

TRIO FALL NEWSLETTER

2024 Edition



UNIVERSITY
of MARY

for Life.

TRIO
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Note from the Director

02

TRIO at UMary

07

TRIO Gets Involved

10

In the Spotlight

11

Looking Ahead

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear TRIO SSS Students,

As the fall semester winds down and we prepare our hearts for the Advent season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the blessings of this year and the beautiful community we share here at the University of Mary.

This semester, we've witnessed your dedication, resilience, and commitment to growth—not just academically, but spiritually and personally. In the spirit of our Christian, Catholic, and Benedictine values, I'm reminded of St. Benedict's call to "listen with the ear of your heart." Each of you brings unique gifts and perspectives to our TRIO SSS family, and it's been a joy to see you embrace opportunities to support one another while pursuing your goals.

Fall Highlights:

Friendsgiving Celebration

- Our Friendsgiving event was a wonderful reminder of the joy found in community. From the delicious pies and warm apple cider to the lively games of Turkey Bingo and Thanksgiving Kahoot, it was a chance to come together, share laughter, and appreciate the blessings we have.

Support Workshops

- Our academic workshops this fall focused on developing a deeper understanding of learning math, time management, study strategies, and spiritual self-care. It was inspiring to see so many of you actively engaging in these sessions and using the tools provided to excel throughout the semester.

Mentoring and Peer Tutoring

- A huge thank you to our peer mentors and tutors who have gone above and beyond to help their classmates succeed. Your willingness to serve others is a beautiful reflection of our shared values.

May God bless you abundantly as you finish this semester strong and prepare for the joy of Christ's birth.

In Christ
Nadine Butts
Director, TRIO SSS

TRIO AT UMARY

March for Life

“Honestly, I was on the fence about going to the March. I had a lot on my plate and wasn’t sure if I could make it work. Then, as I was walking down the hall, Emma Thorp came up to me and asked if I was planning to go. I told her I hadn’t really thought about it, but she was persistent and encouraged me to join. That moment felt like a sign from God, like He was telling me this was something I needed to do.

When we got on the bus, the energy was electric. Everyone was so excited and full of joy. It hit me how amazing it was to be part of a group of people who were coming together to peacefully stand up for what they believed in. The freedom to protest is such a privilege, and being surrounded by others who were just as passionate about defending life felt powerful.

Before the March, we attended Mass at the Cathedral, and I was blown away by how many young people were packed into the pews. When the March started, we walked from the Cathedral to the Capitol building, and the sheer number of people marching alongside me was incredible. Cars passing by honked in support, and people waved—it was such an uplifting feeling. Of course, not everyone agreed with us, and there were a few who made their opposition clear. But that didn’t stop us.

Reaching the Capitol felt like such a meaningful moment. We were there to make our voices heard, but more than that, we were there to pray—not just for change but for the people making the laws and even for those who didn’t agree with us. Standing there, surrounded by others in prayer, I felt grateful. God had given me the chance to witness His love in such a powerful way, and I’m so glad I didn’t miss it.”

Josh Kubar
Cyber Security Administration Major

TRIO AT UMARY

Friendsgiving

This year, TRIO SSS hosted its annual Friendsgiving, combining festive treats, friendly competition, and plenty of laughter. The event, designed to bring students together, created a space where the TRIO community could relax, connect, and celebrate the holiday spirit.



The evening kicked off with the first of many fun activities: Turkey Bingo. Students quickly filled their bingo cards, hoping to win one of the many prizes. The excitement continued with Thanksgiving Kahoot, testing participants' knowledge of Thanksgiving history, fun facts, and pop culture. The competitive energy was contagious as students raced to answer questions. The top three scorers walked away with prizes and well-earned bragging rights. The event wasn't just about competition, though—it was about creating memories and strengthening bonds within the TRIO community. One student shared, "It was so nice to take a break from school stress and just have fun with everyone. This kind of event reminds me how much support I have here." As the evening wound down, attendees left with full hearts, sweet treats, and a renewed sense of connection. The TRIO SSS Friendsgiving was the perfect way to pause, reflect, and celebrate the season with friends. With its cozy treats and engaging activities, the event once again proved that the TRIO program is not just about academic success—it's about building a community where everyone feels at home.

TRIO AT UMARY

Day of Service

“The University of Mary Day of Service this year was an amazing way to get out into the community and help as much as possible. I always love to see the video recap after because everyone looks so joyful. I always look forward to this day because it is a refreshing change from my usual routine and classes. This year was especially impactful because it is the last time I will get to participate in the Day of Service. It made my day that I was able to spend time helping other people because I understood that very few other universities would allow for an entire day dedicated to volunteering.

This year, I spent my Day of Service at Dakota Stage in downtown Bismarck. Dakota Stage is a local theater company that puts on many different shows throughout the year. This summer, they were greatly affected by the flooding so there was a lot of work for us to do. My participation was also related to my participation in Musical Theater Troupe, which is a club here on campus. MTT members were able to sign up for Dakota Stage with other members that they already knew.

Every year, the Day of Service is an amazing opportunity for students all over campus to come together and serve the community. I had so much fun this year serving at Dakota Stage with my fellow Musical Theater Troupe club members. I will miss this opportunity after I graduate but am grateful that I was able to

participate all four years while at UMary. I hope that everyone who participated this year and everyone who participates in coming years feels the joy I did when participating in Day of Service.”



TRIO AT UMARY

First Generation Day

Million Dollar Baby

“My one-million-dollar baby. It is the thought my mom had when she first saw me after I was born. It was not because she felt I was worth a million dollars, but instead, it was because she felt that I had been born with a million dollars’ worth of opportunity. The American Dream. Her American Dream manifested as her first-born daughter. This has followed me all throughout my life, and it continues to push me in the best ways as I navigate a life that is entirely foreign to all past generations of my family.



College was always the expectation growing up. My parents supported all my academic endeavors, and they always encouraged me to continue striving for excellence. As I’ve grown up, I realize this is not the norm in many immigrant households. My dad came to the United States when he was 16, and while he was in high school, he worked long hours in grape fields. Despite his brilliant grades and test scores, he was gifted a pair of work gloves as his graduation present. A reflection of the expectations his parents and the people around him expected of him.

TRIO AT UMARY

First Generation Day

In my high school, I was usually the only Hispanic student in my AP courses, and I see now that it is because I was blessed with such a great support system that I felt encouraged to continue striving for excellence.

Some people may feel pressured to live up to being a million-dollar baby. I have used this to remind myself that I can do anything. I was born in a country where I am given opportunities my parents didn't have, like welfare systems and free and mandatory public education. The opportunity to attend college is a catalyst to open new doors that have never been available for anyone in my family.

However, as I've progressed through my journey at UMary, I have found that even with all the support from my family, I am facing challenges completely distinct from theirs. They cannot relate to the overwhelming stress of papers, lab reports and exams, and I am so lucky that these are my stressors. I have had to find new support. My TRIO advisors, professors, and mentors who have already navigated through college are able to guide me, pray for me, and give me new expectations to reach. I am blessed with the overwhelming support I have on campus and at home. It is through the guidance of the support systems that I have found that I can wake up with the determination that I will be able to continue to fulfill the Lord's vision for me as a million-dollar baby."

Mya Tena
Biochemistry Major



TRIO GETS INVOLVED

Freshmen Retreat

“One of the earliest events of University Ministry at the University of Mary is the Freshmen Retreat. Held in the first few weeks of the fall semester, the freshmen retreat is a formative time for new students to grow closer to God and one another. Alternating between talks, small groups, leisure and prayer, the retreat is easy for freshman to enter into and leave refreshed. Usually, it's held a few hours off campus in the midst of the raw beauty of North Dakota. My freshman year it was held at a 4-H camp, but in the past two years the retreat has been held at Badlands Ministries in Medora, ND. It's powerful being surrounded by wilderness and that creates the space to build strong relationships with peers upon a foundation of truth.

Both junior and senior year, I've had the opportunity to serve others on the retreat. Both years, I've cooked meals in the kitchen (truly an on-your-feet kind of experience) alongside a team of students and a staff member of University Ministry. Each retreat, which spans Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, and we cook over 1,300 meals in an industrial kitchen. It's hard and rewarding work, time I've greatly enjoyed. Serving alongside peers from sophomore to senior year, I've grown closer to friends in the midst of spitting bacon, hand churned butter, and endless cups of coffee. Overall, I'm grateful to participate in something bigger than just myself. There's a beauty in cooking, in cooking communally, and tending to the physical needs of those around you, especially in the shadows of the Badland's hills.”



Camille Haugen
English Major

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Fall Graduates

Congratulations to each of the TRIO Fall 2024 graduates on your well-earned success. May your graduation from the University of Mary be the start of many incredible accomplishments yet to come. Your journey, filled with challenges and triumphs, is a testament to your faith, resilience and commitment to your vocation and formation. The support of the TRIO program has not only helped you gain academic knowledge but also develop the skills and confidence to face the world beyond graduation. This achievement reflects your strength, determination, and the unwavering belief in your future endeavors.

Abigail Birmingham-Guthrie

BS in Elementary Education

Reagan Dalton

BSN Nursing

Audrey Dimmel

BA in English

Margaret Filla

BS in Child Development Studies; Minors in Catholic Studies & Psychology

Juana Gonzalez

BA in Politics; Minor in Criminal Justice

Madelaine Heggstad

BS in Elementary and Special Education

Donzell Howard

BS in Marketing and Business Administration; Minor in Coaching & Sport Studies

Reyna Isenbart

BS in Psychology; Minor in Catholic Studies

Teddy Lillico

BUS University Studies; Minor in Sport & Leisure Management

Jakim McKinney

BS Civil Engineering

Emily Montgomery

BS Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education; Minor in Psychology

Emma Senderhauf

BSN Nursing



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Wall of Fame

TRIO Fall 2024 Wall of Fame Recipients

Maria Welter	Abby Ackerman
Steven Kennedy	Zahrah Amiri
Kyana Olheiser	Jamie Lemer
Mya Tena	Matthew Chromy
Liam Irwin	Kyah Feyereisen
Jonathan Rice	



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

TRIO Veteran - Dave Simmons

TRIO works with students from all different walks of life, welcoming all with open arms. We are particularly honored to work with many active duty and veteran students from all branches of the military. TRIO at UMary would like to highlight a student with such a background. Dave Simons, an undergraduate student working towards a degree in Exercise Science, was gracious enough to tell us a little bit about the story of his life as a student and veteran.

Dave has extensive training and experience in the U.S. Marine Corps. He first enlisted in 1996. His service included two tours to Iraq and Afghanistan as well as in the United States. He finished his time as a Marine at the Wounded Warrior Battalion as a recovering service member in 2017. Dave has received several awards for his distinguished service.

David wasn't sure at first why he chose the University of Mary, but over time he began to realize that he was here for a reason. To him, "my time here has made me realize that God has a purpose for me. I believe that my purpose is to deepen my relationship with Him." He first learned about TRIO from the University's Veteran Representative and found that TRIO has provided him with resources that have helped him return to school. These include tutoring and academic advising, as well as aiding him with emotional concerns.

I asked David if there was something we should know about students who are active duty or veterans. "Many veterans are nontraditional students, often older than their peers and may have families or jobs outside of school. This diversity enriches classroom discussions and fosters a broader understanding of various issues. Veterans often possess valuable skills such as leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving, honed through their military service."

The shift from military to academic life can be challenging. Understanding that veterans may require additional support, whether through academic resources, mental health services, or community support is crucial.

TRIO would like to thank all active duty and veteran students for their service!

LOOKING **AHEAD**

Important Spring Dates

- January 6 - Spring Term Begins *Distance/Online
- January 8 - Spring Term In-Person Classes Begin *16w
- January 21 - Last Day to Add/Drop with no record *16w
- January 22 - Community Learning Day: Life & Dignity, No Classes
- January 28 - Tuition/Fees Due
- February 17 - Presidents' Day. No Classes; Offices Open
- February 27 - March 3 - Spring Break *16w. No Classes; Offices Open
- March 4-14 - Fall Advising
- March 14 - Last Day to Drop with a W *16w
- April 11 - Last Day to Drop with a WP/WF *16w
- April 18-20 - Easter Vacation. No Classes; Offices Closed
- April 21-25 - Semester Examinations
- April 26 - Commencement

TRIO **SERVICES**

TRIO Lounge

The TRIO Lounge will be available throughout the spring semester. The hours will be the same as the library. Stop in for a quiet and quaint place to study and unwind.



*God's blessings for a wonderful Christmas Season!
Jennifer, Nadine, Kristi, and Stephanie*

TRIO
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES