

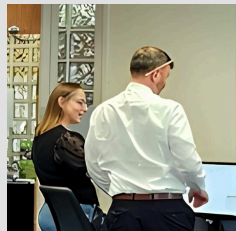
WORKS!



FALL 2024

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

with Kris Hatcher, Ed.D



One of the most important aspects to working in TRiO is helping students and parents apply for financial aid. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can be intimidating, so demystifying it is critical to TRiO's mandate of facilitating college access for disadvantaged populations.

Unfortunately, though, a recent study titled "College Financial Aid Application Frictions" asserts that up to 11% of high school graduates fail to submit their FAFSA due to mistakenly believing themselves ineligible or finding the application process too difficult. Even more troubling, the National College Attainment Network insists that year-over-year FAFSA submissions are down almost 9% in Florida—in large part due to the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) less-than-stellar effort to simplify the application process.

Fortunately, however, the 2025-2026 FAFSA opened November 21st! That version is the second iteration of ED's simplified application experience, and I can personally attest that it's a fast and efficient process. Although the 2025-2026 FAFSA applies toward future GCSC semesters (Fall 2025, Spring 2026, and Summer 2026), submitting it sooner rather than later is critical to qualifying for financial aid.

In order to diminish FAFSA procrastination, TRiO will be hosting completion events at our office (1st floor of SUW) on the following dates/times:

Tuesday, December 17th @ 4:00pm CST
Saturday, January 25th @ 10:00am CST
Saturday, February 1st @ 10:00am CST

If you get a chance, please advise students of those events and remind them how important it is to complete or renew the 2025-2026 FAFSA. Anyone who can't attend the aforementioned completion events is more than welcome to visit TRiO on Mondays through Fridays from 8:00am to 4:00pm for FAFSA assistance. By working together to promote FAFSA completion, we can help students access GCSC and facilitate their success!

Moachlri, E.S. & Raveendranathan, G. (2024). College financial aid application frictions. Department of Economics Working Papers 2024-10. McMaster University. <https://www.econ.mcmaster.ca/econ/depape/2024-10.html>

Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)



The EOC had a busy and productive Fall! So much so, that we've helped more new participants thus far than at this same point in previous years—which would not be the case without your referrals. In addition, the EOC team is enjoying staying connected with our returning students this year. We have several who regularly come by to say "Hi" and share how things are going. It is great to be a place that feels like home for so many.

As we look toward spring, a pressing question for students will be whether they've applied for financial aid. Continuing students need to renew their FAFSA and fill out the Foundation's Scholarship application. Students graduating high school soon must also submit the state's Florida Financial Aid Application by visiting <https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org>. If any students you encounter need help with their financial aid applications, please refer them to the EOC so we can assist!

[Click here to learn more about EOC](#)

-Lisa

Upward Bound (UB)

This fall, UB gladly welcomed 18 new participants (most of whom are Rutherford, Bay, or Deane Bozeman freshmen & sophomores) who are starting their journey toward secondary success and postsecondary readiness. For me, one of the Fall semester's highlights was our Career Panel Discussion—which showcased a broad spectrum of professionals and community partners. The event was a tremendous success that offered valuable insights into potential career pathways for our students to consider.

We also embarked on college tours to the University of South Alabama and Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU). While at FAMU, we immersed our students in the vibrant culture possible at Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU) by attending their football game against Mississippi Valley State.

As we prepare for spring, UB will be focusing on Test Preparation services to help students meet graduation requirements and achieve the ACT, CLT, or SAT scores necessary for college admission and scholarship eligibility.

-Danielle



[Click here to learn more about UB](#)

Student Support Services (SSS)

A key part of SSS's Fall approach involved one-on-one meetings with students to craft personalized success plans, which we use to tailor our support toward each participant's needs and goals. We supplemented our individualized services by presenting group workshops on topics such as developing sound study habits, managing stress, and understanding financial literacy.

Outside of the classroom, SSS took students on transfer trips to the University of West Florida and the University of South Alabama this semester. There, our students toured each campus, met with admissions & financial aid representatives, and learned about transfer processes & procedures. As an example of the impact of such transfer trips, here are some evaluation survey quotes we received from participants on the bus ride back from Alabama:

"The trip was amazing! I've learned so much, especially knowing what I need focus on in the future."

"[The trip] was great, campus and tour guide was amazing."

"The university seems like a good school overall. I enjoyed the trip."

[Click here to learn more about SSS](#)

-Kendra

Tutoring Lab

My tutoring staff and I understand that every student is working hard to balance their education, work, and personal lives. Therefore, we prioritize our students' academic needs by providing a comfortable learning environment and encouraging practical study habits.

As a reminder, our Tutoring Lab also assists EOC students with the GED by offering ad-hoc examination guidance and test-taking advice. The numerous EOC participants who've passed their GED to become GCSC students have reinforced our commitment to helping participants achieve their educational goals!

[To learn more about tutoring, click here](#)

-June



WE ARE TRIO

Hours of Operations:
Monday - Friday : 8:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m
TRiO Tutoring Lab Fall Hours:
Mon, Wed, Fri : 8:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m
Tue, Th : 8:00 am - 7:00 pm
***WE ACCEPT STUDENT REFERRALS!**

Note: 100% of TRiO's program costs are financed by federal money funding.
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