

EQUALITY



Rep. Gwen Moore tells her own first-gen story on the U.S. House floor.

#CELEBRATEFIRSTGEN Centering First-Gen Voices

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Institutions and agencies nationwide celebrated First-Generation College Celebration Day on Monday, November 8. Members of Congress joined in the celebration this year by introducing bipartisan, bicameral resolutions to recognize the November 8 celebration. TRIO alumna Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) was joined by fellow Congressional TRIO Caucus Co-Chair Representative Mike Simpson (R-ID) in leading the effort in the House of Representatives. Meanwhile, TRIO alumnus Reverend Raphael Warnock (D-GA) rallied several fellow Senators, including fellow

first-generation college graduate Roger Marshall (R-KS) to introduce a corresponding resolution in the Senate. (The full list of co-sponsors for the House and Senate resolutions may be found online.)

To kick the celebration day off, COE and NASPA’s Center for First-Generation Student Success hosted a panel discussion featuring first-generation college students and alumni at all stages of the journey – from current students to college leaders. Featured speakers tackled imposter syndrome and questions such as who is responsible for enhancing the sense of belonging: the student, or the institution? A Lunch and Learn the following day focused on what institutions can do differently and demonstrated that campuses have come a long way, but still have much more to do. Panelists collectively determined that it’s on the institution to help students feel welcome. They talked about how their professional spaces enhance their senses of belonging, what they wish they’d known before starting college and how they approached seeking help and advice they’d give to other first-generation students.



In September, during a plenary session at the annual conference, experts discussed key research questions and values that guide the Pell Institute.

PELL INSTITUTE
**Awarded \$50,000
 Grant from Gates
 Foundation**

The Pell Institute received a \$50,000 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the Institute's Students as Partners research. Students as Partners refers to collaboratively working with students to achieve specific learning and research outcomes.

The Pell Institute is excited to receive these funds to support several research projects that rely on a Students as Partners approach. These projects include exploring equitable career pathways for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students; embedding equity within the Pell Institute's Evaluation Toolkit; and supporting the Pell Institute's

internship program. With these funds, the Pell Institute will financially support students as they collaborate on Pell projects.

A major takeaway from the session in September was the historic and vital role Pell Institute partners have played to aid Pell's mission in addressing major higher education equity questions. Its partner approach with practitioners and students assists its research effort to yield powerful insights for policymakers, TRIO programs, and other leaders. The Pell Institute works to identify and support best practices within TRIO, and to give a voice to low-income, first-generation students, and the professionals working with them — many of whom have similar lived experiences.



The Institute conducts and disseminates research and policy analysis to inform policymakers, educators, and the public.



TRIO Upward Bound students at Northeastern Illinois University engaged in teaching underwater robotics, cultural experiences, and biodiversity exploration in Puerto Rico.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Puerto Rico STEAM Leadership Academy

During a week-long program, ten high school students participated in a STEAM Leadership Academy. They led underwater, remotely operated vehicles, and held robotics workshops with high school participants of the University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras TRIO Upward Bound program.

These students also had the opportunity to engage in cultural immersion sessions, peer-to-peer networking, and a final presentation to top government officials in Puerto Rico. Listen to remarks from the Governor of Puerto Rico here: <https://youtu.be/1KRK54esAAY>



Director of STEAM Pathways Aaron Cortes facilitates a discussion with students.



Students review instruction guides while assembling robots.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

“TRIO Kid” Marcia Chatelain Reflects on Winning Pulitzer



Marcia Chatelain
Professor of History, Georgetown University

Historian, best-selling author, and Pulitzer Prize winner Marcia Chatelain spoke at the opening

plenary session of COE’s 40th Anniversary Conference on September 12 in Atlanta. In her inspirational speech, she reflected on her experiences as one of just two black women to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize, which she won this year for her book, *Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America*. She also spoke of being a first-generation student, the importance of becoming a McNair Scholar, and the inspiration of women of color to help show her the way.

Referring to herself as “a TRIO kid all grown up,” Chatelain, who teaches history at Georgetown University, showed the audience pictures of her McNair Scholar class, and said it was one of the first times she was a member of a multiracial group of first-generation college students. And yet, through high school and college, she had only one black

teacher. Then, while pursuing graduate study at Brown University, Ruth Simmons – an African American woman – became the university’s president.

The road she has traveled as a former TRIO student is part of why she gets excited about telling her students at Georgetown that she, too, was the first generation.

And, as for the Pulitzer? What means the most about the award, Chatelain said, “isn’t because I think that there’s something extraordinary about me, but it is now eligible to a black girl who’s thinking about becoming a writer or a historian. That is the real gift of these moments. The recognition is not a signal that the struggle has ended, but the recognition is to say that a new set of possibilities have been initiated.”

A promotional graphic for National TRIO Day. The background is a blue-tinted image of a woman holding a sign that says "TRUTH UPWARD BOUND WORKS". In the top left, the COE logo is displayed with the text "COUNCIL for OPPORTUNITY in EDUCATION". The date "Saturday, February 26, 2022" is written in white. The main text "MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR NATIONAL TRIO DAY!" is in large, bold, yellow and white letters. At the bottom, it says "Share your TRIO Day activities using #NationalTRIODay".

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STEAM Clubs for Jurassic World: Dominion

The Council for Opportunity in Education, Internet Essentials from Comcast, and NBCUniversal invite your students to join our STEAM clubs offering new curricula themed in connection with the upcoming new Jurassic movie *Jurassic World: Dominion*.

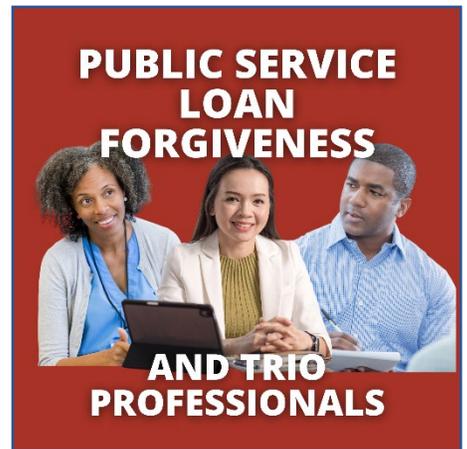
Here's an opportunity to use the exciting science of Jurassic World to engage your TRIO students in real-world projects based on paleontology, animatronics, genetics, and DNA, and more! Each club must engage at least ten students in curricula for five 2-hour sessions.

Twenty TRIO projects will be selected for participation during Winter and Summer 2022. Select participants will be able to attend the Comcast Jurassic STEAM Symposium to showcase their projects in June 2022.

For pre-college youth in grades 9 through 12:

- Selected projects will receive supplemental funding to support their project.
- Contact Nicole Norfles at nicole.norfles@coenet.org for more information.

[Apply here](#) before December 20.



STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

LEARN MORE AT COENET.ORG



McNair Scholars at the University of Kansas pose for a photograph before the pandemic.



THE PELL INSTITUTE SEEKS PAPERS
Submit an abstract about your research related to TRIO.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

McNair Scholars Measure the Impact of COVID on Mental Health

Three sets of McNair Scholars are attempting to measure the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of students, particularly those enrolled in TRIO. As several studies are not entirely done yet, the conclusions are preliminary. But at least one study offered unexpected insights.

Those less-expected, preliminary conclusions are from the research of Roman Austin Ruiz. He is a McNair Scholar and junior majoring in computer science and elementary education at the University of Kansas. He surveyed 85 students and will continue to collect data from a total of 125 participants for his research on TRIO students' feelings of well-being before, during, and after COVID. Ruiz

used Diener's temporal satisfaction with life scale, a short, five-item scale designed to measure feelings of well-being. While his research is not yet completed - especially since the pandemic is not yet over - he reported some interesting observations.

TRIO students reported that before the pandemic, they were moderately satisfied with their lives. During COVID, much-experienced loneliness and isolation, but some students enjoyed higher degrees of autonomy. Overall, there was a statistically significant drop in life satisfaction during the pandemic. However, when the pandemic appeared to be over and many restrictions were lifted, Ruiz surveyed a smaller sample of students who reported that they were more satisfied with their lives than they experienced before COVID.



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T. Chris George and Sari Byerly hug at the Installation of Officers in Atlanta.

40TH ANNIVERSARY Stories of Impact

“COE knows what it’s doing and gets the job done. I don’t think we would have been anywhere near that success without the vision of **Dr. Mitchem** and **Maureen Hoyler** and their making us a bipartisan program. We don’t have a partisan issue. Democrat or Republican: I’m down with whoever is down with TRIO.

This group of programs that started in the 1960s with the War on Poverty wouldn’t be where they are without COE’s vision, mission, and organizing in the 1980s. We’re a tiny lobby in the grand scheme of things, but we’re low-hanging fruit that can probably get pulled quickly in appropriation discussions. TRIO

professionals and students need to understand that in COE, they have a powerful lobby in DC with a track record to prove it.”

— **T. Chris George**, COE Board Chair and Director of Student Support Services at Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College

“TRIO would not exist without COE. I 100% believe that. We would not exist in our current form or probably at all.

The support COE gives on advocacy is hands down, probably the number one benefit. The other is grant writing. If you do not write a good grant, your community does not continue to be served. I have analyzed other grant-funded programs, and no other organization provides COE’s support and grant-writing coaching.

COE stays rooted in the communities that it serves. We are a very diverse country; we have territories and regions with an entire-time zone difference in their communities. COE takes all those voices into account. Every single person that’s connected to a TRIO program is COE. You stay relevant because you’re not just the staff of 10-20 people. The staff help push things forward. But the community is COE.

I feel honored to be part of this organization, to be able to do the work I do with TRIO. Being part of COE is the reason I get up every morning, even on the hard days.”

— **Sari Byerly**, past COE Board Chair and Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at Idaho State University

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Book Clubs as Vehicles for TRIO Student and Program Empowerment

Thousands of TRIO students this year explored the legacy of the late civil rights icon **Representative John Lewis** (D-GA) by reading and discussing his books in COE's "Good Trouble Book Club."

This summer, students heard from U.S. Department of Education Secretary **Miguel A. Cardona**; COE President Emeritus **Dr. Arnold Mitchem**; First Justice of the Franklin/Hampshire Juvenile Court (Massachusetts), the

Honorable James Collins; Comcast's Senior Manager for Employee Engagement and Partnerships, **Mr. Fernando Cárdenas**; Thurgood Marshall College Fund President **Dr. Harry Williams**, and U.S. Congresswoman **Gwendolyn Moore**. The latter three speakers are themselves alumni of the Federal TRIO Programs.

Deborah Norcross, coordinator for the COE book club, shares that book clubs are powerful vehicles for building students' reading comprehension, critical thinking, and discussion skills while deepening and broadening their understanding of topics that matter to them. Building the groups, however, requires patience, time, and sometimes a little luck.

Joshua Engler, who serves as the Education Specialist for **Upward Bound** at **Boise State University**, and **Jackasha Wiley**, who serves as the **Upward Bound** Director at **Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey**, discussed how they have grown successful clubs over the years with local leader involvement that enhances students' experience.

When it comes to selecting books, Engler advises professionals to be intentional about the students' outcomes and know what matters to them most. He reads books in their entirety and allows time to get approval for them if they're controversial. He says he has read five times as many books as he's used to. Wiley agrees and even suggests expanding clubs to include the parents of participating students.

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