financially and he grew up with very little and had lots of “hand me downs”, he never knew what it was like to wear something new from the mall, until he was in a senior in high school. Included are excerpts from his talk given at the summer program banquet upon his completion of the Upward Bound program. Ernesto is currently a freshman at Utah State University Eastern – Blanding Campus.

“I really enjoyed being a part of this program. It has brought out a side of me that I didn’t know I ever had. It makes me want to exceed in life and enjoy the little things that happen along the way. I remember my first year here. I was just a young teen, scared to make new friends. Leave my comfort zone that I was so used to. As the program went on, I became more open to conversations. And by the end of the first week, I realized, this is actually a fun place to be! Some gears finally shifted in my head and a light bulb of opportunities clicked. It clicked into goals that I want to achieve in the future. The classes were interesting and expanded possibilities for me. There were numerous majors that I could study and choose which were best suited for my abilities. I got into French my sophomore year. And I’ve got to say, this class was my favorite class the whole entire program. I just felt so confident after this class. I liked sharing French with my mom. I used to go home every weekend and just talk to her in French. She was like, “What are you saying?” And I had to explain it.



This year was the first time I’ve taken a public speaking class, and WOW!! That was an experience. This was the class I looked forward to all day long. I took advantage of it too. I brought my story-telling skills every day to class. There was never a dull moment in that class. All my rez stories from my childhood came in handy. And that’s why I’m standing here today, to give the next generation of Upward Bound the positive influences of my experiences here. And the benefits it will do for you in the future, take advantage of all the knowledge that’s just laid out there for all of us, take it and obtain it in our

brains and share it with everybody. I always dreaded school. And now, looking back at it, I am very fortunate that I came here instead of wasting my time with nonsense at home during the summer. I expanded my views as a student and matured into an adult with a great amount of appreciation for people who are there to help and want you to succeed in life and in whatever, like, goals you want to achieve—they push you, they help you.

And now I leave you all with a quote and some words of advice. ‘Everybody has goals, aspirations, or whatever. And everybody has been at a point in their life where nobody believed in them. The truth is, we don’t know what is going to happen tomorrow. Life is a crazy ride. And nothing is guaranteed.’ The words are from a rapper, his name is Eminem. The words of advice I want to say to you guys today: Focus on the future you can accomplish and live life with a smile on your face and no regrets to overshadow your achievements. Thank you.”

## Weber State University – Talent Search News

Over the fall, the TRIO Talent Search program at Weber State University has been busy preparing seniors to apply to college with the "College Application Week" initiative. We provided support to our two high schools, Ben Lomond and Ogden High by participating in their school assemblies with our version of "Reality Price is Right" and providing staff time to assist students in the application process.

Our high school Advisors also coordinated a "Senior Retreat" day at each of their schools prior to "CAW" week to motivate the students to apply. Ben Lomond hosted their event on October 28th, and Ogden High was on November 11th. We munched on pizza and listened to TRIO Talent Search students who are in college now, their experiences with college, and their encouragement to current seniors to apply for and attend college. Our junior high advisor has been busy recruiting 8th grade participants, this is always a lot of work and our Jr High Advisor does a great job of finding these students.



*Weber State Talent Search Staff: Jill Schenck, Marisol Velasco, Rebecca Tierney, Shaquille Heath, Alejandro Valquinto*

One of the biggest highlights however is our enrollment rate for seniors into post-secondary education for this fall. Our graduating seniors enrolled at close to an 82% rate! This was an increase of approximately 20% over the last few years and our Advisors deserve kudos!



**WEBER STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

## Weber State University Upward Bound News



**New Year, New Beginnings!** After the recent retirement of former Director, David C. Trujillo, Weber State University Upward Bound welcomes a new Director, Linda Tobias. Linda has 10 years of experience working with Weber State's Upward Bound as the Basic Skills Specialist. A graduate of Weber State University with a Masters of English Degree, Linda is highly qualified and very motivated to step into the leadership position and help guide the Weber State University Upward Bound program into the future. We are excited to begin this new transaction and, with a little guidance from the former director, hope to make our program even bigger, better, and more successful.

A time of thankfulness and giving brought Upward Bound students to Ogden's Marshal White Community Center on two different occasions to serve dinner to Ogden's less fortunate. Partnering with Project Success and Ogden Corrections, Upward Bound students set up and served a meal for those families who would otherwise not have been able to have a hot meal, let alone a Thanksgiving or Christmas meal during the holiday season. Community service not only allows students to give back to their communities, it also helps build scholarship resumes which, in turn, allow our low-income students to earn valuable scholarship money to pay for college.



**WEBER STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

## University of Utah UB and SSS

### University of Utah SSS Student Enjoys Internship in Brazil

**Laura Alvarez** says that TRiO has been part of her academic career every step of the way since she began her college career with the University of Utah Student Support Services in the summer of 2009. She graduated in May 2014 with a Marketing degree and a French minor. When asked how TRiO impacted her experience at the university she says, “I would never have been able to afford a private tutor for my calculus and statistics courses. Through Student Support Services, TRiO sometimes provided up to 20 hours of free tutoring a week. The timely academic and career advising offered by TRiO has also made a huge difference in my development as a young professional. I see TRiO as a bridge between disadvantaged student groups and higher education. As a first generation college student coming from a single-parent household, higher education did not always seem attainable. TRiO made higher education accessible for me. As a graduating senior now looking back I think of obstacles that I would not have been able to overcome without the support of TRiO.”



Currently Laura has an internship with a start up company in São Paulo which she loves. Along with becoming proficient with Portuguese, she is travelling throughout the country. The owner of the business is very impressed with her work and has offered to have her on for an additional three months. Laura is considering her options when she returns including a possible position at the University of Utah, and graduate school.

*Written By: Maria Baldwin, SSS Academic Coordinator The University of Utah*

### University of Utah UB Alum on Way to Becoming a News Anchor

Rosie Nguyen is an aspiring journalist and recent intern with KSL News in Salt Lake City. She is also a former University of Utah Upward Bound (UB) and Student Support Services (SSS) alum. Rosie participated in the U’s Upward Bound Program from 2005-2008 and began her college career as a Student Support Services student beginning in the fall of 2008.

Rosie was born and raised in Salt Lake City. Her parents were refugees who immigrated to the United States during the Vietnam War. She and her younger sister, Michelle (who is also a TRiO student) know the value and determination that comes with hard work as they worked at their family owned restaurant since they were children. The family business was a major part of their lives and certainly helped them learn to juggle the rigors of coursework along with employment while they made their way through school.



Through the TRiO UB program, Rosie was able to acquire enough federal grants and scholarships to pay for her entire undergraduate program at the University of Utah. Since she was able to secure financial aid she was



able to take some time away from her mom's restaurant to work on other things including 3 news internships, 1 study abroad trip, and numerous service projects. With the help of the SSS program, Rosie was able to maintain her involvement at the university while earning 2 bachelor degrees in four years.

As Rosie was in the process of applying to graduate school, she took the GRE but did not feel that her scores were strong enough for admission into the Master's in Communication program at the U. However, her fear was proven unfounded as she was admitted - though she does credit a letter of recommendation written by Kathy Felkner, former TRIO Director with being a large part of her acceptance.

Rosie attributes her academic success to all of the staff members of the U's two TRIO programs. As Rose states, "...without their guidance, support, and instruction, I wouldn't have had the proper resources to prepare for college, effectively map out my academic trajectory, and pay for school through financial aid."

Rosie is making a name for herself in the media world as she became an active reporter and occasionally anchored for local television news station KSL as part of her KSL internship. She is scheduled to finish her Master's degree in Communication from the University of Utah in the Spring of 2015. After graduation, she would like to continue pursuing a career in TV news as an on-air reporter.

The University of Utah's TRIO Programs could not be more proud of the success she has had and hope that other Upward Bound and Student Support Services students see her as an example that TRIO works!

*Written By: Chris Macias, UB Academic Advisor The University of Utah*