BSU TRiO Hosts Northern MN TRiO Day

Over 250 students from Upward Bound, Student Support Services, Talent Search, and Upward Bound Math Science programs from across Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin gathered at BSU on February 16th to attend the 10th annual Northern MN TRiO Day hosted by BSU’s TRiO programs. “TRiO is all about YOU!” was the theme of the day with a focus on sending well-rounded students forth to succeed in the world of higher education and beyond.

Craig Hillier of Winning Edge Seminars started the day. He spoke to students about making the right choices and having resilience to turn setbacks into comebacks when pursuing life-long goals. He also urged students to take responsibility for their own lives and actions. He sent students forth ready to actively participating in the day’s events. Students then attended breakout sessions focused on academic enrichment, career development, financial literacy, and personal well-being. Representatives from more than 20 colleges also provided information on specific college programs and admission requirements.

National TRiO Day was established in 1986 as a day of celebration, reflection and action around increased access to higher education for disadvantaged students. Since 1965 federally funded TRiO programs have helped two million students from disadvantaged backgrounds finish high school, enter postsecondary education and graduate.

BSU TRiO has sponsored Upward Bound for high school students since 1966 and Student Support Services for college students since 1970. BSU will soon offer services under TRiO’s McNair Program to help college students from disadvantaged backgrounds attend graduate school.

Craig Hillier’s keynote talk echoed the purpose of all TRiO programs. That is to help students persevere and keep working toward their goals whatever they may be.
A Word from Our Director

In the August 5, 2012 edition of the Chronicle of Higher Education, an article entitled, “Traits of the ‘Get It Done’ Personality: Laser Focus, Resilience, and True Grit,” described what a successful academic needs to succeed in a higher education environment. I was struck by the traits listed in this article and how these traits are ones I attribute to each of you as a TRiO/SSS student. The traits of successful academics are listed below.

As you proceed through this academic year, I encourage you to remember this list of traits. Each of you knows hardship and has recovered from some of the most difficult situations, which demonstrates your resilience. As a result, you have grit and are conscientious. None of you are ordinary since you use creative ways to achieve your goals. You have learned to focus. As a result, you are enrolled at BSU. Lastly, you have learned to self-regulate so that you can manage the many distractions and temptations that come your way. Celebrate the strengths you have developed as you discover what is important to you and how you want to live your life.

The Successful Academic

People who get things done and accomplish their goals often share these traits:

- **Resilience**—the ability to recover from set-backs and cope effectively with stress
- **Grit**—perseverance and passion for challenging, long-term goals
- **Conscientiousness**—tendency to be orderly, self-controlled, industrious, responsible, and willing to delay gratification
- **Creativity**—the willingness to break with convention, challenge the status quo, and come up with new ideas
- **Focus**—the ability to zero in on one thing at a time, tune out distractions, and avoid multitasking
- **Self-Regulation**—an awareness of what matters and the discipline to avoid temptations and see a task through

Spring Schedule

- 3/18 Fall Semester Class Schedule Available
- 3/18 Deadline for submission of Grad Plans
- 3/25 Fall Semester Registration Begins
- 4/10 Last Day to Withdraw/Make Up Incompletes
- 4/10 Student Achievement Celebration
- 5/2 Reading Day
- 5/3 Finals Begin
- 5/9 Spring Semester Ends
- 5/10 Commencement
- 5/16 Spring Semester Grades Available

When Do I Change My Advisor?

Most new freshman in TRiO are assigned to a TRiO advisor—Sarah, Steve, or me (Crystal). Typically, we advise students from their freshman year through to end of sophomore year (or until you have chosen a major). We introduce you to classes that interest you and give you the opportunity to explore majors with introductory classes and have you attend events like the Major and Career Expo.

When you feel confident in your selection of a major, usually sometime in the sophomore year, we connect you with faculty from those majors. It’s great to be connected to an advisor in your intended major because they know their major inside and out and can give specific details about course content, when the class may be offered and possible minors that may compliment the major.

Switching to a major advisor is easy! You can fill out the Advisor Change Form, located on the Advising Success Center website. You will need your new advisor’s signature for the form. We can help you with this process. Even though you may have a new advisor, we want you to remember that our TRiO doors are always open to you. You are a TRiO student the entire time you are at BSU!
Marissa Stitt Talks About Life in Graduate School

Because of her high academic standing and campus involvement Marissa Stitt was honored as the TRiO/SSS student of the year in April of 2012 just before graduating from BSU with a degree in Psychology. Marissa is currently pursuing a Master of Science degree in Mental Health Counseling at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She recently talked with us about her decision to go to graduate school.

When and how did you decide you wanted to go to grad school? After looking into the employment opportunities available for graduates with a bachelor’s degree in psychology, I realized I wasn’t yet equipped for the career that I really wanted (counseling). Because of this, I decided then that I was going to graduate school.

How did you first learn about graduate school? I knew little about the process of applying or the opportunities available. I began with a Google search and made a list of the places that offered a master’s program in counseling. Once I had pinpointed two acceptable locations, I had to research more about their programs-- the coursework, the staff, what the program could offer me that other programs couldn’t.

How does grad school differ from undergrad school? Whereas undergraduates work toward broadening your knowledge across many different areas, grad school hones in on the development of the knowledge and skills that are necessary for your chosen field of study. There’s also much more reading!

How did participating in TRiO at BSU prepare you for grad school? It’s important to remember that once you’re a TRiO student, you’re always a TRiO student. When I needed support as a freshman (and sophomore) on choosing a major, the staff at TRiO helped me get my footing. The encouragement I received from the TRiO staff when I was a senior made a huge difference when applying for grad school got stressful.

What financial concerns did you have about going to grad school and how have you addressed them? Continuing your education in general is expensive, and I didn’t know how I could afford grad school, because money has always been tight. I currently support my education with the use of student loans. While this idea initially made me feel nauseated, I realize I’m making an investment in my future.

What GPA and GRE scores should students have and what should student do in order to get into graduate school and get a graduate assistantship? Programs differ in their requirements on GPA and GRE scores, but the higher students sit, the better off they will be. Any experience students can gain as an undergrad that’s related to their field can only help. Departments look to hire graduate students into assistantships who have experience similar to what they need in their program.

BSU will soon offer services under TRIO’s McNair Scholars Program to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds attend graduate school. How might the McNair Scholars Program have helped you prepare better for grad school or do research? Having research experience is great because many graduate programs appreciate applicants who have experience with research, and many assistantships available to students are also based on research. Although my undergraduate psychology research wasn’t directly related to counseling, the staff of my program viewed my research as an achievement. Also, you’ll have to read research articles at some point or another. Having firsthand experience doing research really gives you a leg up when it comes to understanding research jargon.

What were your fears or concerns about going to grad school and how have you overcome them? My biggest concern was that I was moving 300 miles from home (where I didn’t know anyone) and starting a new adventure completely on my own. I overcame this fear by simply pulling myself up by the bootstraps and doing it. It hasn’t always been easy, but it has been a huge growth experience for me. I’ve become familiar with the city, made some great friends, and found a program I really love.
TRiO Hires McNair Associate Director

TRiO Director, Kelli Steggall, has announced Kristina Cirks will be the Associate Director for the McNair Scholars Program starting March 11th.

Cirks received her Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from the College of St. Benedict and has a Master’s degree in educational leadership with an emphasis in higher education from Minnesota State University – Moorhead.

Cirks brings a wealth of experience in a variety of college settings to her new position. She has served as a sports information director at Coe College in Iowa, as the enrollment manager at Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Fergus Falls, and as an admissions representative for Bemidji State University. She has spent the past 1-1/2 years as the interim assistant director and transfer specialist for the admissions office at BSU.

Cirks said she is excited about introducing students to the idea of graduate school and then providing them assistance to reach their educational goals and enroll in a graduate program for their chosen field.

Making College Even More Interesting

By attending a liberal arts college, like BSU, you have the chance to explore various fields and to learn about interesting and new subjects. Getting exposed to different topics, ideas and ways of thinking doesn’t happen only in the classroom or by doing your assignments. BSU hosts many events on campus to enhance the college learning experience and to provide entertainment. These events are often free or cost very little for students to attend.

You will see an assortment of events listed throughout every TRiO/SSS newsletter. The TRiO/SSS staff encourages you to attend a variety of events (even if the topic is something you know nothing about). You may discover something that really interests you. At the very least, you’ll learn new things and become a more well-rounded person.

You have an opportunity to hear about a diverse range of topics at BSU’s 14th annual Student Scholarship and Creative Achievement Conference (SSCAC) on April 10th. This non-class day is set aside every year to showcase students’ original research and creative accomplishments.

Jason Edens, who holds a Master of Science in Environmental Studies from Bemidji State University, will give the keynote address. Edens is the founding Director of the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL), a solar thermal manufacturer who is pioneering the delivery of solar heat to low-income families on energy assistance as a lasting solution to low-income fuel poverty.

Current BSU students are then in the spotlight giving oral presentations about research they conducted, displaying and discuss their work during a poster session, participating on a panel, displaying art work in an exhibition, or giving a creative performance.

TRiO students report the following reasons to attend the SSCAC

- There’s potential for extra credit in some of your classes
- You may learn something interesting and useful by going to different presentations
- You get to see the types of projects, the depth of research necessary, and the length of presentation expected for when you have to do your own senior project
- It’s free and the donuts are great
- You learn how to give better presentations by seeing different presentation styles
- It makes a good impression on your professors when they see you at the presentations
- To support your classmates who have worked hard on their projects/presentations
- There is no test afterwards

Other Happenings to Check Out

44th Festival of Nations
April 6th, from 3-7 pm in Memorial 100

Funtastic Dance Follies
Th – Sat, April 18, 19 & 20 at 7:00 pm with a matinee at 2:00 pm on the 20th

Main Theatre-Bangsberg Events
Bemidji Choir
Mar 24, 3:00 pm
Wind Ensemble/Symphonic Band
Apr 21, 3:00 pm
Opera Theatre
Apr 26-27, 7:30 pm (Bring Student ID!)

Recital Hall-Bangsberg Events
Bemidji Trombones
Mar 28, 7:30 pm
Varsity Singers
Apr 14, 3:00 pm
Voltage
Apr 15, 7:30
MIDIots
Apr 16, 7:30 pm
Percussion Ensemble
Apr 25, 7:30 pm