

# UTSA TRiO

## Student Support Services

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# Engage

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John Bonner – Jaz Burgess – Bethany Mayott  
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Fall 2018

And so ended yet another semester, but at TRiO Student Support Services at UTSA all that means is that we are welcoming new students and new opportunities at every corner. The fall semester has proven yet again that when given the opportunity to engage, both the community and each individual are the better for it.

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**Workshops and TRiO Tours** took the spotlight for the fall 2018 semester's programming. As mentioned in the previous issue, our Student Success Advisor Bethany spearheaded our TRiO Tours initiative, wherein TRiO participants are exposed to career, cultural, and graduate program prospects. This past September we went to the San Antonio Art Museum to indulge in Latin American arts, learn about the role of a museum and its curators, as well as the historical influences of the pieces we viewed. Afterwards, we stopped by a San Antonio staple Mi Tierra at Market Square to munch on pan dulce.



In October we drove to our sister school The University of Texas at Austin to explore their graduate school fair. Our students were able to learn about the graduate programs and meet with graduate recruiters from across the state and nation.

We also took several of our College of Business and College of Liberal and Fine Arts students to take a tour of USAA. They had the opportunity to learn about the financial assistance the company provides for families, military and individuals seeking retirement, and also learned about internship opportunities and networking skills. The students were also able to take a behind the scenes tour of the company's resources and benefits that are provided for their employees.



Finally, in November we held a special program for our STEM majors at iFLY. They had the opportunity to learn about the science applied in their flying experience. Additionally, they had the chance to apply their flying skills in the wind tunnel by soaring with an instructor.

As for workshops, our ambassadors are leading the charge in teaching while learning.

They have the chance to learn how to engage students as well as learning group facilitation skills. Our TRiO Ambassadors (TRiAMs) presented hour-long workshops during the fall which helped with social growth and leadership skills.

Also, we held our first ever poetry workshop, facilitated by our scholarship specialist, Taylor Kiesling. This workshop allowed advisors, staff, TRiAM Leads and students to write original poems highlighting their personal experiences about where they came from. To showcase the hard work put into the poems, Taylor made the project into a book and made a copy for each of the 18 participants, including staff.

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## The BIG Event: Adulting 101



was our second iteration of our mid-semester get together, The Big Event. This day-long institute happens once a semester where special guests and panelists come and present to all our students on how to prepare for student success.

Our theme this semester was Adulting 101. TRiO SSS students had the opportunity to attend various breakout sessions and meet with other participants.

Our speakers and panelists discussed everything from establishing good credit, to building grit and determination, and to how to be a strong candidate for grad school applications.

Because of our large program, the Ambassadors and TRiAM Leads were divided into family gathering groups where students were divided into small clusters for icebreakers and lunch. Being surrounded by a friendly environment, the TRiAMs and students were able to bond in these groups by building community.



**R.A.C.E** (Roadrunners Achieving Continuous Excellence). R.A.C.E is about celebrating student success in our TRiO program. Our Ambassadors and Leads worked accordingly to ensure that the event ran smoothly.

The Ambassadors all had different tasks such as introducing speakers and welcoming important guests. During this event we awarded the Soaring Scholar Award to one of our students, and two-time winner, Stephanie Navarette who reached over 600 program points. Additionally we celebrated our upcoming graduates and their academic achievements. We would like to thank all of our partners who attended and supported our students.



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## We love a celebration!

At SSS, we are always looking for a reason to be festive. We love to show appreciation for our amazing students, staff, and general holidays (real or made-up). This semester was full of fun and interactive activities with our students. To start it off we celebrated National Pumpkin Spice Day on the first of October where our advisors brought everything pumpkin spice such as chips, bread, cookies, and more for students to enjoy.



On November 19<sup>th</sup> one of our SSS advisors, Bethany brought hot apple cider for the students to stop by and drink on National Apple Cider Day.



During these days students were able to relax and have a good time in the office as well as update us on how their studies are coming along. On September 14<sup>th</sup> a few of the SSS students and staff came up with the brilliant idea of surprising our director John Bonner by decorating his office with sticky notes and balloons for his birthday.

During finals week, the SSS office wanted to offer students with a space to relax and provide some de-stressing activities such as learning about healthy ways to snack during while studying, board games, and the therapeutic aspect of painting.



**Friendsgiving** was our first Thanksgiving gathering. During this time students brought special dishes from different cultures and shared it with the rest of the group. It was a time full of fun, laughter, and continuous talks over accomplishments and future goals. This event was a great way to interact with the students while eating delicious food.



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For the Spring 2019 semester we are excited to announce that we will be hosting many more events for students. We are sad to announce that our Scholarship Specialist, Taylor, will no longer be working with us in the office, but on the bright side she will begin her student teaching. On an even brighter note, we would like to introduce our new scholarship specialist Carolina Cruz who will be helping our students with their writing.

Currently we plan on attending a behind the scenes tour of the San Antonio Zoo where we will learn from the marketing and conservation departments of the San Antonio Zoo. We are also looking forward to the Major Mentor Fair where our Ambassadors Leads and SSS students will have the opportunity to create and present a poster based on their major to high school students.

National TRiO Day is also coming up to celebrate, and recognize first-gen students and what their experiences in college. We will be celebrating the positive impact of our TRiO programs and reflect on the importance of the opportunities

given to the students. This day is important because it shines a light on the TRiO programs that provide access in higher education for low- income and first-generation students.

We will take a trip to the Majestic Theater for a cultural experience to watch the musical, the Sound of Music. Additionally we will take a trip to UT Health San Antonio, the Witte Museum and visit graduate school programs at Trinity and the University of the Incarnate Word. Finally, with the help of our advisor Bethany we are planning a graduate school trip to LSU and New Orleans in late May.

As for on campus events, our TRiAMs will be holding various workshops throughout the semester, from getting involved around campus to applying for research programs. The TRiAMs are also responsible for creating and promoting volunteer opportunities for our participants to get engaged with our community, as well as hosting and attending various social events on and off campus. TRiAM Leads will be hosting two informational workshops this Spring on why one should consider being a TRiO ambassador. The goal for our TRiAMs is not only be a student contact for our participants in the program, but also to be leaders in facilitating educational and social growth in our students.





Once again, we will end our semester with Roadrunners Achieving Continuous Excellence (R.A.C.E.) where we will honor our students who are graduating, look back at what we have all accomplished, and award our most active student.



In the Fall 2018 semester, we saw a leap in student participation in our program with our implementation of the 3-2-1 Program and with new workshops and social opportunities. Our 3-2-1 Program awarded students points based on their participation in our program.

Students had to attend three advisor meetings, two workshops, and the Big Event to earn the required 300 points to be considered an active participant in our program. Many of our students went above and beyond and continue to ask on how they can get additional points.

In the fall 2018 semester, we have seen more engagement and excitement than ever before. We are privileged to be working in such a great program with such wonderful students. With the addition of our TRiAM Leads we are hoping to increase the involvement of ambassadors and allow them greater opportunities of leadership. As we anticipate the spring 2019 semester with all its opportunities, we hope to continue to be engaged: engaged in our pursuit to inspire, challenge, and support our students and community.