



Klondy Canales

TRIO

I was born and raised in Portland, Oregon and I am Latin American by Honduran heritage. I came from an immigrant, low-income, single parent household and I am a first generation college student. My journey with the TRIO program began when I was a senior at Reynolds High School in Troutdale, Oregon. I was applying the Gates Millennium Scholarship program and received help with writing and revising nine essays from a TRIO staff member at Mount Hood Community College. I am proud to be a Gates Millennium recipient and was fully funded for five years at the University of Washington and will be funded in my future graduate work.

My first quarter at the University of Washington was a difficult one filled with hardships. Thanksgiving of 2009 I lost all communication with my mother due to previous abuse, became homeless and financially independent. As an honors student I was placed on probation for not maintaining the required GPA and I was on the verge of dropping out of college. My assigned advisor at the time, Andrea Griggs from the TRIO Student Support Services in STEM reached out to me as she saw that my grades were slipping and quickly became not only my adviser, but my mentor, and a person that believed in me. After working with her that year and meeting with her every quarter, my grades began to improve and my outlook on college changed. Against all odds I turned my GPA around, was on a good standing with the honors program, and that summer (2010) I participated in the Science, Technology, and Research Scholars (STARS) Program at Yale University where I did research on microbial pathogenesis.

Being part of the UW TRIO program supported me greatly and provided the resources I needed to become a successful student at UW. My advisor continued to advise me for two more years until she moved to Oregon. Then Kesia Ceniceros and Kristian Wiles, joined the TRIO team and Kesia became my adviser, mentor, and role model from the time we met until my graduation. She was there for me when I was fixing things with my mother, when I was leaving an abusive relationship, she helped me apply to scholarships, she read my personal statements and essays when I applied to the Peace Corps, and she attended my Public Health graduation. Kesia continues to support me as I have ventured into the field of higher education and has become a colleague that I can come to for support and advice. Without the support and guidance of TRIO I would not have graduated from the University of Washington.

Since graduation I was a co-instructor for the scientific writing portion for the University of Washington Genomics Outreach for Minorities (GenOM) program. I then became the Director of the Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) program at Highline College. I currently work for the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS) program which is a unique public-private partnership that will fund 14,000 scholarships over a span of 10 years for students from low- to middle-income families to pursue STEM and healthcare degrees in Washington State. Having served in these roles, I know it is not only about guiding students through the rigorous coursework that is required, but also about getting to know who they are, building relationships, and believing in them. Programs like TRIO reinforce the importance of advocating for students who are first generation, low-income so they can be successful in academic careers. I believe that as leaders in higher education programs like TRIO, shall continue to embrace the variety of backgrounds students come from and support the perseverance and achievements of these students over time and through decades of continual success that TRIO has made possible for students across the nation.

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As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.



TRIO Projects

The Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) are Federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs. TRIO also includes a training program for directors and staff of TRIO projects.

The recipients of the grants, depending on the specific program, are institutions of higher education, public and private agencies and organizations including community-based organizations with experience in serving disadvantaged youth and secondary schools. Combinations of such institutions, agencies, and organizations may also apply for grants. These entities plan, develop and carry out the services for students. While individual students are served by these entities, they may not apply for grants under these programs. Additionally, in order to be served by one of these programs, a student must be eligible to receive services and be accepted into a funded project that serves the institution or school that student is attending or the area in which the student lives.

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