

TRIO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Winter Newsletter

2024-25 Edition



NOTE FROM THE **DIRECTOR**

Dear University of Mary TRIO SSS Students and Community,

As we continue to move through the winter season, we celebrate the accomplishments, growth, and dedication of all the students in TRIO SSS. This season has been full of opportunities for success, and I am excited to share some highlights as we look ahead to spring.

First and foremost, I want to take a moment to acknowledge and celebrate National TRIO Day! This special day, observed on the last Saturday of February, honors the incredible work of TRIO programs across the nation. National TRIO Day serves as a reminder of the vital support we offer to our students, and it brings us together to reflect on the journey of persistence, achievement, and transformation. We are proud to be part of a community that nurtures the success of first-generation college students, income eligible students, and students with disabilities.

As part of our ongoing efforts to empower our students, we've been offering a variety of workshops designed to foster both academic and personal growth. This winter, we focused on topics such as mental well-being, financial literacy, graduate school prep, and graduation prep. These workshops provided students with the tools to succeed academically and personally, as well as the opportunity to reflect on their faith and its role in their success.

We are excited for the opportunities on the horizon. Our TRIO End of the Year Banquet will offer a time for celebration and accomplishment as we bid farewell to several seniors, as well as honor many other current students who have gone above and beyond.

I want to take a moment to thank all of you for your dedication and participation in the TRIO SSS program. Your commitment to your studies, personal growth, and faith is what makes this community special.

In Christ,
Nadine Butts
Director, TRIO Student Support Services

JAZZ FEST

When I first arrived at the University of Mary, I had no idea how much being a member of TRIO would positively shape my life. I am a sophomore at the University of Mary pursuing a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry with a pre-med concentration. Despite the challenges of my rigorous academic path, I have managed to keep my love and passion for learning and music alive. At the beginning of my freshman year, I was awarded a music scholarship, which has allowed me to stay involved in multiple ensembles, including pep band, choir, concert band, and vocal jazz. In spring 2025, my vocal jazz ensemble dedicated countless hours preparing for Jazz Fest. We practiced our repertoire 5 times a week for hours on end. Nothing less than perfection was acceptable for our performance at the Belle. Balancing my commitments can be challenging, especially with a 20-credit course load while also working as a phlebotomist and a waitress. The week of our two performances was particularly demanding—I met with the group six days that week while also preparing to take three exams. Thankfully, as a member of TRIO, I was granted the privilege of private tutoring and, more importantly, found a supportive family within the program. My TRIO advisor Kristi and all the staff help me out so much. Without TRIO's help, I likely wouldn't have made it this far. I may have had to drop my ensembles to focus solely on my GPA for medical school, which would have cost me my music scholarship and forced me to work more to afford tuition. The memories I have made in the music department are ones I cherish, and I am incredibly grateful that TRIO has allowed me to continue pursuing both my academic and musical passions.

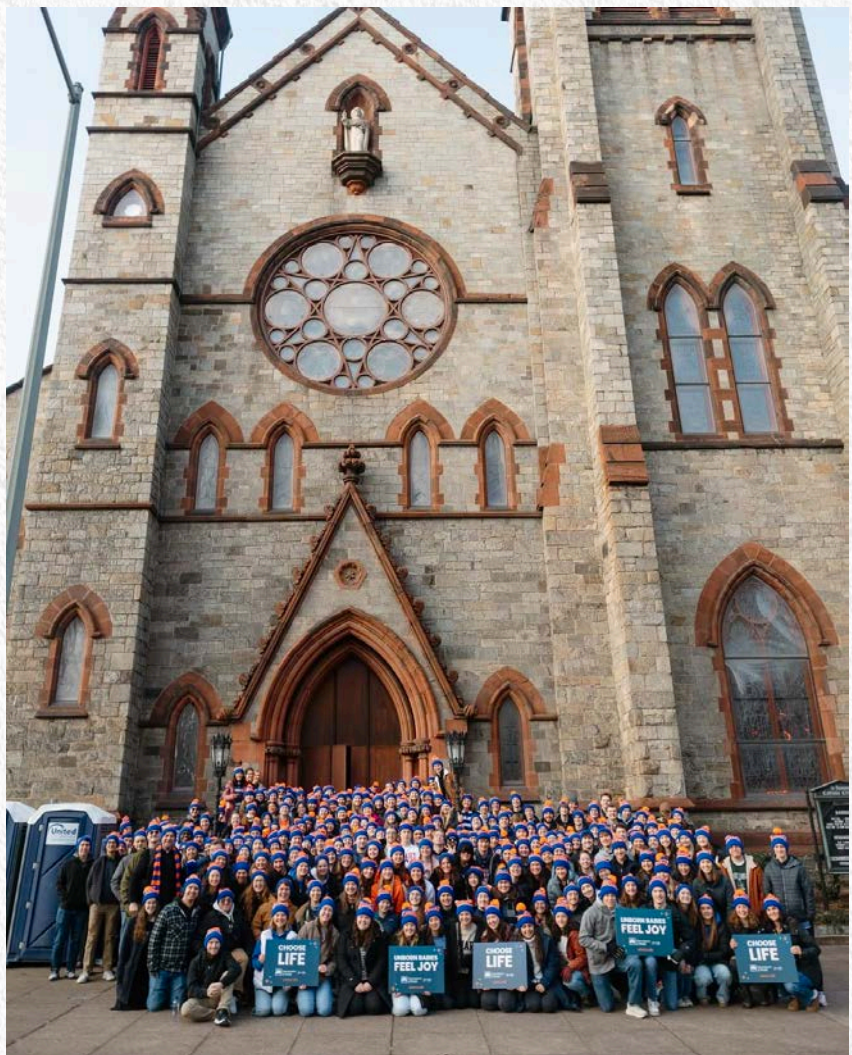
-Grace Goven
*Sophomore TRIO Student &
Biology Major*



MARCH FOR LIFE

I first attended the March for Life my freshman year so there was something fitting about returning to DC my senior year. This year, I went back to DC with some of the same friends I went with freshman year, as well as new friends I've made since. One of my favorite things to do in D.C. is walk around the city. The drama of our history is so palpable there in the buildings and the monuments. I saw the Declaration of Independence for the first time and tried, without much success, to read its faded cursive. Later that night my friends and I ate at Elephant and Castle, where I had one of the best burgers of my life. The next day, during the March, I held on tightly to my friends as we moved through the crowd of blue and orange hats. I could feel the infectious joy and energy of our group. We were joined by students from other universities who were eager to chant and march with us.

-Maria Rodriguez Brannon
*Senior TRIO Student &
History and Catholic
Studies Major*



PAINTING WORKSHOP

What happens when you give a roomful of TRIO students canvases, paintbrushes, and paint? They create amazing artwork while also relieving stress! The first workshop of the spring semester was a hit, and plenty of TRIO students had an opportunity to flex their creative muscles to paint a UMary sunset scene! Led by peer mentor Mya Tena, the workshop was a guided painting lesson (think of a Bob-Ross type of scenario) where students were guided through painting a scene of The Grotto at sunset. Everyone had a different interpretation and took their artwork in a unique direction, producing a lot of variety in the work among participants, which was so refreshing to see!



Preparing for this lesson was so much fun. I first scrolled through different photos of U-Mary scenery until I found one that I liked, and then I made a small, rough painting to get an idea of what colors I would be using. Once I had the small painting to look at, I painted it on a larger canvas that would be similar to the one I would be using for the demonstration. I am not an art major, so when I have a chance to do something creative, I seize the opportunity and use it as an outlet away from my academics. I hope that through this workshop, people were able to surprise themselves by seeing the product of what their creativity can accomplish. I also want to encourage everyone to continue being creative in whatever artistic medium they like, whether it's drawing, dancing, or even singing! Find what you love to do and fit it into your busy schedule. You will be so glad that you took the time to do something that gives you joy!

- Mya Tena

Junior TRIO Student and Bioethics Major

NEURODIVERGENT CONVOCATION

The convocation hosted by TRIO director, Nadine Butts, about understanding the neurodivergent learner was well attended by many students and faculty. The panelists consisted of Dr. Kim Marman, Dr. Nicole Spotts, Dr. Lynn Dodge, Theresa Hayes, Rose Kelly, and Audrey Dimmel. Each person on the panel answered each question with a different point of view based on their personal experience with being neurodivergent or working with neurodivergent students. As a student who attended the convocation, the panelists enlightened me about the importance of understanding the difficulties neurodivergent students go through. Not only because of their neurodivergence, but mostly difficulties that come from people who do not understand neurodivergence. The students on the panel spoke about friendships and the need for their friends to understand their needs. Before, I had thought neurodivergent individuals only needed support in academics, but it was eye opening to realize that as friends and peers we also must provide that support by giving them time and space to do what they need to do for themselves. Accommodations, advocacy, compassion, and service are things we should all be doing to ensure our neurodivergent peers feel seen and supported.

- Patience Baker

Senior TRIO Student and Human Support Services Major



LOOKING AHEAD

WORKSHOPS

MAR
12
WED

Etiquette Dinner

5-7pm- Chick's Place
Learn proper etiquette for your next important dining experience.

MAR
31
MON

Financial Jeopardy

3:30pm - Virtual
Join us for a fun and informative game of Financial Aid Jeopardy!

MAR
20
THU

Lunch & Learn: *What's Next?* *Grad School and Beyond*

11:00am Presentation 1
11:30am Lunch
12:00pm Presentation 2
Student Organization Conference Room

APR
7
MON

TRIO Awards Banquet

6:00 - 7:00pm
Chick's Place
Celebrate YOU with a catered meal, awards, and more!

ALL SEMESTER

TRIO Community Circle

THURSDAYS @ 4:00pm
Welder 140

TRIO students are led by TRIO Staff, Peer Mentors, and Leadership Team members in a community circle, inviting them to listen, share, and experience belonging. See our **TOUCH BASE with TRIO** Canvas page for details, beginning January 16th through April 17th.

TRIO Financial Literacy

If you are unable to attend a Financial Literacy workshop during fall or spring semester, please fulfill your Financial Literacy credit requirement by watching one of the videos posted in Modules on our **TOUCH BASE with TRIO** Canvas page. You can choose various subjects such as Budgeting or Credit Scores, and then take a short quiz upon completion of watching the video.

TRIO Lounge

A TRIO-only study lounge has been established in the Northwest corner of Welder Library, complete with coffee, tea, snacks, and supplied with a variety of resources to support and encourage you as a TRIO student on our campus. Please use this space and enjoy our changing themes that celebrate events, holidays, and people who have made a difference for students and educators.

TRIO Communication

TOUCH BASE with TRIO and Instagram

Please access our Canvas page **TOUCH BASE with TRIO** and our Instagram page **@trioatumary** for regular announcements about upcoming events, advising information, and our weekly TRIO Tip Tuesday and Mental Health Thursday supports!

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