

# TRIO NEW MEXICO

| 005 | Spring 2018



## TRIO Day Celebration 2018

by Dawn Blue Sky-Hill – UNM TRIO SSS -TRIO NM President

On February 9th, TRIO programs throughout the state of New Mexico all came together at Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) and the Santa Fe State Capitol to take part in the celebration the 2018 TRIO Day. Senate Memorial 54 was introduced by New Mexico Senator John M. Sapien, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee. Every year, high school and college students, teachers, members of Congress, local officials, TRIO Program staff, participants and alumni, and others come together to celebrate the positive impact of federal TRIO Programs in our nation's communities. The group reflected on the importance of educational opportunity programs in creating a fairer society for all Americans and to promote further access to higher education for income-eligible and first-generation students.

This year Santa Fe Community College has hosted TRIO Day including programs from: Central New Mexico Community College-main Student Support Services, Central New Mexico Community College-Montoya Stu-

dent Support Services, Eastern New Mexico University Upward Bound, New Mexico Tech Upward Bound Math and Science, Northern New Mexico College Upward Bound, San Juan College Student Support Services, Santa Fe Community College Student Support Services, UNM College Enrichment & Outreach Program, UNM-Gallup Student Support Services, UNM-main Educational Opportunity Center, UNM McNair, UNM-main Student Support Services, UNM-main Upward Bound, UNM-Taos Upward Bound Math Science, and UNM-Taos Student Support Services.

Students were provided tours to explore SFCC and see many of the programs the college has to offer like culinary arts, digital media, physical education, and life science. Rob Carriaga, SSS Achievement Coach, CNM set the group on a positive tone as Masters of Ceremony. SFCC Interim President Cecilia Y.M. Cervantes welcomed TRIO New Mexico followed by a welcome from TRIO New Mexico president Dawn Blue Sky-Hill. Emily Stern, SFCC faculty, led a group activity, which en-

couraged the students to reflect their motivation, family, and goals. Students were given a chance to share their story with the group and then express their thoughts through art on medallions. Each student contributed their medallion we attached to a metallic art installation with the letters reading “TRIO”.

A powerful keynote presentation was provided by George Esquibel, SFCC SSS student, about his battle of losing his eyesight and his determination to pursue his college education with the support of his family and SFCC SSS. TRIO Day Celebration moved to the New Mexico State legislative rotunda where students were given the opportunity to tour the legislative building or to visit the historic

Santa Fe Plaza. The group reconvened in the rotunda for an afternoon of presentations from representatives from congressional representatives from the office of Martin Heinrich, Michelle Lujan-Grisham, Tom Udall and Steve Pierce.

Impactful student testimonials rounded out the day and they shared how TRIO programs have helped them achieve their goals and dreams. Overall, TRIO Day was a day of celebration, reflection, and action around increased access to higher education for disadvantaged students. Federal TRIO Programs help income-eligible, and first-generation students enter college and earn a degree.

## NMSU Student Support Services TRIO Scholarship Recipients

by Carol Hicks – New Mexico State University SSS

NMSU TRIO Student Success Services Program would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our very own participants who were awarded scholarships this fall. SWASAP graciously recognized the academic and leadership achievements of several of our TRIO SSS participants with the SWASAP Scholarship. They are Susana Navarro, Alessa Ibanez and Lupita Martinez.

NMSU students also received generous TRIO New Mexico Scholarships. Recipients included, Melissa Grijalva-Hernandez, Isabel Rivera and Alessa Ibanez. Alma Chavez, received the prestigious Walter O. Mason, Jr. Scholarship. Alma, who graduated in December as the outstanding graduate for the College of Arts and Sciences, graduated with three bachelors' degrees in Anthropology, Spanish and Psychology.

Lupita Martinez, was also awarded the Lupe Torres Memorial Endowment Scholarship. This scholarship was established to honor Lupe

Torres who proudly graduated from NMSU, was an outstanding Student Success Center staff member and an all-around wonderful person. Lupita Martinez, was the first recipient of this extremely worthy award.

Melissa Hernandez-Grijalva in addition to a TRIO NM Scholarship, was also awarded The Global

Citizen's Project Scholarship that provides NMSU students the resources to have a global experience. Melissa will be traveling to Costa Rica on a non-credit faculty-led program where she will have the awesome opportunity to engage in the Costa Rican

community.

Again, congratulation NMSU TRIO SSS students! These scholarships were well-deserved and

TRIO hopes that the academic goals of these students are a little more within reach!

Go Aggies!



From left to right: Alessa Ibanez, Alma Chavez, Isabel Rivera, and Lupita Martinez.



# UNM Taos attends SWASAP Student Leadership Conference

*Submitted by University of New Mexico Taos SSS Staff*

The UNM-Taos TRIO-SSS program traveled to Van, TX for the SWASAP Student Leadership Conference during the last weekend of September. Rocio Aragon, Paulina Estrada and April Jiron enjoyed spending time with other college students from Oklahoma and Texas and learning leadership skills from the Paradigm Shift facilitators. The team blended games and “funtivities” with times for reflection and conversations of leadership qualities, teamwork strategies, organization/time management advice and communication methods. In addition to workshops and seminars regarding leadership, the students were able to participate in fun camping activities such as the zip line, campfire, mini golf and human maze.



*From left to right, Paulina Estrada, Rocio Aragon-Munoz, Chad Eline (staff) and April Jiron*

Paulina shared her student perspective of the trip. “I was very fortunate for having the opportunity to attend the Leadership Conference. It prepared me to have the courage and the initiative to be a great leader. The trip to Texas was filled with a lot of learning, fun and new experiences.”

While in Dallas, they also enjoyed the sights and sounds of the Dallas World Aquarium. This attraction featured birds, reptiles, various plant species, penguins, sharks and crocodiles. The students liked to compare and contrast the size and amenities of the city atmosphere with that of their hometown. The bright lights of the city at night provided a sharp contrast to the mountain shadows and star-filled skies of Taos, NM.

## LNESC TRIO Upward Bound

*by Jesus Villarreal – LNESC Upward Bound*

Since 2010, The LULAC National Educational Service Center, Inc. in Albuquerque provides college access services to Highland High School students through Upward Bound. In 2017, LNESC was awarded two additional Upward Bound Programs that serve students from Atrisco Heritage Academy High School and Valley High School.

With the start of the two new programs, we have made some great additions to our LNESC team. Our new team members bring a variety of skills and experience to the LNESC Family.

Jesus Villarreal returns to LNESC after a two-year period at Highland High School as

the Dean of Students and Community School Coordinator. He brings 6 years of experience as Upward Bound Program Coordinator. Jesus provides leadership at LNESC as the TRIO Manager.

Fernando Vidal is a former tutor for UB at Highland High School and now makes the transition to LNESC Operations Specialist. Fernando’s expertise in technical support is a much-needed addition to the entire center including all three UB programs.

### **Upward Bound at Atrisco Heritage Academy High School**

Mercedes Turner leads the UB program at

AHA as the new program coordinator. Mercedes brings plenty of experience to our program as a former LNESB UB Academic Advisor at Highland High School and Program Coordinator from NM Tech UB. Cristian Sanchez joins Mercedes at AHA as the new Academic Advisor. Cristian is an LNESB Upward Bound Alumnus and a University of New Mexico graduate. His knowledge and experience with Upward Bound are essential to our new program at AHA.

### **Upward Bound at Valley High School**

Stasia Sandoval, the new Program Coordinator at Valley High School brings years of experience working with youth making her a great match for our new program at VHS. Jeanine Rogge joins Stasia at Valley High School. Jeanine is a graduate of VHS and her knowledge of the school and Viking traditions give the program a great opportunity to serve the students at Valley. Jeanine and Stasia are

both University of New Mexico graduates and are proud to be working with Albuquerque students.

### **Upward Bound at Highland High School**

Our Highland High School program also welcomes another LNESB Upward Bound Alumnus. Karla Ochoa joins the LNESB team as an Academic Advisor. Karla graduated from HHS and the University of New Mexico and brings lots of experience to the program. She is thrilled to go back to her Alma Matter and help students similar to her achieve their academic dreams of obtaining a college education.

LNESB Albuquerque is delighted and enthusiastic to welcome the new team members. We are thankful to Highland High School, Atrisco Heritage Academy, and Valley High School for partnering with us to provide valuable Upward Bound services, and allowing us to be a part of their school and community.

## **2018 SWASAP Emergent Leader**

*by Carol Hicks – New Mexico State University SSS*

New Mexico State TRIO Programs Congratulates Bernadine Booky TRIO NM's SWASAP Emerging Leader Institute Representative Bernadine Booky has been employed by the New Mexico State University TRIO Student Support Services Program for three years. During this time, she has performed exceptionally in the role of the Administrative Assistant and presently the Mentor Coordinator. As Mentor Coordinator Bernadine assisted in designing and implementing the present TRIO SSS Mentoring Program. She has taken the program to the next level by writing and submitting the Mentor Certification proposal to the College Reading and Learning Association and was awarded the Certification Program to certify TRIO SSS Peer Mentors. Bernadine expressed an interest in the SWASAP Emerging



Leaders class and decided to apply. Leadership is a quality that Bernadine possesses and it was an honor to write a letter of support for her participation in the SWASAP Emerging Leaders Class. As a result of her application and dedication to the TRIO Mission, Bernadine was selected to represent TRIO New Mexico and New Mexico State University's TRIO Programs on the regional level in SWASAP's 2018-2019 Emerging Leaders Institute class. She has embraced the TRIO Mission and is prepared to learn, grow and develop professionally in her role as an ELI representative. Bernadine possesses the skills, integrity, persistence and ethical character to be an exceptional leader in TRIO and will represent the TRIO Organization well. Let's continue to support and applaud Bernadine as she continues her TRIO journey!

# Beyond Tutoring

*Submitted by Central New Mexico Community College Main SSS*

At CNM TRIO, the tutor coordinator has started giving a workshops called “Eating Healthy on \$20 a week budget”. The workshop starts with having students do a cost analysis on how much money they spend on groceries over 4 years, when spending \$20, \$40, or \$100 a week on food. Students learn how to plan meals, and how to create nutritious meals off what they might already have in their pantry, along with inexpensive healthy staples (e.g. bananas, oatmeal, and lentils). We discuss the basics of cooking and how to create versatile recipes such stuffed sweet potatoes, egg frittatas, or a stir-fry. There is a section on preventing food waste, including the proper way to freeze leftovers as well as how to store produce to stay fresh longer. We look at cooking once a week for the entire week, in order to save time and always have healthy meals on hand. The workshop has been very successful with high attendance and positive reviews.



## UNM Taos SSS Student Highlight

*Submitted by University of New Mexico Taos SSS Staff*

Jasmine Lopez a freshman at UNM-Taos and a TRIO-SSS participant joined over 200 volunteers for the annual Taos Feeds Taos food drive. Jasmine along with TRIO-SSS staff and other UNM Taos students and staff helped fill over 1110 boxes with donated food! The food boxes were distributed to families from Taos, Peñasco, Questa and other surrounding communities in Northern New Mexico in December before the holidays.

## NMSU SSS Fall 2017 Mentor & Tutor CRLA Certification Ceremony

*by Carol Hicks – New Mexico State University SSS*

On December 1, 2017, the NMSU TRIO SSS Program held their first College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA) Certification Ceremony to recognize the Peer Tutors and Peer Mentors who successfully completed the required hours of training and mentoring or tutoring experience to receive certifications. The Mentoring Certification is a first for the TRIO SSS Program and can certify Mentors for three levels: Level 1 – Regular Mentor; Level II – Advanced Mentor; and Level III – Master Mentor. The Tutoring Certification is a recertification for TRIO SSS Program. The Tutoring Certification Program has been approved for Stage 3, Level 1 – Certified Tutor, Level II – Advanced Certified Tutor, and Level III – Master Certified Tutor. The Tutoring Certification is a Lifetime Certification. The Mentor Coordinator, Bernadine Booky was able to present three Mentors with the Level 1,





Regular Mentor Certification, three mentors with the Level 2, Advanced Mentor Certification, and four Mentors with the Level 3, Master Mentor Certification.

The Tutor Coordinator, Trese Collins presented 6 tutors with their Certification - Level 1 and 7 tutors with their Advanced Certification - Level 2. We are very proud of our peer staff for accomplishing this milestone in their professional development. We extend a well-deserved congratulations and thank you to the Mentors and Tutors for their hard work and dedication that they contribute to TRIO SSS Program participants' success.

## CNM TRIO Student attended National Climate Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C.

*Submitted by Central New Mexico Community College Main SSS*



CNM student Adrian Toledo was one of 150 students in the U.S. who attended the National Climate Leadership Summit June 5-7, in Washington, D.C.

Summit attendees, included leaders from student governments, campus environmental organizations and young professional groups, who discussed the future of environmental policy and programs around the country.

Adrian Toledo is majoring in Environmental Planning and Design and plans to transfer to the University of New Mexico next Fall. He is a current participant of CNM TRIO program at Main campus. He is involved in the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) CNM Chapter.

"I am really interested in learning how to build like our ancestors did with a limited impact on the environment and sharing that method with younger Native Americans and all Americans," Toledo said.

## UNM Gallup SSS Staff Spotlight

*Submitted by Kimimila Simms - UNM Gallup SSS*

UNM Gallup TRIO/ SSS has new staff this past 2017 year! We have done a lot of to celebrate success and achievements for our students such as our summer bridge program called, Lobo Academy, 4-year University transfer trips, workshops, potlucks scholarship awards ceremony, Graduation, participating in the University's activities and many more academic initiatives! We continue to grow and learn from each other while on the road to academic success. The staff have been attending trainings, attending Ulead classes, and the 2017 SWASAP conference. We constantly are looking for ways to improve the way we interact with students to keep them motivated and on track to graduation and we look for to the 2018 year!





# New Mexico Tech Upward Bound Acknowledges Their Senior Scholars

*Submitted by New Mexico Tech UB Staff*

The New Mexico Tech Upward Bound Math and Science program would like to acknowledge our

high school seniors who are diligently preparing for college. Our senior cohort includes 17 very hard working students as they continuously balance high school classes, dual credit courses, going to work, and pursuing leadership positions in outside student activities. Among the countless student successes within our program, many seniors have been applying for exciting college opportunities and acquiring scholarships for future higher educational endeavors. Our seniors have been offered funding opportunities including varying institutional merit-based scholarships, the QuestBridge Scholars, and one-student counts as a Daniels Fund finalist. Among these young scholars, we have a variety of students who are eager to attend schools such as our host institution New Mexico Tech, The University of New Mexico, Williams College in Massachusetts, Regis University in Colorado, New Mexico State University and Eastern New Mexico University. We would like to recognize and commend our class of 2018 for all of their hard work throughout high school, the UBMS program, and continuing to strive for greater academic progress in the years to come!

## TRIO NM ELI: An Interview with '17 Emerging Leaders Institute Participants

*by Dawn Blue Sky-Hill – TRIO New Mexico President*

### Kurtis Griess



**Project Director, Upward Bound Math and Science**  
**New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology**

### What has been a highlight(s) of the ELI experience?

The highlight of my ELI experience has been getting to meet so many amazing TRIO professionals from across our region and connecting to a community of people passionate for the students we serve. The ELI trainers and Southwest Association of Student Assistance Programs (SWASAP) board are great at developing us as leaders and sharing their knowledge and expertise. Working on the project with the other ELI participants has been fun and enlightening. We learned how to work as a team long-distance and

each person has something unique they bring. It's great to have a support network beyond my institution and anytime I go to a conference, I know there will be familiar, friendly faces that are working toward the same goals.

**Do you feel ELI has given you a better understanding of TRIO? Explain.**

ELI has given me a much better understanding of TRIO. I know have a greater awareness of the other TRIO programs and the dynamics of how different institutions run their programs. I also better understand how our state association, SWASAP, and COE work. Our associations defend, advocate, and support TRIO programs so that we can continue to serve our students. Without the leadership of these associations, TRIO would not be where it is today!

**Would you recommend ELI to others? Why?**

I would strongly recommend ELI to any professional that wants to take their leadership to the next level. It's an opportunity to develop yourself and join a community of like-minded, passionate people who are serving the programs in our state and region. The friendships you form and lessons you learn are invaluable.

**Trese Collins**



*Program Coordinator, Student Support Services  
New Mexico State University*

**What has been a highlight(s) of the ELI experience?**

Representing TRIO NM as an ELI representative has been an amazing experience. This opportunity has given me knowledge of the leadership role to include developing one's leadership style, the importance of being an ideal team player and the opportunity to network and collaborate with other TRIO professionals. One of the highlights of this experience has been working with TRIO ELI graduates who have taught me about the objectives, organization and procedures of TRIO in order to promote success on the state, regional and national levels.

**Do you feel ELI has given you a better understanding of TRIO? Explain.**

I feel that ELI has given me a better understanding of TRIO by providing me knowledge and understanding on the history of TRIO, the importance of the TRIO mission and the importance of being involved within the TRIO community in order to contribute to the success of the state and regional associations. Also, I have gained an understanding of fiscal management, strategic planning and parliamentary procedures within TRIO.

**Would you recommend ELI to others? Why?**

I would recommend ELI to any TRIO professional because the information, knowledge, motivation and professional development I have gained from this experience has been invaluable.



# NMSU TRIO SSS Program Celebrates Outstanding Graduate

by Carol Hicks – New Mexico State University SSS

When Alma Chavez walked across the stage during the fall commencement ceremony at New Mexico State University Saturday, Dec. 9, it was a celebration for the Juarez, Mexico, native, who was selected as the outstanding graduate for the College of Arts and Sciences graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology, Psychology and Spanish.

Alma Chavez, a TRIO Student Support Services program participant at New Mexico State University, was honored as the outstanding graduate for the College of Arts and Sciences at the fall commencement ceremony Saturday, Dec. 9, at the Pan American Center. "We are very proud of Alma's accomplishments," said Carol Hicks, TRIO SSS Program Director.

"TRIO staff felt honored knowing Alma, her journey and the grit, resilience, passion for learning and the hard work she exerted on her road to graduation."

Chavez said she was surprised to receive the honor, which included her leading the College of Arts and Sciences into the Pan American Center as the Standard Bearer.

"I felt so blessed that all my efforts were recognized with this award, even though a professor nominated me, I did not think that I would receive it."

Chavez, who graduated from the Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso, Texas, after coming to the U.S. at 14, said learning English was a challenge but that was just one of the ways the TRIO SSS staff supported her at NMSU.

"I really enjoyed being part of TRIO throughout my college career because it has helped me a lot," she said. "The mentors have helped me with my grammar, communication skills and always supported me academically. In addition, they became my friends because they are very nice. Since the beginning, they have always been committed to helping all students, including me." "TRIO plays a significant role in the lives of the participants," Hicks said. "TRIO provides opportunities using an individualized approach applicable to each student's need. TRIO provides guidance in accessing resources, navigating processes and providing information to participants to

assist them in making informed decisions about their education."

A first-generation college student, Chavez agreed college can be difficult. "At the beginning, it was hard to organize my time for school, work, events and more. Being a first-generation student is hard because you have

no one that can give you advice about college."

Chavez said she plans to take a year to conduct research before pursuing a Master's Degree in Forensic Science in hopes of becoming a Forensic Anthropologist for the FBI, CIA or Interpol. She encourages other students to follow their dreams. "Even though one door closes, it does not mean that others will not open," Chavez said. "Every challenge makes you stronger and if you have any question about college do not be afraid to ask."



# TRIO Students Testimonials

## Jessica Bower



**Central New Mexico  
Community College**  
*Student Support Services*

TRIO has helped me become a more confident student and has encouraged me not to give up. I feel like the amount of support I get from TRIO has helped me to try more things that I never would have considered before. From the first TRIO orientation, I have felt very welcomed into the TRIO community. It has changed my whole sense of belonging because CNM is no longer just a place I take classes; it is now an expansion of home. I don't feel threatened or anxious about reaching out because I know that TRIO students are everywhere and I feel like we really help and look out for each other.

I am normally a very shy and reserved person; but since TRIO, I have been much more comfortable and relaxed because of the people I know. This has helped me to get more involved in CNM including joining the TRIO Achievement Group student club and participating in some Phi Theta Kappa events. There has definitely been an improvement in my grades because of TRIO. I have attended most of the workshops, and every time I learn something new. Ever since I started in TRIO, the first time I went to Spring Fling, I was recognized for my good grades that put me over a 3.5 GPA. I really felt motivated to go for my 4.0, and I have succeeded every semester.

I am currently set to graduate this May with four (4) Associate's degrees in Human Services, Psychology, Sociology, and Liberal Arts as well as my certificate in General Studies and Substance Abuse Counseling this Summer. I plan to continue my education at NMHU, and I will absolutely complete my Bachelor's degree. Ultimately, I have a goal to attend Columbia University for my Master's degree in Social Work. I plan to become a

social worker that specializes in Substance Abuse Treatment and Prisoner Re-entry.

I want to tell students to not be afraid to ask questions and put yourself out there when you are struggling. There are so many people willing to help and so many resources available. If you are going to dream, then dream big and go for it!

## Cinthia Herrera

**University of New Mexico**  
*Educational Opportunity Centers*

I approached Educational Opportunity Center because of a recommendation from a friend as I needed help with my application for financial aid. They helped right away and showed me how to complete the FAFSA and where I had to fill out the correct information.

The results were fantastic. I was very impressed with the program and have enjoyed my visits. I have found out the advisors were very friendly and very straightforward with answering my questions.

The Educational Opportunity Center has helped in many aspects as a freshman of UNM. It's a place where I have certainty that my questions of FAFSA or classes or UNM in general can be answered. I've been to the Educational Opportunity Center multiple times since last year, where I feel welcomed and a place where I can speak in Spanish with my advisor and whom I can relate to. I get tips on how to be successful in school and how to apply for scholarships. I never leave with doubts and I always get the help I need as a freshman who is new to college.

It is obvious the coordinator of EOC is committed to excellence and I have no doubt that is an outstanding program for students at UNM. I would recommend this program to many others as the advisors are excellent in their jobs.

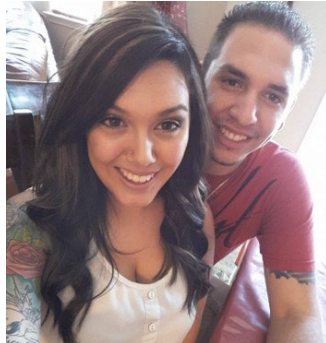
## Jasmine Loya

**LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc**  
*Upward Bound*

LNESC Upward Bound helped me graduate from high school by improving my grades and ensuring

that I was taking all the required courses. Tutoring made a big difference in my classes because I was able to improve my grades with the help I received on a daily basis. Our program coordinator guided me through the process of applying for college, financial aid and scholarships. She also took time to sit with me and help me complete the application to CNM. I am grateful for all the help because without Upward Bound I would be lost.

## Hannah Cruz



**Central New Mexico  
Community College**  
*Student Support Services*

I graduated from CNM with the help of TRIO SSS. Coming into college, I knew I wanted to make something of myself but did not know how or where to start. TRIO was the exact guide I was looking for. Many people feel that they are alone through their journey in college, but I wasn't.

TRIO stayed in touch with me making sure I was on the right track to success. All the members are so inviting and friendly, and I am truly grateful for that. As a scared freshman, it was encouraging to have such amazing people supporting and motivating me. I couldn't have made it this far without TRIO.

## Ivonne Almodobar

**University of New Mexico**  
*Educational Opportunity Centers*

I am currently enrolled at Anderson School of Management at the University of New Mexico. I would not be here if not for the assistance of the University of New Mexico's Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) program. EOC is one of the Federal TRIO programs which assists adults who, like me, want to return to school, but need direction and guidance.

I am from Mexico and I have been lived in Albuquerque for six years. When I moved here I did

not know English language and I had no connections. However, I have great aspirations to raise my level of education as well as to contribute in my community. Truly, education is a key to success; it opens doors and helps individuals meet their goals. However, the hardest part of going to college is paying for educational expenses. Also, been new in this country is hard because you are the one without knowledge in how to apply for college and for scholarships. Return to school has not been easy but I have a great desire to learn, so, I attended GED classes, summer 2012 semester at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) and I got my GED in September of the same year.

That summer I met Marcial Martinez, Director of the EOC program, University of New Mexico and everything changed for me. With EOC program, I found opportunities and I have learned about available resources and how to use them. Through EOC I had been accepted in CNM in Fall 2013 and I got FAFSA. I was student of ESOL classes to learn English and I earned my Associate Degree of Arts in Business in the Spring 2017. Again, EOC program helped me to connect to UNM and thanks to its help I had accepted to attend to Anderson School of Management and I got financial aid to pay for my education. It has been a long journey to be at this point in my education and EOC program has supported me so much to be where I am now.

EOC Director Marcial Martinez provided me the encouragement and direction I needed to do things as simple as filling out an application or filing my FAFSA. While the process was intimidating, having the support of my EOC counselor made all the difference in the world. Today, I am on my way to becoming a college graduate. I will be graduating in the Spring 2019 with Bachelors of Arts in Accounting.

## Naomi Benavidez



**LULAC National  
Educational Service  
Centers, Inc**  
*Upward Bound*

Throughout my entire high school experience, I have been given opportunities and support from



the Upward Bound program. I joined as an incoming freshman and I am finishing the program through my senior year. Upward bound provides me with advisement, assistance, and helps me expand within myself.

The program opened my mind to what all I can do with my education in the future and has prepared me to do it. My experience has been beneficial and has made me more of an assiduous student. I have gained wisdom and confidence about my future plans of going to college because of Upward Bound.

## George Gonzales



**Central New Mexico  
Community College**  
*Student Support Services*

As a first generation/ low-income student I was faced with many challenges and questions for which I had no answers; this was up until I found out about TRIO Student Support Services. It was during the spring semester of 2016, when I was offered a student employment position with TRIO, that I would find out that I had been working towards the wrong associates degree, so if I planned to transfer to UNM I would need to change my major. Lucky for me I was at TRIO, and that was right where I needed to be. I am proud to say that thanks to TRIO and their wonderful team, I am graduating. This is nearly two years sooner than I had previously figured possible. For reasons such as these, I believe TRIO to be an essential tool for any student and should be available for generations to come.

## Isabel Morales

**University of New Mexico**  
*Educational Opportunity Centers*

I am currently a student at CNM Community College. This has been thanks to the UNM Educational Opportunity Center program that has helped me since my inception. This program gave me

the information about Financial Aid and the most important thing is that they helped me with the whole process. Thanks to this program, I was able to acquire my Financial Aid and begin my studies. Until today, I continue to occupy the services of the UNM EOC program. It would be very difficult for me if I did not have the support of them. It is very important that programs like this continue to be available to students and continue to provide support and advice. Sometimes, because they do not have the support of programs like EOC, many students dropping from college.

## Jacob Lopez



**LULAC National Educational  
Service Centers, Inc**  
*Upward Bound*

I am an eleventh grader at Valley High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Being a part of Upward Bound has given me many opportunities that I wouldn't have been able to experience if I had not joined the program. The tutoring program provided has helped me tremendously, just knowing they are there for me if I need any help. With Upward Bound, I got to visit two college campuses this year which was awesome. Finally, having Upward Bound as an educational resource to ensure that I am on the right track to graduation and college is something I am very thankful for!

## Christina Gutierrez



**Central New Mexico  
Community College**  
*Student Support Services*

I want to thank TRIO SSS for everything they have done to support me as I head into gradua-

tion! They have been my main support mentally, emotionally and physically! Without them, I don't think I would be in my position transferring to UNM into the Civil Engineering Department and working as a Transportation Engineering Intern at HDR, Inc. They are more than friends, it's more like a family, that I'm so lucky to have!

## Victoria Rivera

**University of New Mexico**  
Educational Opportunity Centers

I am sophomore at the University of New Mexico and a first generation college students. As a first generation college student when the time came to apply for college and financial aid, I had no resources to guide me in either application process. My parents have never filled out a financial aid form and there was little to no assistance given to me through my high school counselor. What I needed was someone to guide me through the application process for both college and financial aid and that is exactly what the Educational Opportunity Center did for me. They guided me through the process of applying for financial aid and ensuring that I had all the paperwork in order to apply. They sat with me, showed me the process and explained it every step of the way. They took their time going through the cost of tuition, the expenses, and what my financial need is based on my family's income. They ensured that I was comfortable with the application process and answered all of my questions.

The Educational Opportunity center helped me apply to financial aid ensuring that the cost of attendance at The University of New Mexico wouldn't stop me from pursuing my degree and education. Not only did they help me while I was applying for the college process and financial aid while I was still in high school but they also help me while I am currently still an undergraduate. Every year when it's time to apply for financial aid I head over to the Educational Opportunity Center and am given assistance in reapplying for financial aid.

This program helps me in ensuring that all of my financial aid information is correct so there is no delay in the submission and process of my financial aid. Their assistance allows me to continue my education. They have been a reliable resource for not only me but also other college students who need direction and assistance while currently in or

applying to college. They have given me and other students the information, support and resources needed to ensure our success in college.

## Christine Gustafson



**Central New Mexico  
Community College**  
Student Support Services

When I started as a student at CNM, I thought I had a pretty good handle on my studies and the path that I wanted to follow. By my second year at CNM, I started questioning what that path was. I decided to sign up with TRIO at CNM Montoya as there were many things going wrong personally and I could not focus, and I was trying to figure out if nursing was the path that I wanted to take.

My passion lies in Forensics; unfortunately, however, there are no forensic programs at CNM. I met with Magda who helped me get resources for my daughter and myself. I met with Jimi who come to find out was a plethora of information! I absolutely loved working with him. He put me on a path that I felt confident about and got me set up with tutoring with Kristen.

Long story short, I graduated from CNM on the Dean's list and with honors. I am now a Community Healthcare Coordinator for Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Mexico helping the homeless and Medicaid recipients get the care, shelter, and resources they need to be healthier. I will be starting at UNM in June to follow the forensic path by taking a forensic psychology course.

Thank you to everyone at the CNM Montoya Campus who helped me along the way; Willie Smoker who helped me with my graduation gown, Jimi for his guidance, Kristen with her awesome tutoring skills and knowledge and Magda who helped get me resources so that my 13-year-old daughter and I could make it through some very difficult times!

# Santa Teresa High School teacher shares recent Antarctica trip

Luis Villalobos, Gadsden Independent School District – Published by Las Cruces Sun News

Penguins smell. Glaciers make the sound of thunder with they break up, and killer whales are not always successful in their hunts for meals.

Those were some of the experiences that Monica Nuñez brought back to her classroom at Gadsden Independent School District's Santa Teresa High School after being in Antarctica from Dec. 26 to Jan. 8. She visited as part of a fellowship from the National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow Program.

Among a select group of 35 teachers who participated in the program, Nuñez was eager to return with photos, videos, research data and remarkable memories of one of the most remote and dangerous places on Earth.

"I want to travel more and bring back my experiences to the classroom," she said. "I want my students to be inquisitive and to seek other opportunities through my experience." During her first day back at Santa Teresa High for the spring semester, Nuñez used a smart board to show her physical science students scores of photos and videos from her trip. Students were mesmerized.

"It's life-changing because this type of research brings you back very passionate about what you see," she said. "And being able to bring that into the classroom for the student, I'm being able to give them a real-world account of being in Antarctica."

While other teacher fellowship honorees went to Alaska and the Galápagos Islands, Nuñez was part of the last expedition of the season to Antarctica. She'll collaborate with other teachers to share data among classrooms throughout the country.

## A great escape

Nuñez traveled to the remote continent by ship. Her group took water samples and visited the land around several natural harbors.

"We saw penguins and killer whales, and re-

searchers were excited about actually witnessing a failed attempt by a pod of three whales hunting a single seal that successfully escaped," she said.

Nuñez captured the incident on a video, which shows the whales ramming a large piece of ice where the seal was resting. The pod hit the ice three times, but the seal hung on. The whales left after the unsuccessful attempt, and the seal quickly escaped in an opposite direction.

## Falling ice

The video is part of a treasure trove of images of a land that few, if any, of her students might ever visit.

"Being able to see the ice, the glaciers, the ice shelves and see spectacular colors that a photograph can't capture and being able to see those things on a ship was incredible," she said. "We saw ice shelves with walls about 100 feet high." Sometimes, the expedition team would hear a "tremendous sound" like lightning, Nuñez said. It wasn't a storm but rather the sound of tons of ice breaking off glaciers.

Nuñez told students about her encounters with penguins, which had a strong smell that was hard to get rid of days after encountering them. At one point, she sat down near a group of Chinstrap penguins, so named because of markings on their heads that resemble a chin strip. One penguin then waddled over to within inches of her. She and other teachers, however, were told not to pet or touch any of the animals.

Nuñez said the birds were "noisy, curious animals."

"(I)t was funny to see how adult penguins struggled to tuck large chicks under them to protect them from the cold," she said. "The bad thing was penguins are messy, and their droppings were all over our protective clothing."

She said she has a goal to inspire students to have an outlook of curiosity.



“(I)t is important that I make my students passionate about the world and show how the world is interconnected,” she said.

“I want them to be explorers too, even if it is just going to the library.”

## SWASAP Scholarship Awardee

by Dawn Blue Sky-Hill – University of New Mexico SSS

We are honored to announce Myrella Gonzales, a University of New Mexico-main campus SSS TRIO member who is majoring in population health, and minoring in Spanish, has been awarded with the 2017 collegiate scholarship from the Southwest Association of Student Assistance Programs (SWASAP). SWASAP awards deserving students from New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana, to help them in their academic goals.

Myrella’s goals include continuing her education beyond the bachelor’s degree and will go on to graduate school where she wants to get both a Masters of Public Health, and a Masters in Medical School. Myrella’s biggest aspiration is to dedicate her professional career to addressing the health disparities that



exist in her community by founding her own non-profit organization.

Myrella says the SSS TRIO has helped her to be successful in her college career, by supporting both “Professionally and emotionally, during a time in which... (she) was overwhelmed by (her) ... (academic and familial) responsibilities.”

We are proud of what Miss Gonzales has accomplished despite at first feeling “intimidated” when she began her first year of college and are honored to have helped achieve her goals. With her positive attitude, ability to persevere and “ni pena ni miedo” philosophy, we know that she will continue to succeed in her academic career and beyond.

## CNM TRIO participants won the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society All-State Academic Team

Submitted by Central New Mexico Community College Main SSS

Debrilla Ratchford and Valerie Gurule, TRIO SSS Main campus, also enjoyed lunch with CNM Vice President Phillip Bustos in Santa Fe.



They were recently honored at the New Mexico Legislature in Santa Fe. The students -- Debrilla Ratchford, Valerie Gurule and Saday Gonzalez – introduced themselves in the Education Committee at the Roundhouse, and then were congratulated by legislators. To be eligible for the New Mexico All-State Academic Team, students must have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 and at least 45 credit hours. They were also judged on criteria such as participation in student organizations, community service, special recognitions and an essay.

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