

# EQUALITY



Jurassic World Dominion Actress **DeWanda Wise**, Senior Vice President of Sales at Comcast **Marge Jackson**, and Universal Pictures Brand Marketing Director **Henry Ong** speak with COE President **Maureen Hoyler** during the annual conference opening session, entitled "Partnership and TRIO: Lessons for the Future." Panelists discussed the importance of mentors, defying the odds as a member of an underrepresented group in a competitive industry, and how TRIO projects can collaborate with local entities to promote STEAM opportunities for students.

## IN THIS ISSUE

**Upward Bound Student  
Earns Awards, Casts Eye  
on the Future**

**COE Partners with Comcast  
NBCUniversal, Expands the  
STEAM Pipeline**

**Executive Leadership Institute  
Convenes Leaders of TRIO  
State Associations**

**Students and Mentors Grow  
Through Annual National  
Student Leadership Congress**

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022 **Star-Studded Start to Annual Conference 2022 as an Actress and Executives Wow Crowd**

This year in San Diego, from September 21-24, the Council for Opportunity in Education hosted its 41<sup>st</sup> annual conference. Beneath the theme "Opportunity Matters: Discovering Solutions, Expanding Horizons," the conference attracted more than 2,000 participants who attended virtually or in person at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront hotel.

Guest speakers included *Jurassic World Dominion* Actress **DeWanda Wise**; Senior Vice President of Sales at Comcast **Marge Jackson**, Universal Pictures Brand Marketing Director **Henry Ong**, New Mexico Attorney General **Hector Balderas**; U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary of the Office of Postsecondary Education **Nasser Paydar**, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Benefits **Julia Gusse**, and U.S. Department of State Ambassador to Malta (2012-2016) **Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley**, just to name a few.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022



Before **DeWanda Wise** was a first-generation student who attended New York University, she attended public school in Baltimore. Wise, who played helicopter pilot Kayla in Jurassic World Dominion, said, despite challenges growing up, she rarely would admit how difficult they were, even to herself.



**Marge Jackson's** ultimate message for conference participants was to accept their possibilities. She pointed to the audience, "You are the real power. It's all of you and the power of all of you who are changing lives."



TRIO alumni—Nevada Attorney General **Aaron Ford**, T-Mobile Senior National Education Administrator **Kiesha King**, University of Puerto Rico Professor **Marinilda Rivera Diaz**, Founder and Director of the Reentry Campus Program **James Monteiro**, and 2021 Achiever and Author **Sarah Smarsh**—accepted awards at the national conference in September, and all told what they accomplished with the help of TRIO.



**Henry Ong** said he spent time pitching the idea of bringing 350 TRIO students to **Universal Studios** in June. He had to make several presentations before different executives to collaborate with other parts of the company. But the weekend of the event was even better than envisioned. "It was like capturing lightning in a bottle," he said.



“Because of **Upward Bound**, we were, as a family, able to change our trajectory from field workers to broadcast executives. One of my most significant accomplishments is that I am one of eight family members in the broadcast industry,” said **Jose Luis Padilla** during his acceptance speech at the Awards Luncheon.



The 2022 recipients of COE’s highest honor, the Walter O. Mason Award, were **Trent Ball**, senior director, of postsecondary equity and attainment, Missouri College and Career Attainment Network; **Karen Keim**, director, Educational Opportunity Center and Talent Search, the University of Maine system; and **Angelica “Jeli” Vialpando** (pictured above with 2021-2022 Board Chair **Chris George**), COE’s senior vice president for program and professional development.



The TRIO Family Achievement Award honors those individuals who have changed the direction of their families through the TRIO programs. This year, a California broadcasting powerhouse, three members of the Padilla family received the award: **Jose Luis, Efren, and Elizabeth Padilla**. They all participated in **Upward Bound** at **California Lutheran University**.



With midterm elections as a backdrop, New Mexico Attorney General **Hector Balderas**, Plattsburgh (NY) Town Supervisor **Michael Cashman**, Wisconsin State Assembly District 17 Representative **Supreme Moore Omokunde** and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Benefits **Julia Gusse** shared their insights on how TRIO professionals can and must engage with policymakers at all levels to ensure the most significant outcomes for their students.

STATE LEADERSHIP

# Snapshots from the convening at the University of Kansas

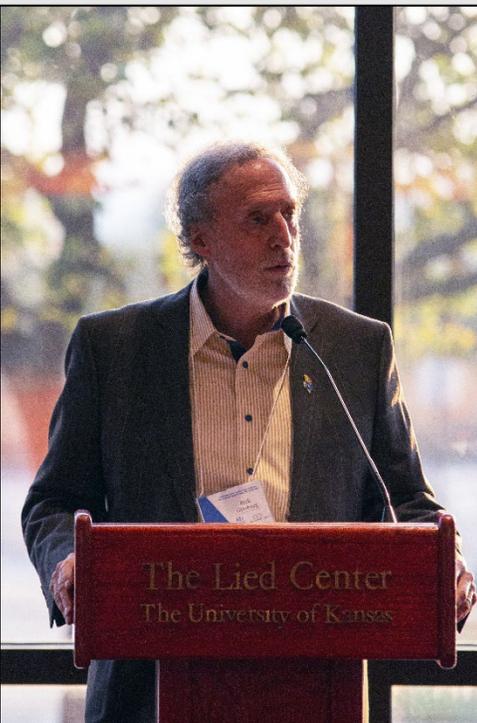
Dr. Arnold Mitchem



ELI participants pose for a photograph at Princeton University.



Kevin Hudson from Princeton's Office of the Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion introduces a graduate admissions panel.



## Executive Leadership Institute Convenes TRIO State Affiliate Association Leaders at Princeton and Kansas Universities

The 2022 Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) provided college access and success professionals with the opportunity to engage in lectures and workshops. Facilitated exercises strengthen their leadership skills at state and institutional levels.



COE's Executive Leadership Institute for College Opportunity began in October at the University of Kansas and concludes in March 2023, in Washington, DC, at the Council's Leadership Summit during the annual Policy Seminar.



During the symposium this summer, 350 TRIO students participated in interactive STEAM demonstrations, attended a college and career fair, saw an advanced film screening before its official release, experienced **Universal Studios Hollywood**, and received a free laptop computer from Comcast's Internet Essentials program.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND TRIO COE Partners with Comcast NBCUniversal, Expands the STEAM Pipeline

COE is working with Comcast NBCUniversal to address the shortage of students preparing for careers in science, technology, engineering, art, and math. A highlight of this long-standing COE-Comcast partnership was the **Jurassic World Rule Your Future STEAM Initiative**, through which 35 TRIO pre-college programs have piloted three curricula related to the film *Jurassic World Dominion* focusing on robotics and animatronics, biology and DNA, and paleontology. These



In June, *Jurassic World Dominion* Director **Colin Trevorrow**; the movie's stars **DeWanda Wise**, **Bryce Dallas Howard**, **Isabella Sermon**; co-writer **Emily Carmichael**, and paleontologist **Steve Brusatte** reflected on producing the film, emphasizing the need for more diversity in STEAM careers with TRIO students.

curricula will be available to all TRIO programs later this fall. "We are delighted to be a part of this incredible STEAM initiative," said COE President **Maureen Hoyler**. "Inspiring first-generation, college-bound students and exposing them to careers they may have never thought possible is at the core of

our mission at COE. We can't wait to see what discoveries or innovations might happen due to our students' participation in these creative learning experiences." Other businesses participating in the project include Blue Origin, Nucleus, STEM Equity Alliance, and Thermo Fisher Scientific.



# SAVE THE DATE

## COE'S POLICY SEMINAR

**March 19-22, 2023**

Hyatt Regency of Washington  
400 New Jersey Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001



COUNCIL *for* OPPORTUNITY *in* EDUCATION



**FAIR SHARE  
AUG 1-  
DEC 1  
2022**

***POWER OF PERSISTENCE (POP!) CAMPAIGN***

# **THE ROAD TO SERVE **ONE** **MILLION** STUDENTS**

Scan this code to  
make your contribution  
to **Fair Share** today.



**\$50 Donation**

**Goal: \$25K**



COE's annual **National Student Leadership Congress (NSLC)** for first-generation high school students is often described as transformational for the young people participating in the five-day experience in **Washington, D.C.**

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

## Students and Mentors Grow Through Annual National Student Leadership Congress

This year, the 33rd annual NSLC took place in mid-June and, as always, proved exciting for not only the student participants but the TRIO staff as well.

"I would encourage every TRIO professional to take this opportunity [to serve as an NSLC counselor] because it gives you a

unique chance to grow as a person and as a professional," said **Juan C. Rivera-Ramos**, a TRIO alumnus and **Talent Search** counselor at the **University of Puerto Rico's Rio Piedras** campus. Since first serving as an NSLC counselor four years ago, Rivera-Ramos states that he has learned something new every time. "It's all about the students," he said. "Counselors who attend get to be with diverse students from all over the country."

**Sydney Romero** agreed. A former TRIO student and current **Upward Bound** instructor at her alma mater, the Homestead campus of **Miami Dade College**, Romero said, "Seeing the diversity was a joy in itself, and I would encourage other professionals to be a part of that." Romero said she especially enjoyed seeing students' leadership skills grow as they

shed their roles from home. "Introverts became extroverts," she said of the students. She recalled one young man from Montana who said he doubted that at home he could be so relaxed and as much himself as he was at the NSLC, to which a new friend from New Jersey spoke up and encouraged him to try it once he got home.

Rivera-Ramos summed up his experience and those of other TRIO professionals at the NSLC. "You can work with these smart and supportive kids--students who visit the Capitol and talk with their Members of Congress, letting them know that TRIO works--and you see how they grow and transform during the process," he said. "They arrive in D.C. scared and return to their hometowns as different people. The whole experience of NSLC empowers them."



NSLC 2022 Participant **Gerardo Aguirre Remigio** (pictured center above) is a student in a hurry. The 16-year-old **Upward Bound** participant, a rising senior at Woodburn High School in **Woodburn, Oregon**, has a lot he wants to accomplish.

#### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Upward Bound Student Earns Awards, Casts Eye on the Future

During the school year, in addition to a demanding academic schedule, including three International Baccalaureate courses, **Gerardo Aguirre Remigio** works as a supervisor at Dairy Queen, runs track, and finds time to volunteer in the community. This past summer, Aguirre Remigio attended two student leadership events in Washington, DC: COE's **National**

**Student Leadership Congress (NSLC)** and **Close Up**. He is volunteering for a local K-4 summer school in his district and taking a college-level writing course at **Chemeketa Community College**, which hosts his **Upward Bound** program. He has won awards, including Student of the Year in the Oregon Title IC Migrant Education program and top student in his Woodburn High academy, the Academy of International Studies. He maintains a 4.17-grade point average. In addition to all of this, he will be the first in his family of immigrants from **Michoacan, Mexico**, to attend college.

"I always prioritize academics because of my upbringing," Gerardo says. "My family always said, 'School comes first.'" His **Upward Bound** Director **Lino Solomon** describes Gerardo as an "awesome student" who takes advantage of every opportunity and never missed an activity in his first two years at **Upward Bound**.

"I have been putting in extra work ever since I started school. I try not to let opportunities go to waste," agrees Gerardo. He applied to NSLC because "I'm pretty shy when meeting new people...I was trying to work on that and interact with others, networking and making connections." The NSLC experience, which included mock debates and a meeting with his Member of Congress, "educated" him. "I was able to learn so much that I was able to bring back to my community. It was a blast." How has **Upward Bound** helped him? "It is an amazing community where we have created a bond. It is nice to know that you have a community of those like you who can reach out to and ask questions."

Gerardo plans to study architecture and minor in business. He worked with his father in construction, including the renovation of their family home, and he saw how happy the successful project made his mother. "It was the realization of a dream. I want to give the same thing my mother felt to others while pursuing my passions," he says.



COE and its partner institutions, [ECHO](#) and [The Hague University of Applied Sciences \(THUAS\)](#), hosted 15 TRIO college students for the summer program from June 25 until July 16.

## STUDENT OPPORTUNITY 2022 Keith Sherin Global Leaders Return to In-Person Travel to Study Diversity and Inclusion, Student Empowerment, and Sustainability in the Netherlands

Although halted temporarily by the global pandemic, COE and international partners have offered study abroad programs in South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Spain since 2000. This summer's event constituted the second partnership in the Netherlands.

The 2022 summer program began by immersing students in an introduction to the multiethnic culture of the Netherlands. They

discussed the Dutch educational system, student empowerment, and cultural capital while living in a small village in northern Holland near the coastal dunes. Then, the group traveled to The Hague, the seat of government for the Netherlands, where they met other international students enrolled at The Hague Summer School and took classes in global migration, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and blockchain technology.

Students participated in community service efforts and visited local tourist sites, including museums and Amsterdam's famed canals. During a free weekend, the group explored neighboring Dutch cities, and some took trains to Berlin and Paris.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### LaJaun Willis, UX Researcher at Google



As a user experience researcher at **Google**, TRIO Alumnus **LaJaun Willis** researches the problems and needs of people who use various tech products. He also creates new experiences to meet the needs of companies.

TRIO has been a source of many opportunities and a provider of resources that led me to become a User Experience researcher at **Google**. I first became part of TRIO through the **McNair Scholars** program at the **University of North Dakota**. There, I got my first opportunity to research whatever I wanted. The **McNair** program showed me how fun research can be and taught me the skills to succeed in higher education. For me, TRIO became much more than an educational opportunity program as time passed. It created multiple support systems that I did not initially have in college. The other **McNair Scholars**, my mentor, and the TRIO staff helped create a sense of belonging and psychological safety, especially in environments where others disrespect your culture and

values. Even today, I still refer to myself as a **McNair Scholar** because I still use those skills regularly to push through adverse situations.

STEAM fields are necessary for TRIO students to consider because they hold important roles and positions where people build our communities. Many marginalized groups have little say in constructing our communities, technology, and other resources. As a result, we do not experience the full benefit of these things. These issues need attention in multiple ways, but I have found that once you become one of the builders, engineers, and researchers, you get many opportunities to influence processes and systems to make them more inclusive and create opportunities for marginalized communities. However, students need to balance their experiences with humanities and social sciences. This balance encourages us to learn from our mistakes and build a better tomorrow.

Every time I run into TRIO alumni, they smile at the mention of TRIO because of its impact on their lives. We are a group of individuals who believe in TRIO's mission and want to continue seeing it impact people's lives. Now that we have made it into these spaces, we can create opportunities for other marginalized and underrepresented people trying to create similar successes.



At the time of her entry into the **Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)** system in **Maine, Annaliese Jakimides** was 47. Her two oldest children were in college, and her youngest was still at home, and her husband had just left them on a 40-acre plot in the woods on a dirt road in Northern Maine. They had lived there for 25 years, mostly without running water, sometimes without electricity, and growing all the food they ate.

#### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### **Annaliese Jakimides, Author**

After my family and I had to leave the place we called our home, I knew that if only I could figure out a way in and through college, a degree would be the ticket that prevented us from becoming homeless—a genuine possibility, it seemed.

Here were the obstacles: no income, no savings, losing a house (rural, small town, in the woods), divorce, children on the cusp of launching into the world, a car with 250,000+ miles on the odometer, no family to turn to—my mother and father had both passed, and my only sibling was a heroin addict in a distant city. I also felt too old.

And yet here I am now, at 73, proof of how powerful it is to have others believe in your

possibilities. For me, that was the **Maine Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC)**.

EOC was always a light shining in the dark. MEOC helped me negotiate the finances and applications and answered questions whenever I had them. They always made me feel that I could do this and always left me with a sense of my value, no matter the choices I made—including when I had a soft-money, short-term job at the university with which I could take a free course, and I chose Dance. I later enrolled in **Vermont College** and in 1997 earned a bachelor's degree in English.

Today I am a freelance writer who facilitates life conversations and discussions through the lens of books and teaches workshops about writing, parenting, vegetarian life, and life in general.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT:

## The Barrio Logan Upward Bound Program: Developing Student Leaders and Graduates

When Cecilia Carbajal was a math teacher in Los Angeles, she argued with school administrators about why the school was not doing more for students. Soon she stopped arguing and rolled up her sleeves. Carbajal went from teaching to directing an **Upward Bound Math-Science** program at the **University of Southern California**. Now she's running the **Upward Bound** program at San Diego's **Barrio Logan College Institute**. "I have been doing what I love to do for 15 years," Carbajal said.

Carbajal is Mexican and grew up in South Central Los Angeles. She is humbled by the barriers some of her students face, which include homelessness. "I listen to their stories, and I have nothing on them," she said. "But even if they are strong students, unless you give them support and guidance about what to do, they cannot get to college. We need to guide them to go to universities," she said. She cites a promising recent graduate with a high average, three siblings, and a single mom who depended upon him for help at home. The family had no idea how to assist him in applying to universities. That is where the **Upward Bound** program came in. "He's attending UCLA in the fall," Carbajal said proudly.



The **Barrio Logan College Institute** is a community-based college preparatory organization that provides various after-school programs that begin in the third grade. The **Upward Bound** program serves 60 students who attend King-Chavez Community High School, a charter school with a primarily Hispanic, low-income student population.

She and her staff, which includes a coordinator and two part-time academic mentors, work hard to keep their high school students' graduation rate at 95 percent or above. The program also encourages students to mentor younger students at the Institute. "I believe in student leadership," Carbajal said. Expecting students to set the example for those in lower grades develops leadership qualities and creates positive peer pressure among all the

students to attend every class and study hard. "They have to help each other out," she said. And they do, with the help of the **Upward Bound** program, newly renewed for another five years. This year, the high school graduation rate of the students in her program is 100 percent. "It is hard," she admitted. "But we have a lot to celebrate. And we are grateful."