

EQUALITY



On October 1, 2023, Kimberly Jones assumed the presidency of the Council for Opportunity in Education.

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Embracing the Season of Reset and Renewal: Our Community's 2023 Achievements and Initiatives

By Kimberly A. Jones

In many ways, autumn is a time of contradiction. Many of us – whether as educators, students, or parents – find ourselves diving headfirst into the busyness of the back-to-school season. Yet, at the same time, autumn is also a time of reset and renewal. We celebrate the accomplishments of seasons past and set new goals for the season ahead. We, as a

TRIO community, have much to celebrate, as illustrated by the features in this quarterly edition of *Equality*.

In this issue, we also highlight upcoming changes to the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid**, which will be known as the "Better FAFSA"; our work to help low-income students and families obtain broadband access through our **TRIO Gets Connected** initiative; preparations for the **2023 First-Generation College Celebration Day** this November, and more! In these brief pages, I hope you find words and images that will inspire you during this busy season of reset and renewal.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023



The Chair's reception honored COE's immediate past president, **Maureen Hoyler**, on her retirement. **University of Nevada-Las Vegas** Director of College Programs **Kyle Ethelbah** is pictured here with colleagues **Dawn Blue Sky-Hill** of the **University of New Mexico** and **Mioshia Wagoner** of **Haskell Indian Nations University** presenting Maureen with a quilt, among other gifts.



Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Isabel Wilkerson** delivered a powerful keynote address at the 2023 Annual Conference, discussing the deep-rooted issues of caste and discrimination in America, drawing parallels with historical events, and emphasizing the collective responsibility to address and rectify these systemic challenges.



Before his political career, **Rep. Steven Horsford (D-NV-04)** founded the Culinary Training Academy, aiding numerous Nevadans in securing well-paying positions in the hospitality industry, eventually becoming Nevada's first African American Majority Leader in the State Senate and the first African American to represent the state in Congress. He credited his TRIO experience for empowering his voice and self-advocacy.



COE presented the 2023 TRIO Family Achievement Award to **President Surangel S. Whipps Jr. and First Lady Valerie Ngereblung Remengesau Whipps** of the **Republic of Palau**, who both participated in the **Upward Bound** program at **Palau Community College**.



Public and private sector employers are essential for students' success. **Miguel Cambray**, Vice President of Global Philanthropy at **JPMorgan Chase**, emphasized the importance of providing student support services and promoting diversity and change within employers. Cambray's experience of growing up in poverty on Chicago's south side underscores the significance of these efforts.



The Walter O. Mason Award stands as the pinnacle of recognition bestowed by the Council. The 2023 award winners are **Jeffrey Kahlden** (pictured left), director, Grant Management Services for Student Success at **Dallas College**; **Antonio C. Stephens** (pictured right), director, TRIO Center of Excellence, **Saint Augustine's University** in Raleigh, NC; and **Dolores Gomez** (pictured center), director, Student Support Services-Teacher Prep, **Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi**.



It isn't enough for TRIO students to have a successful experience in college. They need to connect their educational experience with a thriving career. College-to-Career plenary panelist **Courtney McBeth** (pictured left), senior vice president and chief program officer at **Strada Education** is pictured above with co-panelist **Darren Jackson** (pictured right), founder and chair of **All In Milwaukee**.



Current and former COE board members pose for a photo during a special networking reception before the highly anticipated annual conference.

STATE INITIATIVES

Snapshots from the convening at Johns Hopkins University



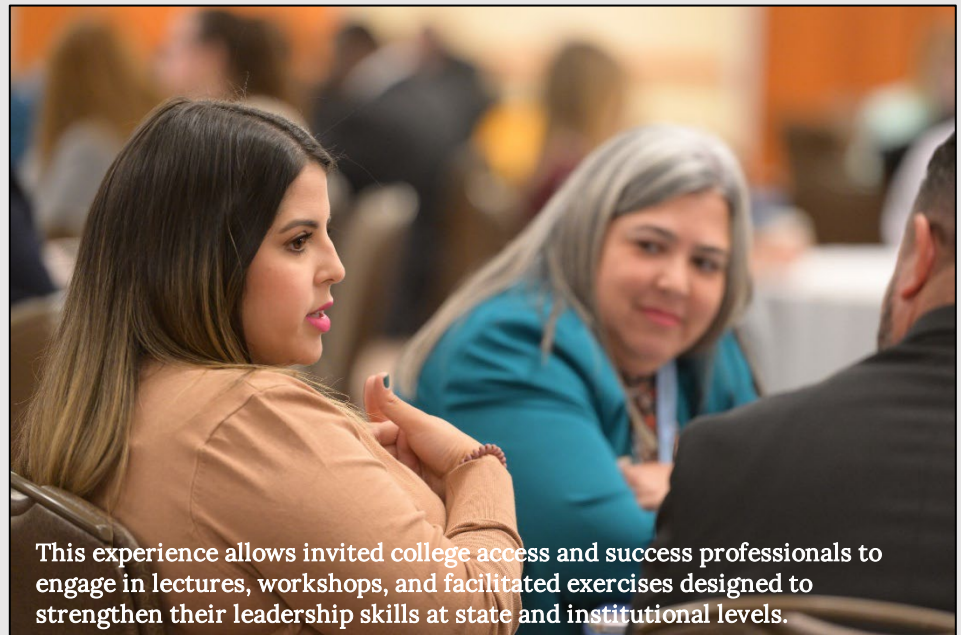
Dr. Arnold Mitchem



Jackasha Wiley and Holly Lawrence



ELI participants pose for a photograph at Johns Hopkins University.



This experience allows invited college access and success professionals to engage in lectures, workshops, and facilitated exercises designed to strengthen their leadership skills at state and institutional levels.

A Convening of TRIO State Leaders

The 2023 Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) offered college access and success professionals a unique platform for participating in informative lectures and hands-on workshops. Through guided exercises, participants honed their leadership abilities, focusing on impact at both state and institutional levels.



Sam Blanco III is the 2023-24 Chair of the COE Board of Directors.

COE's Executive Leadership Institute for College Opportunity began in October at **Johns Hopkins University** and concludes in March 2024 in Washington, DC, at the Council's Leadership Summit during the annual **Policy Seminar**.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

FIRST GEN: A Memoir Igniting Conversations on Social Mobility and Equity in Education

By Alejandra Campoverdi



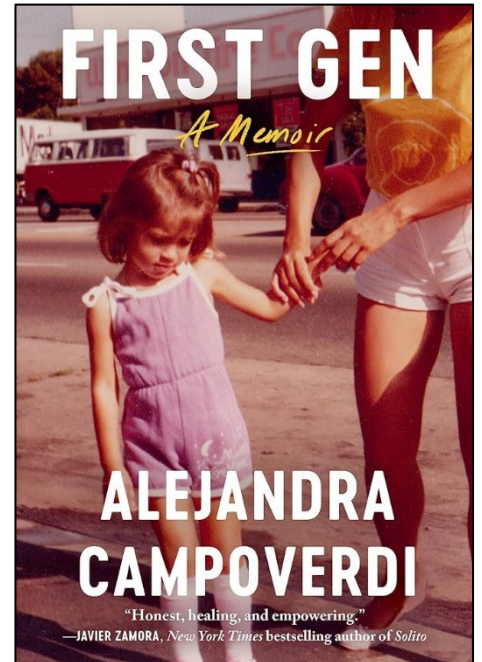
“FIRST GEN” is technically a memoir, but it’s also more than that. It’s a broad examination of the emotional toll of social mobility on first-generation young people, using my own story as a frame.

I could not be more humbled and honored that COE selected “FIRST GEN” as its 2024 Opportunity Matters Book Club book selection. The work you’re doing with TRIO and with the Council for Opportunity in Education to advance equity in education could not be more critical, and I hope “FIRST GEN” will ignite conversations in your classrooms and on your campuses.

I also hope to visit some of your campuses next year and participate in these critical conversations. In many ways, I wrote “FIRST GEN” for your students. I hope reading the book

will help them feel more seen, validated in their experiences, and less alone.

Until then, happy reading.



COE invites TRIO programs and individuals to register their local book club chapters and participate in the 2024 **book club here**





SAVE THE DATE

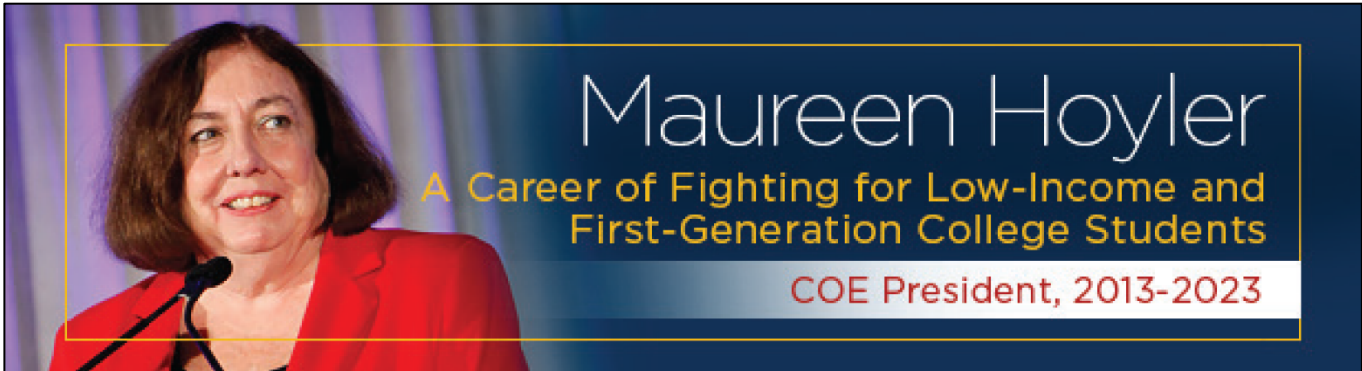
COE'S POLICY SEMINAR

March 17-20, 2024

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



COUNCIL *for* OPPORTUNITY *in* EDUCATION



Join Us in Celebrating 42 Years of Transformative Leadership!

In honor of Maureen Hoyler’s remarkable 42 years of service, the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) invites you to participate in our special fundraising campaign. Help us recognize the retirement of our esteemed President and leave a lasting impact on the future of educational equity for first-generation and low-income students and students with disabilities.

Donate \$42 to Commemorate Maureen’s Legacy

Maureen’s journey began at Marquette University, where she discovered her passion for empowering others through education. From her early days as a work-study student to her role as President of COE, she has been a tireless advocate for TRIO students, touching the lives of millions.



Empowering Leaders, Changing Lives

Under Maureen’s visionary leadership, COE achieved significant milestones that transformed the lives of countless students:

- **Secure Funding for TRIO Programs:** Maureen’s efforts led to five-year grant funding cycles for TRIO programs, ensuring stability and expanding their impact.
- **Protecting TRIO Funding:** In a historic bipartisan victory, COE successfully defended against attempts to cut \$60 million from TRIO funding.
- **First-Generation College Celebration:** Maureen pioneered the celebration of first-gen students and faculty, fostering a supportive environment on campuses nationwide.
- **Empowering Students through Initiatives:** COE launched multiple student-focused initiatives, benefiting over 800,000 underrepresented students annually.

Help Us Continue Maureen’s Legacy

Maureen’s dedication to educational equity will resonate within TRIO programs and COE for years to come. By donating \$42, you contribute to the future of educational opportunities for students in need.





COE will provide assistance, insights, and community efforts to facilitate FAFSA completion and encourage participation in their educational initiatives. This will culminate in a **December 13** webinar on navigating the new FAFSA process and achieving successful submissions.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Open the Link to FAFSA Success: Your Journey Begins Now!

Do you know the “Better” FAFSA will be released in **December**? Why wait until December to conquer this revamped process? COE is here to awaken and incite your journey, conquer challenges, and coach you through the imminent “Better” FAFSA release. **Institutional members can access recordings of our 4-part “Better” FAFSA webinar series.** In these sessions, we unravel complex terms like “contributor” and “consent,” smoothing the

new process to support FAFSA completion. Uncover the essential first steps to create the FSA ID, the critical key for providing FAFSA completion assistance to your TRIO participants.

The FSA ID opens the gateway to FAFSA completion success, but how is it done? How long does it take? Who is required to create an FSA ID? In the recording from our second installment of the four-part series, we delve into these pivotal questions, providing insight into key terms and processes. During this engaging session, we ensure you can provide FSA ID completion guidance before the December release.

This autumn, leave the fear behind. It is not scary when you join COE, as we invite you to join

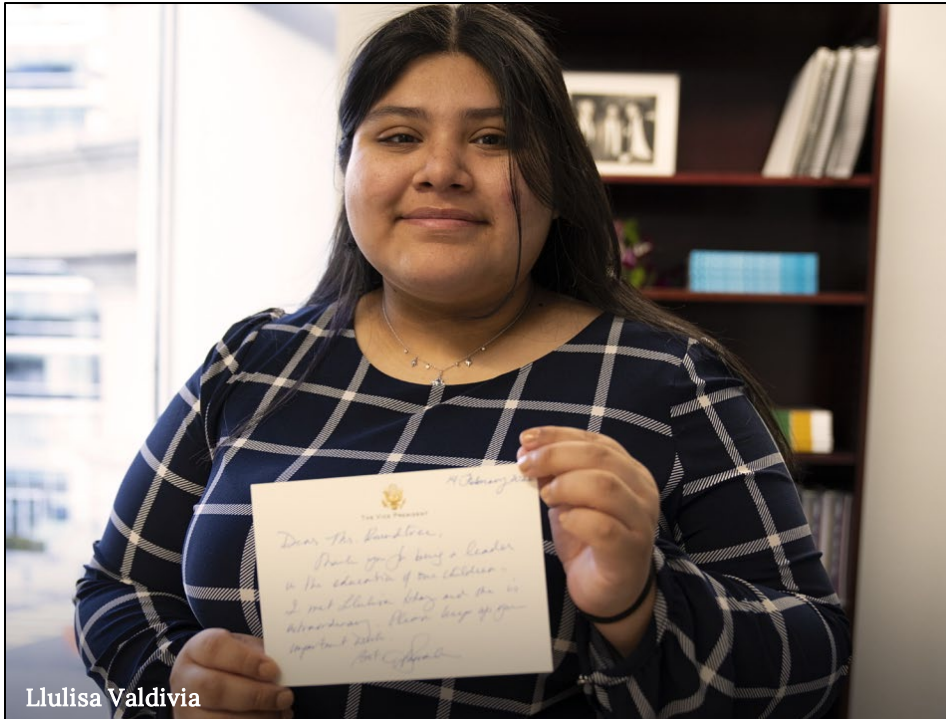
a supportive community effort to address challenges. Whether you operate in rural areas or serve adults with prior FAFSA completion experience, the third installment aims to partner with you in providing ideas for successful new FAFSA sessions for your TRIO program participants. We will also present an exclusive preview of the latest FAFSA updates as they are released.

Then, come December, let COE guide your progress. Curious about the essential components of a successful FAFSA workshop? On **December 13**, we’ll share insights on addressing unforeseen challenges in this new process, navigating IRS and ISIR data, and achieving FAFSA completion success. We aim to lead you to a successful submission summary page. Embark on your journey to FAFSA mastery with COE today and register for any of the upcoming FAFSA webinars here.

To further enhance your FAFSA journey, contact **Woodrow Lewis, Jr.**, COE's director of college initiatives, at woodrow.lewis@coenet.org or **Nicole Norfles**, COE's director of program practice and innovation, at nicole.norfles@coenet.org.

With their extensive expertise, they can address your specific inquiries.

Hopefully, the “Better” FAFSA provides additional support to participants. COE is here to provide TRIO-specific guidance on the process, and we welcome your participation.



Llulisa Valdivia

The **Affordable Connectivity Program** is a transformative initiative that addresses the digital divide and creates opportunities for TRIO participants. Join the millions of Americans bridging the gap and harnessing the power of connectivity and **learn more here**.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Affordable Connectivity Helped Pave the Way: My Journey as the First College Student in My Family

By Llulisa Valdivia

I'm on the path to becoming the first collegegoer in my family, and it's a journey I intend to pave for those who will follow.

Last year, I had the incredible privilege of introducing Vice President Kamala Harris, who has made a monumental impact on

families like mine through the **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**.

Before the pandemic, we didn't think of internet access as a necessity. But when online schooling became our reality, it became clear that we couldn't do without it. We needed the internet for education to keep up with our studies.

It was my oldest brother who introduced us to Internet Essentials, a program that was a game-changer for our family. He'd already applied and gotten it for his daughter. We filled out the application, which took less than 10 minutes, and within two days, we had reliable internet at home. I shudder to think of how challenging college applications would have been without

Internet Essentials. I still vividly remember the feeling of sending off my application and the agonizing wait for a response, even though it was only a month. When I received my acceptance letter from my first-choice college, I immediately called my mom. Her pride and joy were palpable.

Looking forward, I aspire to become an immigration lawyer, a career that resonates deeply with my family's history. Their journey to a new land was fraught with risk, yet they persevered. My aunts and uncles worked tirelessly to make it happen, and I'm determined to honor their sacrifices.

My mom has big plans for me, and I'm committed to meeting her expectations. Her dreams for me are my motivation to keep striving for greatness.

This story underscores the transformative power of education and how it can change the course of not just one life but an entire family's future. It's proof that connectivity can break barriers and open doors to a brighter tomorrow.

I may be the first, but I'm dedicated to ensuring I won't be the last in my family to embark on this incredible journey.

Llulisa Valdivia, an Internet Essentials customer since freshman year of high school, currently attends Neumann University. She is an alumna of the University of Pennsylvania TRIO Upward Bound program.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

The 2023 National First-Generation College Celebration and this TRIO Upward Bound Alumna's Inspiring Career Journey



Leticia Silva's journey is a powerful testament to the potential and success of first-generation college students.

COE and the Center for First-generation Student Success proudly announce the annual First-Generation College Celebration Day 2023, which continues to raise the national profile of first-generation college students.

This year, the focus is on the inspiring career trajectories of

first-generation graduates who have risen to senior leadership positions in some of the world's most renowned companies.

Among the distinguished panelists, we are honored to introduce TRIO alumna Leticia Silva, who participated in the TRIO Upward Bound program at St. Olaf College.

Leticia's journey began when she joined the Minnesota Twins as an intern in 1998.

Over the years, she made her mark within the organization, ascending to Senior Vice President of Human Resources in January 2021.

In her current role, Leticia oversees the Twins' human resources department, encompassing various talent acquisition, organizational and employee development, compensation, benefits, diversity and inclusion, HRIS, employee relations, and administrative services.

Leticia Silva's success story is a testament to the potential and excellence of first-generation college students.

*Join us for a simulcast of the virtual panel on **Thursday, November 2**, or **Wednesday, November 8**, as we celebrate remarkable individuals like Leticia, who inspire the next generation of first-generation students to reach new heights in their careers and beyond. [Register here](#)*

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

How One Upward Bound Program Encouraged Dialogue Between TRIO Students and Law Enforcement Using Role Play

By Kate Robins



"The real onus will be ensuring we stay committed to the goal and working together as a community. We no longer believe that policing is just arresting someone. It's committing to preventing crime by investing in our community itself," Buffalo Police Chief Tommy Champion said.

After the tragic murder of George Floyd in 2020, Don Patterson, director of the TRIO Upward Bound program at Buffalo State University, initiated a conversation with Steve Nichols, the then-captain of Community Policing in the Buffalo, New York Police Department (Nichols is now retired).

They explored ways to help students understand the perspectives and behaviors of people from diverse backgrounds during various encounters. Nichols proposed a Community

Policing training program where students and police could switch roles in role-playing scenarios to foster social capital and mutual understanding.

Patterson, Nichols, and **Buffalo Police Chief Tommy Champion** discussed the importance of mutual understanding, a concept rooted in the principles of **Sir Robert Peel**, the "father of British policing" from the 19th century. Nichols emphasized that a police department should reflect its community, enhancing trust and familiarity.

Chief Champion urges TRIO professionals to consider the perspectives and experiences that come into play during a police call. During a role-play, you can gain insight into the complexities of police encounters. The scenarios highlight the challenges and potential risks officers face during traffic stops. Nichols emphasized that police training in Buffalo includes programs like **Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents** and an understanding of **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)** to better respond to diverse situations.

Champion and Nichols quickly acknowledge that historically, "police have not been on the right side of justice." Today, they partner with district attorneys to create programs for first-time offenders. The programs provide mentorship and links to essential services.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

2023 National TRIO Achievers Inspire with Extraordinary Success Stories

The 2023 National TRIO Achievers made the Educational Opportunity Dinner an inspiring event, showcasing TRIO programs' essential role in student success. Recipients included **Cheryl L. Johnson**, former U.S. House of Representatives Clerk; **James T. Brett**, president and CEO of the **New England Council**; **Fernando Cárdenas**, director at Comcast; **Lesia Crumpton-Young**, past president of **Texas Southern University**, and **Ruben Canedo**, co-chair of the **University of California Systemwide Basic Needs Committee**.

Cheryl L. Johnson (pictured *second from left*), expressing gratitude for her recognition, commended the audience for their work in improving the lives of teenagers in cities like Washington, D.C. She emphasized the value of investing in education, urging advocates to highlight TRIO programs' impact to **Congress** compared to taxpayer dollars spent on juvenile detention facilities.

James T. Brett (pictured *far right*) humorously acknowledged his

elder status among the Achievers, encouraging his fellow honorees to celebrate their relative youth and accomplishments. He credited **TRIO Upward Bound at Boston College** with transforming his life.

Fernando Cárdenas (pictured *second from right*) shared his journey from his family working in the fields to him connecting 10 million people to the Internet at **Comcast**. He attributed his success to the **Upward Bound** program at **Fresno State**, emphasizing TRIO's role in empowering individuals to pursue education and achieve their dreams.

Ruben Canedo's (pictured *center*) research on supporting undocumented students laid the foundation for his work today, highlighting the significance of healing, disability, and transformative justice in pursuing genuine equity.

Lesia Crumpton-Young (pictured *far left*) became the first African-American woman to earn an engineering degree from **Texas A&M University**. She credited **Upward Bound** with shaping her journey to becoming a university president.

These National TRIO Achievers emphasize TRIO programs' pivotal role in promoting student success.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

How TRIO Upward Bound Helps Me Navigate a Path to Success

By Asa Watson



As a D.C. high school student from a family where no one has experienced college, I've often felt the absence of guidance compared to my peers with college-educated parents. It's a path fraught with uncertainty. However, my journey took a remarkable turn when my high school assistant principal at Ron Brown College Preparatory, Kwabena Tumaini, introduced me to the TRIO Upward Bound program at George Washington University.



Darrell Thornton (pictured front left) became director of TRIO Upward Bound at The George Washington University this June, and this summer, welcomed a new group of students, including Asa (pictured center). "Asa immediately stepped into the program with a positive attitude, leadership skills, and determination to succeed and take advantage of what the program offers," said Thornton. "I'm looking forward to introducing him as Sergeant Major of the Army!"

I was determined to pave my way towards a successful life after high school, and Upward Bound became my stepping stone. This program has been more than just support; it's been my compass, guiding me through unfamiliar academic terrain.

During the summer, I dived into a math class that covered everything from probability to functions and game theory, expanding my horizons in ways I couldn't have imagined.

My dreams led me to a career in the United States Army, with West Point Military Academy as my top choice. The George Washington University Upward Bound program strengthened my academic skills and gave me time each summer to plan for the next three years.

It's not just about graduating; it's about graduating without the burden of debt, ensuring my financial stability as I pursue my aspirations.

Beyond academics, mentorship has been crucial in my journey. Mr. Darrell Thornton, our Upward Bound director, has been a guiding force. Through this program, I've had the privilege of visiting universities like Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University and Georgia Institute of Technology, offering me a glimpse into the vast opportunities that the world of higher education holds.

TRIO Upward Bound is not just a program; it's a beacon of hope, showing students like me that our ambitions are within reach, regardless of our starting point.