TRIO STUDENT BOARD - JOIN US!

The TRIO Board exists to encourage TRIO students to take leadership roles within CEHD and the University, get involved in community service activities, and improve the campus climate for low-income, first-generation college students, students of color, and students with disabilities. The TRIO Student Board had a very successful fall semester! They had strong turnouts at their Homecoming Event, the Homecoming Parade, the Leadership Retreat, and the end of the semester hot chocolate and movie hangout. Come join the student board at their future events and see what they have to offer! Learn more at z.umn.edu/sss.

TRIO OPEN HOUSE
Friday, February 5th
12:00-3:00 (come anytime)
Room 40 in Education Sciences

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TRIO programs are celebrating milestone anniversaries this year and would like to invite you to kick off our celebrations at an Open House:

TRIO programs serve students who are typically underrepresented in higher education including low income, first generation college students, students with disabilities, and students of color. Three TRIO programs at the University are housed in CEHD:

50th Anniversary, TRIO Upward Bound [College Prep]
40th Anniversary, TRIO Student Support Services [College Transition/Adaptation]
25th Anniversary, TRIO McNair Scholars [Grad School Prep]

Come join us at the TRIO Open House for food and more information about the TRIO programs! We look forward to seeing you!
Knowing that you were knee deep in existential literature, performing arts composition, and Algebraic K-theory during the winter break, it pains me to welcome you back to another semester. LOL! It's time to ring-in new weekly schedules, instructors' subjective method of APA format, and late-night chats! In the meantime, take some time for deep personal growth. It was, of course, Mark Twain who said, "I have never let my schooling interfere with my education!" With that said, here is some great advice to begin your new semester and New Year:

Adjust your schedule around when YOU are the most productive and creative.

While most people would advise you to do your work first thing after class, in the end, you know what's best for you. - Ching Ho

The Law of Diminishing Marginal Returns applies to your GPA, too. Of course, you should maintain a respectable GPA, but know that once you cross 3.5, it matters less and less. The difference between an A and an A- is not worth you endlessly pouring over a textbook instead of spending valuable time with friends or working on extracurricular activities. - Marli Creese

Take advantage of this time to become the most amazing version of yourself. You can think of college as an incubation period, where you can develop your skills and character. You are likely never going to have as many resources, like-minded peers, free hours, and opportunities as you do in college again—so use them wisely. - Ching Ho

Recognize that it's OK to be sad. With all the pressure of college becoming the best four years of your life, it's hard to admit when you're not happy. However, college is also a major time of transition. You will probably be lonely at times, and sometimes feel overwhelmed, but it doesn't mean your college experience is any worse than anyone else's. In fact, these are growing experiences that will probably be most valuable to you later on. - Meredith Winn

Don't be too quick to specialize. "The problem with specialization is that it makes you into a specialist. It cuts you off, not only from everything else in the world, but also from everything else in yourself," says William Deresiewicz in a talk he delivered at Stanford. - Arsène Hotali

Build yourself, not your resume. Many students will do extracurriculars or gain leadership positions just because they want to impress future employers. However, if they focus more on developing themselves as strong, well-rounded people, they will be far more memorable in interviews and in the working world. - Vishal Agrawal

Don't be proud of your college - make your college proud to have you. Many students fail to go the extra mile, and a frequent regret is that they didn't contribute more to their college campus while they had the chance. Try to be one of those students that your professors and classmates will remember in years to come. Make an impact. - Debarghya Das

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ADVISER DROP-INS

**Greg Sawyer:**
Mondays 11:30am-1pm / APH 135
Thursdays 11:00am-12:00pm / 40 Ed Sci

**Kirsten Collins:**
Tuesdays 1:00pm-2:30pm / APH 135
Thursdays 12:00pm-1:00pm / 40 Ed Sci

**Nate Whittaker:**
Wednesdays 11am-12:30pm / APH 135
Thursdays 12:00pm-2:00pm / 40 Ed Sci

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

**GABBY XOCHIHUA-STRICKLAND**

Everyone's college career is arguably very unique to each individual. I am sure that some students enter college with no clue about what they want to study, while others begin higher education with a clear goal and passion for their future. I was a student with a diffused sense of interest and had very little clue about what my future would hold. The only thing I was sure of is that I wanted to focus my energy towards something that mattered. Something that I truly cared about.

I spent 4.5 years at the U of MN feeling lost, for the most part. As a junior, I decided to make my own major through the Inter-College Program (ICP) in the College of Continuing Education. I created a BA thematic degree focused on Art, Psychology and Social Justice. I had an inclination that I would work within education and the arts but wanted to have my other passions and interests included in my learning. My degree is titled, Expressive Art, Identity and Social Advocacy. I wanted to ensure that I would be equipped with the tools to better myself and my community while doing something I believe in.

Prior to graduation (Fall 2015), I applied for a position as a Paraprofessional at Hiawatha Collegiate High School. My passion for social justice and the arts came into play when they were looking for a person to help their Special Education students overcome obstacles that stand in the way of their academic success. Currently, I work one-on-one with a student who has a cognitive disability. I accompany the student and am responsible for accommodating the student's needs, which helps to create a better learning experience. I push the students to work hard and while they teach me how to become a better advocate. I also co-teach a resource class and lead an art lab. Thus far, my time at Hiawatha has been challenging and a bit overwhelming, but it is a really great place to be. I am fortunate to be in a place that feels comfortable and encourages its team members to grow and learn, even as educators. I am learning way too many things to fully describe and put into words, but I know it has already greatly shaped who I am growing to be and how I view the world in a short time. I am excited to continue learning from my wonderful team at Hiawatha and am oddly enjoying my 2nd high school experience but this time, from the other side of the desk.
FROM CAMPUS TO CAPE TOWN
TRIO’S DEEP RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA

Ten University of Minnesota TRIO students travelled to South Africa this January 2016 to participate in Whittaker’s UMN global seminar, “South Africa: Tracing the Footsteps of Social Change.” The course combined classroom discussion, on-site community education, and excursions to historic sites in order to trace “soft footprints” of a conscious sort – to seek the wisdom South Africans gained during their long walk in defeating Apartheid. A few TRIO students had this to say about their journey:

CANDACE BUNYAN: Expect the unexpected. When I first went to South Africa I had a clear picture of what I thought Africa was due to the influence of my own family’s perceptions of Africa. My parents and siblings used to live in Botswana; so, when they heard I was going on this trip they were ecstatic. They told me many things; that I will love it and the place is so beautiful. They were right about some things, but I have found things to be very different than I had expected. South Africa is a melting pot filled with many different people that come from a variety of different backgrounds.

KAO XIONG: Being in South Africa has made me appreciate life more and disengage less. I brought back many valuable lessons that I think are beneficial to everyone, no matter how far ahead in life you think you are. The level of humanity, sincerity, and respect that the locals have with each other and with students is beyond my own personal experiences. Cape Town has allowed me to learn how to appreciate the smallest things that I have and that even though life may get rough, if you have a positive attitude and outlook on life then you will make it through to a brighter day. Cape Town has also taught me how to forgive the oppressor(s) even in the cruelest of conditions. Most importantly, it has rekindled my desire to pursue a career in the social justice area and to make a change in our communities for cultural equity and to help create the same opportunities for the unprivileged. “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” –Desmond Tutu. Cape Town was a rehab session for life: it was breathtaking, inspiring, raw, and most definitely life changing.

CHRIA VANG: Whether we feel ready or not, the fight for social justice isn’t waiting for us. My decision to apply for the program was made on a whim. I was badly burnt out from school and felt I needed to test if my heart was still beating. I was at a place in my life where I felt so small and meaningless. I didn’t even know if I was going to get accepted into the program because I applied so late, but this trip came at a point in my life where I needed transformation, and it gave me exactly that. Who was I to study social justice in South Africa? I didn’t know squat! But even if I didn’t have much to share, I felt that I had a lot to learn and that made my heart flutter. I remained hopeful that the personal exposure, new knowledge, and deep friendships would help me realign with my moral compass. I’m proud to say that after getting my tan on, I came back to chilly Minnesota feeling more ready than ever to finish the academic year strong and firmly plant my feet in my values!

TROY WILDEMBERG: This trip was a lot of work, but more specifically, it was spirit work. I walked away with a more kind heart, but also the deep sense of belief that we are all inexplicable tied to one another. I think it really changed me as a person.

ZERBINE RYPA: My experience in South Africa is one that I never want to forget. I learned a lot from this journey, but the most meaningful lesson to me was how important it is to give individuals, especially oppressed individuals, a space to tell their narratives; it empowers them. I will take this lesson to find ways to improve my community here in the U.S.

To date, 38 UMN TRIO (former or current SSS or McNair) students have traveled to South Africa for this global seminar!

ANTHEA JANSEN IN MINNESOTA

This past fall, Anthea Jansen made a visit to Minnesota, her first trip out of South Africa. Jansen has conducted the community-education component of Whittaker's South Africa global seminar at Afrika Tikkun, where she oversaw many of the social and youth services. Jansen is also a trainer for the South African National Association of Child Care Workers. She has several years of experience working in Delft Township, known for its substandard schools, lack of jobs, and high rates of crime, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis. Over 100 University of Minnesota students have built relationships with Anthea over the past six years and it was a privilege to have her visit. We certainly kept her busy. Anthea was the guest speaker for the 4th Annual TRIO Leadership Retreat, participated in CEHD’s International Speakers Series, presented to the African American Read-In program, attended a number of trainings, and met others who had a vested interest in collaboration, while sharing expertise and knowledge. She also visited Ely and Duluth MN, the MOA, multiple Twin Cities sites, attended a MN Wild and UMN Football game, an apple orchard, MN Science Museum, and celebrated Halloween with us – USA style! Anthea and TRIO Adviser Nate Whitaker are starting a new NGO after-school program titled “Building Bridges” in Bellville South, Cape Town, South Africa.
TRIO TEXTING SERVICE!

How nice would it be to get a text message regarding important TRIO and University dates, deadlines, and events? Well...YOU CAN! Sign up for our TRIO "Remind" text service! We keep texts to a minimum and students who use the service say it's great!

To receive messages via text, text @b4a2 to 81010. You can opt-out of messages at anytime by replying, 'unsubscribe @b4a2'.

 Trouble using 81010? Try texting @b4a2 to (612) 276-0327 instead.

Or to receive messages via email, send an email to b4a2@mail.remind.com. To unsubscribe, reply with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 25: Last day to add class without instructor permission
February 1: Last day to add class without college & instructor permission
February 2: Last day to drop a course without a "W"
February 5: TRIO 50/40/25 OPEN HOUSE
February 24: TRIO Financial Aid, Loans, Workstudy, & FAFSA Workshop 12:30pm-1:30pm, ApH 11
March 14 - 18: Spring Break!
April 1: TRIO Adult Student Leadership Symposium (Bemidji, MN)
April 4: Last day to drop a course ("W" on transcript)
April 7: TRIO Budgeting & Savings Workshop!
April 12: May and summer registration begins
April 14: Fall 2016 registration begins (check queue date)
April 30: FAFSA priority deadline!
May 6: Last day of instruction
May 7 - 8: Study days
May 9 - 14: Final exams
May 23: May session begins
May 30: U of MN closed (Memorial Day)
June 13: Summer session begins

YOUR NARRATIVE MATTERS

TRIO AFFINITY GROUP (TAG)

The TRIO Affinity Group (TAG) was started by TRIO Adviser, Greg Sawyer, and is now entering its second year with great success! TAG is an assembly of TRIO or TRIO-like students that come together and engage in stimulating conversation and critical dialogue based on the sharing and listening of their experiences as first-generation, low-income students at a primarily white institution as well as in our larger society. TAG is a place for students to gain a sense of community, validation, and to hopefully strengthen their voice through the sharing of stories and experiences that impact and influence their college journey.

TRIO Student Heather Mullins said this about TAG: “I had the grand pleasure of going to a few TAG meetings which I absolutely loved. The space it provided and types of discussions we had just filled my soul each and every time. It’s something that is seriously missing at this big university and is much needed. I also just met a ton of really cool people there and it connected me with the community more - community that makes me feel accepted, and like I have a place at the U for the first time. That is huge. Places like this may exist at the U, but having it just for the TRIO community makes a big difference.”

Students interested in learning more about TAG should contact Greg Sawyer at sawy011@umn.edu or by calling the TRIO office at 612-625-0772.

OUR MISSION: Grounded in the Civil Rights Movement, TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) strives to ensure access and equal opportunity education for University of Minnesota students who are first-generation in college, low-income, students with disabilities, or students for whom English is not their first language. Through inclusive and accessible services, including academic support, counseling, teaching, and advocacy, the SSS program seeks to remove institutional and cultural barriers, foster a climate that values the social and cultural capital of our students, and promote retention to graduation.