Change is constant. While it can be uncomfortable, change also promotes growth. And so TRIO/Student Support Services is changing and growing.

This summer both Eve Nichols and Pauline Danforth will assume new positions at Metropolitan State University. Most recently Eve Nichols accepted the position of Coordinator of Disability Student Services, and as announced earlier this year, Pauline Danforth will be Director of Women Services.

Now, it is time for the program to accept new leadership with a new director expected to be hired this summer and a new counselor to be hired as soon as possible.

Sometime in July, TRIO students will be invited to bid goodbye to Eve as TRIO counselor. Coincidentally her new office is located two doors down from her present office, so she won’t be far.

**Student of the Month— Kim Frair**

Interview by Julia Opoti

When I started working with TRIO/SSS about four years ago, Kim Frair was one of the first student workers that I made friends with. Every afternoon, I would check in with the students that I tutored, and would meet Kim at the front desk as she worked as an assistant to the Office Manager. Kim had just got laid off at the time, and mentioned her job predicament to Pauline, who then hired her. Over the years, Kim has also worked as a TRIO mentor. In these responsibilities, she has learned how to work with different individuals.

In 2002 after a long hiatus from school, Kim decided to shop around for schools. A counselor at the Disability Rehabilitation Services suggested Metropolitan State University. After meeting with Caroline Roney (then Director of Disability Services), Kim knew that she wanted to come to school here. Her academic journey at Metropolitan has been quite challenging to say the least. With a learning disability, Kim needs special accommodations, and she is glad that the university has facilities set up to assist, unlike her experience in high school where she was left to her own devices.

As a Psychology major, Kim has found her passion in life. She would like to be a therapist for internationally adopted adults. Her dream is to have her own clinic. Being an adoptee from Korea to American parents, Kim has continually faced issues between both worlds, and would like to help other adults overcome these challenges. Kim was recently recognized and awarded a sweatshirt by the Psychology Club for her continued participation in Psychology seminars and workshops.

Kim attributes her personal growth to her mentors within the university and her life experiences as an adoptee. When Kim first came to Metro she was very shy, however, working as a TRIO mentor has allowed her to overcome this. Speaking to students on a daily basis forced her to practice her public speaking. Reading and writing have always been a challenge for Kim as she has a learning disability. She has been able, over the last four years, to overcome this hurdle with the help of some of her instructors and the Disability Services office on campus. As a returning adult student, Kim has found that the current higher education system with its support for students with disabilities has allowed her to excel academically. She was scared to return to school because of previous experiences, however, she is now proud to be an A student.

When not in school, Kim enjoys needle crafts such as cross-stitch, needle point and knitting. She also likes watching documentaries, and reading a lot of self-help books and books on Korean adoptees.

Kim, who now works in the Student Affairs office, looks forward to graduating within the next year.
TRIO Students and learning disabilities

By Pauline Danforth

Unlike many physical disabilities, learning disabilities are hidden. You can’t look at a person and know they have dyslexia or dysgraphia or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD). Yet, students with learning disabilities struggle enormously when they attempt college. Depending on their disability, sitting still in classrooms is very hard, taking notes is difficult and writing may be nearly impossible. Yet, many students with disabilities do persevere and do complete college degrees.

Oftentimes individuals with learning disabilities lead very successful lives outside of college, having adapted to their disabilities and having chosen occupations that work with their learning disabilities. For instance, generally speaking people with AD/HD do well in, and love the constant change and excitement of working in a hospital emergency room.

Many students with disabilities refrain from attending college right after high school because of their learning disabilities. After awhile, they decide it is worthwhile to struggle through college and earn that important degree.

Using pseudonyms let me describe a few TRIO students with disabilities. “Frank” worked successfully in the construction field making a good living for many years. He returned to school during an economic recession and came to the Disability Student Services Office for accommodations and joined TRIO for additional support. Like “Frank”, “John” was (and is) a successful businessman. After 20 plus years, he decided he really wanted that college degree for himself. Now he attends college part-time, works full-time and is getting accommodations from DSS and related services from TRIO/SSS.

Both of these men were and are successful outside of college. However, both felt it was important personally, more than professionally, to work toward their bachelor’s degree.

Common learning disabilities and definitions:

- **Dyslexia** impairs a person’s ability to read. The disorder varies from person to person though common characteristics include difficulty with phonological processing (the manipulation of sounds) and/or rapid visual-verbal responding.

- **Dysgraphia** causes difficulty in expressing thoughts in writing and graphing. Students have difficulty making sequences of letters and words as they write.

- **Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD)** affects children and adults and is characterized by problems with attention, impulsivity, and over activity.

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SCHOLARSHIPS

Can you afford to take classes next year? Do you have other pressing financial needs apart from school? How soon can you graduate? These are all concerns that students have as they prepare for the next school year. Fortunately, there are scholarships out there for students looking for additional monies to ease the burden of rising tuition costs. Well, nothing is really free. You have to do a little work so that you can get this free money. Follow the financial aid link on the university homepage: www.metrostate.edu. You will be asked create a profile allowing you to receive an extensive list of scholarships that you qualify for.

Another great web site www.fastweb.com asks you to fill out an extensive profile and provides you with a list of scholarships that will match your needs.

Start applying now. Several have a deadline date of June 16, 2006

If you have any questions, please call and set up an appointment with the TRIO mentors who will assist you in writing and getting the proper forms necessary to send in your applications.
TRIO AND ITS HISTORIC BATTLE AGAINST CLASSISM

By Ciana Cullens

A few months ago, TRIO counselor, Eve Nichols attended a conference that dealt with the structuring of teaching communities to secure student graduation and retention. Some of her favorite moments came from the shared stories of other TRIO directors and counselors who currently work at commuter schools. Her favorite speakers were Vincent Tinto, famous in student retention along with Paul Thayer who has been in TRIO since 1967. Although they’ve had different experiences they both share the philosophy that TRIO students deserve the best that the university has to offer and they maintain their high expectations of the students that are in TRIO, a philosophy also shared by Eve.

What seemed to excite Eve most is the continuous progress in the development of learning communities, creating an optimum educational environment. The programs are geared to promote students’ academic growth as a communal experience. Through its mentorship and tutoring programs, TRIO builds and encourages a sense of community. The program itself is a gridlock of support. When a TRIO student moves from one campus to the next, their counselor refers them to a TRIO counselor at the new school.

Eve shared this important and exciting history of the TRIO program. TRIO grew out of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, a grass roots movement that stirred the fires of Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration’s War on Poverty during the social movement era. In the turmoil of racial/ gender discrimination, an ever-present culprit of injustice was pervasive. The issue of poverty stretches across all demographic divides and is a social barrier within itself and thus the War on Poverty was declared. One of the first programs to sprout its wings was the Upward Bound program in 1964 which set out to prepare students, who were economically disadvantaged for the rigors of post-secondary education. In 1965 the Talent Search, a program directed at assisting poor youth, was birthed out of the Higher Education Act. As time went on, the effectiveness of these programs increased and the services that they offered continued to reach a wider scope of students. In 1968 Special Services for Disadvantaged Students now known as Student Support Services was founded becoming the third federal program created under the umbrella of the Higher Education Amendment that led to the program’s collective acronym TRIO. The TRIO program has continued to grow. In 1972 the Equal Opportunity Centers (EOC) was developed. Just four years later in 1976 federal Training for TRIO programs was instituted. This training encouraged and honed the proficiency of the program’s employees. In 1986, TRIO added its sixth program named after the famous African American astronaut Robert E. McNair. The program was extraordinary in its goal to help students obtain their PhD.

More strides were to be made: in 1990 a separate math/science program were derived from the Upward Bound program. In 1998 further amendments were made to the Higher Education Amendment that allowed the TRIO Dissemination Partnership program to come into fruition.

TRIO offers a continuing service to society as the economic divide between classes continues to grow. The need for support and preparation for the economically challenged has never been greater. I see TRIO producing notable leaders while maintaining its reputation of greatness for several more decades to come. Knowing how TRIO came into existence and understanding its purpose was a wonderful experience.

I hope that this information has inspired you to embrace the struggle and its predecessors as I have.

Information for this article was found in part at: http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html

MENTORSHIP WITHIN TRIO

By Ciana Cullens

The TRIO mentorship program is a remarkable service that provides a plethora of resources to the students. As a TRIO student, I can take advantage of the resources, guidance and support that mentors provide. James Edwards, a recent graduate, was a TRIO mentor.

According to James, the philosophy that governs all mentors is no matter what a mentor is doing, the student’s needs come first. The mentors are also expected to initiate contact with the student with a monthly check-in. One of the biggest obstacles he faced was trying to schedule a time to meet with the student in person.

Other responsibilities include administering the student assessments and discussing the results with the student. (James wanted to give some comfort to the students so he stated early in the conversation that all of the student files are held in the strictest confidence.) Coaching students into developing personal study habits, interpersonal skills and leadership is also included in the responsibilities of the mentors. In his application of these requirements, he always tried to address the whole person on all levels, not just academically. Mentors encourage students to attend school events and to join organizations on campus.

While the responsibilities of mentors greatly impact other students, these duties also allow personal growth and development for the mentors, who are also TRIO students. For instance, mentors are expected to conduct workshops and do power point presentations. James found that these workshops were fun and allowed him an opportunity to form friendships with the students. These things were also helpful for his academic and professional growth. James demonstrated his strong belief that being a TRIO mentor allowed him room to take risks that he may have not taken otherwise.

By working as a mentor, he was exposed to the bureaucratic side of how the university works. Knowing where to find and how to access resources on campus was very valuable to him, as well as the students that he mentored. This gathered information helped to create a fulfilling experienced during his mentoring experience. It gave him the chance to provide the student with options which can sow a seed of hope in the student. He gave an example of a scenario where a student is concerned about taking a class that the Metropolitan State University doesn’t offer. He gave the student a creative suggestion. That suggestion was to take the course at a community college and transfer it in.

He embraces TRIO’s mission to help alleviate the length and difficulty of a student’s academic career. He was emphatically passionate about his use of creative strategies to accomplish this goal. He told me it was a tragedy for him to see students on the road to something that has nothing to do with their heart. All of his efforts were directed to help the students connect learning with their heart. His belief is that education should be connected to who a person is. As we wrapped up the interview, James told me that he treasured his mentorship at TRIO as invaluable to his life’s journey, personally and academically. It seems that the saying is true about giving being a greater gift than receiving. From this interview, it seems that being a mentor offers many great rewards.