

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE 1  
TRIO STUDENT-OF-THE-YEAR

PAGE 2  
TRIO GRADUATES

PAGE 3  
CAMP TRIO

PAGE 4  
TRIO ALUMNI  
ACHIEVERS

PAGE 6  
STUDENT  
HIGHLIGHTS

### HIGHLIGHTS

### UPCOMING EVENTS

## TRIO Student-of-the-Year: Graciela Jimenez

Graciela Jimenez grew up in Richardson, Texas-but both her mother and father have strong ties to Mexico. Her early years offered some of her best life experiences and unfortunately some of her worst. Grace's childhood was not without struggle. Her family dealt with substance abuse issues which created many traumatic events for Grace at a young age. As an adolescent, she spent time with her family in a homeless shelter. After her parent's divorce, Grace moved to Goshen, Indiana with her mom and siblings. It was then that her home life began to stabilize more.

Despite all the struggles she and her family faced, Grace always felt her mom was a strong support in her life. Grace recalls that her mom always prided herself in the accomplishments of her children and the joy she saw in her mom during those moments stayed with her all through the years. In fact, Grace's mom and a family friend really pushed Grace to consider college after high school.

Like many first-generation college students, Grace says, "College was never in my head growing up." It wasn't until high school she started thinking about furthering her education. From a young age, Grace dreamed of being a teacher, judge, or business owner; but it wasn't until a 4<sup>th</sup> grade science class that Grace really found her passion. It was that spark in elementary school that sent Grace on a path toward a science degree.

Grace chose Purdue Fort Wayne as her college because of its close proximity to



family and the affordability it could provide her. She also liked the idea of being on a smaller campus where she could build connections with professors easily while studying microbiology and immunology.

Grace graduated in May with a B.S. degree in Biology with a concentration in Microbiology and Immunology and an A.S. degree in Chemistry. She is currently working as a Microbiology Lab Technician at Biodyne-USA. She plans to work for a few years and then apply to a Master's degree program in Texas.

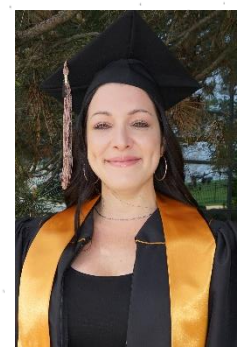
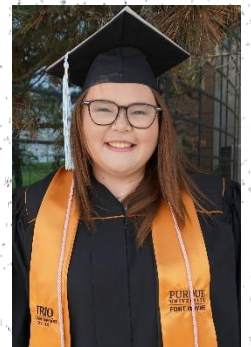
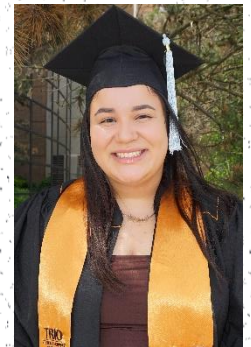
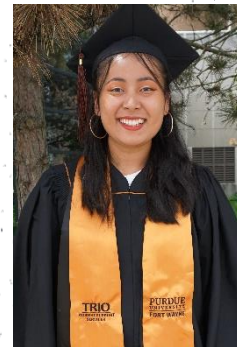
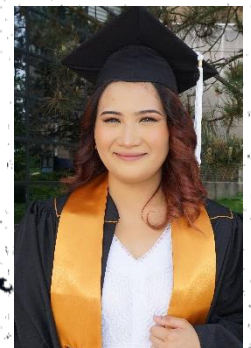
Grace would like others to know, "No matter how bad it gets, don't give up. Think of what you want for yourself and your future...and how you're going to get there." She continues, "It took more than one person's help for me to get where I am today." Grace credits her family, friends, TRIO, and faculty for helping her persist to earn her degrees.

# 2021-2022 GRADUATES



## CELEBRATING TRIO STUDENTS

- Karen Ayala-Ramos** – Bachelor of Arts in Communications
- Da Ma Zan Be** – Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs
- Kaylee Bennett** – Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Mo Eh** – Bachelor of Arts in Art and Design with Sociology Minor
- To Ko Htay** – Bachelor of Science in Biology
- Graciela Jimenez** – Bachelor of Science in Biology & A.S. in Chemistry
- Viviana Lagunas** – Bachelor of Science in Education with English Minor
- Na Da Laing** – Bachelor of Science in Education
- Indira Lucero-Palma** – Bachelor of Science in Education
- Alexis Merkle** – Bachelor of Science in Business with Art & Design Minor
- Alyssa Moore** – Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Gemssy Munoz** – Bachelor of Arts in Communication
- Montana Phillips** – Bachelor of Science in Information Technology with Business Studies Minor
- Skye Robinson** – Bachelor of Science in Education
- Samuel Stauffer** – Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology with Psychology Minor
- Elizabeth Wood** – Bachelor of Science in Human Services
- Alexandria Wolfe** – Bachelor in Applied Science with Psychology & Sociology Minors
- Jonathan Brito** – Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering
- Raj Patel** – Masters of Science in Systems Engineering





# HAPPY CAMPERS ATTEND CAMP TRIO



## CAMP TRIO 2022

TRIO is heading back to camp for fall 2022. To sign up for a spot, email [trioss@pfw.edu](mailto:trioss@pfw.edu) or stop by the TRIO office.

**When:** Saturday, September 3 thru Sunday, September 4

**Where:** Camp Potawatomi, Wolcottville, Indiana

**Who:** Open to all PFW TRIO SSS students (spaces are limited-sign up early)

**What:** Come enjoy teambuilding activities, s'mores at the campfire, boating, swimming, archery, and meeting new friends

**Costs:** There is no cost for this event- lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday included

**Camp Gear:** T-shirt, water bottle, bag, blanket, and other fun camp gear provided

## CAMP TRIO 2021

This year, TRIO students went to camp! In September, students spent the night at Camp Potawatomi for two days filled with teambuilding, friend-making, and fun. While at camp, students participated in archery, volleyball, kayaking, swimming, teambuilding activities, and s'more-making. Students gave this experience such rave reviews that we will be returning to camp for fall 2022. Interested students should sign up for this experience early as spaces are limited. Sign up in the TRIO office or by emailing [trioss@pfw.edu](mailto:trioss@pfw.edu).



# CONGRATULATIONS

## TRIO Achiever 2022

### Taylor Talamantes

Each year, TRIO recognizes an outstanding TRIO Alumni Achiever who has shown exceptional achievement since graduation in the realm of business, philanthropy, and/or service. This year's recipient of the 2022 TRIO Achiever Award is Taylor Talamantes. Taylor is owner of Sensory Cuts here in Fort Wayne. She helps those who have sensory disorders get haircuts in a professional setting utilizing a therapeutic approach. Taylor graduated from IPFW in 2016 with a degree in psychology and is a licensed barber and registered behavioral technician. Taylor shares that TRIO was a huge support throughout her college journey. "TRIO made me feel like I wasn't alone...(TRIO) truly understands being first-generation can be difficult so they go far out of their way to ensure you feel heard!" Through the support of TRIO, Taylor was able to volunteer at a Manatee Reservation in Puerto Rico and still has relationships with people she met four years later. Taylor added, "Had it not been for the support of leaders, teachers, and services such as TRIO, I wouldn't have been successful."



## TRIO Achiever 2021

### Abigail Wiegand

The 2021 TRIO Achiever was Abigail Wiegand. Abby is a TRIO alumni who graduated from IPFW in 2015 with a degree in Human Services. She currently works at Interfaith Homeless Network as a Family Case Manager. Abby assists new families that move into the shelter by connecting them to resources, providing financial education, and signing them up for transitional housing. Abby shared that TRIO helped her learn how to work with people she now serves in her career field. Learning how to manage her time and multitask have also been very beneficial in her current career. Abby shared that TRIO was like family to her. TRIO was her first job and staff even helped her learn how to drive a car. She also noted how TRIO helped her experience cultural activities that she otherwise would not have had the chance to. She would like to remind new students to get involved on campus! "Use the time you have to utilize all the resources around you. Being in college can be the time to learn about new or different things and you might be surprised and end up finding something you love."



## TRIO LEADERS ARE BACK



The TRIO Leaders program is back for fall 2022! This program provides leadership training for first-generation college students. Students must apply for this program and spaces are limited. Training includes one-hour monthly meetings on Thursdays from 3-4pm. Dates for this year's meetings: Sept. 15, Oct. 20, Nov. 17, Jan. 19, Feb. 16, Mar. 16, and Apr. 20. Applications for the 2022-2023 TRIO Leaders class are available in the TRIO office or by emailing [trioss@pfw.edu](mailto:trioss@pfw.edu).





## TRIO Student-of-the-Year 2021:

### Jonathan Brito

Jonathan Brito grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, but both of Jon's parents are from Mexico. His mother and father came to the United States to improve their economic situations while young adults. During the process of becoming citizens, Jon's parents faced struggles brought on by having to learn a completely new language. Although Jon notes he and his siblings learned English more easily being immersed in American culture and schools, his parent's path was more difficult. Jon recalls times having to go to the doctor, tax office, and other grown-up places to help act as a translator for his parents while still a young child.

Despite the challenges his family faced adjusting to a new language and culture, Jon recalls his family telling him college would offer a better career path than the one his parents had to take and could take him farther in life.

Jon credits his early childhood experience with helping him develop independence and a strong work ethic. One of Jon's biggest motivations for getting his degrees includes wanting to be a good role model for his siblings—letting them know they can also pursue education as a way to a better life.

During college, Jon was involved with TRIO, Hispanos Unidos, IEEE, Soccer Club, IEEE Electrical Vehicle Project, and was the recipient of a National Science Foundation Scholarship.

Jon graduated in May 2021 with a B.S. degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering and a minor in Math. In May 2022, Jon completed his M.S. degree in Electrical Engineering. He is currently working as a VA/VE Engineer Technician at Nidec.

Jon encourages other first-generation students to "Be determined in the path you are taking...and if you're not sure, ask as many questions as it takes...it's okay not to know everything, no one does."



**"You can't control the cards you're dealt, just how you play the hand."**

**–Randy Pausch**



## TRIO Peer Mentors

The TRIO-SSS Program at Purdue Fort Wayne has a student-mentoring program. TRIO Peer Mentors are current TRIO upperclassmen who work one-on-one with new TRIO students to help foster belonging on campus. Their job is to help new students navigate the challenges of adjusting to college and offer guidance and suggestions for how to get support and more involved on campus. Peer mentors also hold teambuilding events throughout the year. Dates for these meetings are Sept. 27, Nov. 15, Feb. 7 and Mar. 21 from 1:30-3:00pm in Kettler Room 239. Peer Mentors are paid positions. For more information about becoming a TRIO Peer Mentor, please contact your TRIO Advisor or email [trioss@pfw.edu](mailto:trioss@pfw.edu).

# TRAVELING TRIO



## HISTORY ALIVE

In June, TRIO took a deep dive into history. Students traveled to Detroit, Michigan to visit the Henry Ford Museum and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. Students visited Rosa Parks bus, saw presidential vehicles, and learned about American innovation throughout the years. At the Charles Wright Museum, students learned about the complex African-American experience—including learning about the Slave Trade and explored exhibits documenting the Civil Rights Movement. TRIO student, Jared Ragsdale, said, "Walking through the slave trade portion of the *And Still We Rise* exhibit gave me—a white male—perspective as to what the ancestors of friends and family suffered through. Prior to this trip, I'd read about the slave trade in history books but walking through the interactive exhibit that immersed you in the process was a sobering experience."



## ROCK ON

In May, TRIO explored Cleveland, Ohio. At the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, students toured exhibition halls and learned about musical artists and the history of many American music genres. At the Pro Football Hall of Fame, students were able to get an up-close view the Lombardi Super Bowl trophy, championship rings, and busts of Hall of Famers. Students could even watch past Super Bowl Games in the museum's theater. TRIO student, Hai Nguyen, shared that, "This trip brought new experiences...exploring a city with a group of people helped me connect with others. This was outside of my comfort zone but still would not have it any other way." Another student, Aseel Batuq, shared that he enjoyed how, "people appreciate other people's work and value it, whether they were football players or musicians."



## UP-CLOSE ANIMALS

In October, TRIO took a trip to Columbus, Ohio. Students toured the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and got to participate in several behind-the-scenes animal encounters. Groups learned from zookeepers about care for giraffes, sloths, penguins, and sea lions. Students were even able to get up close with these animals, help with feedings, and ask zookeepers questions! TRIO student Andrew Velez said, "The experience at the Columbus Zoo was educational yet very fascinating, learning about the different habitats...and being allowed to have our small group receive a behind the scenes tour of the sea lions was amazing!"

## TRIO FALL BREAK TRIP 2022

Save the date! TRIO is heading to the Windy City on Monday, October 17, 2022 (during Fall Break). Attendees will enjoy an architectural boat tour of the city after visiting the Art Institute of Chicago and Adler Planetarium. This trip is a great opportunity to get to know your fellow TRIO peers while touring museums. This trip is free for TRIO students and includes transportation, t-shirt, tickets to museums/experiences, lunch, and dinner. Sign-up by emailing [trioss@pfw.edu](mailto:trioss@pfw.edu). Spaces are limited, so sign up early!





# TRIO STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS



## Elijah Paulk

Last summer was great for chess! Elijah Paulk, his chess club, and Fort Wayne Parks department worked together to host more than 300 people for Fort Wayne's very first community chess event! The event featured tournaments, speakers, special guests, prizes, paintings, food, and more. Eli shares that, "It truly was a historic moment for Fort Wayne and myself and I am very appreciative of that moment."



## Dezaray Clawson

Dezaray Clawson is now writing articles for InputFort Wayne. Topics Dezaray has covered include women in STEM, supporting rural small businesses, and free art programs for teachers. Dezaray is a senior Communication major with a concentration in Journalism. You can read articles from Dezaray at [www.inputfortwayne.com](http://www.inputfortwayne.com).



## Oneel Occenat

Oneel Occenat competed in the Council for Opportunity in Education's first Shark Tank Pitch in March for a chance to win scholarship money. Oneel pitched his invention and business plan to a panel of judges—the *Sleeve Clip* that is used to hold shirt sleeves up so wristwatches are easier to see. More information on his invention can be found at [www.clothingsleeveclip.com](http://www.clothingsleeveclip.com).



## Toko Htay

Toko Htay participated in the Student Research Symposium during spring semester. In his research, he discussed *Mycobacterium abscessus* that can cause severe infectious disease in humans. He states that "*M. abscessus* can form biofilms, which are large communities of cells and are usually resistant to most antibiotics." Toko investigated the role that efflux pumps have in biofilm formation and found that the "effectiveness of different efflux pump inhibitors (EPIs) against biofilm formation will benefit in the development of new antibiotics to treat *M. abscessus* infections."



## Lincoln Everetts

Lincoln Everetts is excited to take the stage this July in his premier performance as SpongeBob in the Civic Theatre's production of *The SpongeBob Musical*. SpongeBob, Patrick, Sandy, Squidward and all of Bikini Bottom face total annihilation of their undersea world! The stakes are higher than ever in this dynamic stage musical as chaos erupts and their lives hang in the balance. And just when all hope seems lost, a most unexpected hero takes center stage. The power of optimism really can save the world! For more information and to purchase tickets visit [www.fwcivic.org](http://www.fwcivic.org).



## Stephanie Spotts

Stephanie Spotts participated in the Student Research Symposium this spring. She featured costume designs for a proposed theatrical production of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* where the roles of women and men are reversed. Women have roles outside of taking care of their home and having children. In her production, the *Lysistrata* would have costume renderings of a *kisaeng*—women from a dynasty in Korea who serve as artists or entertainers. Stephanie wanted to display in this production that "if a play from Ancient Greece can show that ideology of women being equal to their male counterparts is possible, then the world of today should be able to as well."



## Austin Brandenberger

Austin Brandenberger will conduct research in quantum and material physics this summer for 10 weeks at Montana State University in Bozeman. He is attending with Brian D'Urso, who is an associate professor of optomechanics, quantum optics, precision measurements, and atomic physics at the University. He was chosen for the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates program based on his academic and research records. This program only awards a few hundred winners nationwide. Austin will be "implementing a feedback cooling algorithm that slows down particles trapped with Magnetic fields" and working with "magneto-gravitational traps".

Have news to share?

Email [trioss@pfw.edu](mailto:trioss@pfw.edu) to let us know what you are up to and to be featured in our next newsletter!

# RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

## August Events

- 22-24 – TRIO Tables on the Lawn 10am-2pm  
Pick up your planner, supplies, and tie-dye a TRIO t-shirt!
- 25 – Wear your TRIO T-Shirt Day  
Show your TRIO pride by wearing a TRIO shirt!
- 29 – TRIO Syllabus Workshop – 1-2pm, KT G43
- 31 – TRIO Coffee Hour – 8:30-9:30am, KT G30  
Grab a coffee, hot cocoa, tea, & snacks while visiting with TRIO friends!

## September Events

- 3-4 – Camp TRIO  
Join your TRIO friends for an overnight camp adventure!
- 12 – TRIO Goals Workshop- 1-2pm, KT G43
- 14 – TRIO Coffee Hour-8:30-9:30am, KT G30
- 14 – TRIO Cultural Conversations – 12-1pm, KT G43  
Learn about topics on diversity, equity, & inclusion.
- 15 – TRIO Leaders – 3-4pm, Library IDEASpace  
Get leadership training designed for first-generation students.
- 15 – TRIO Family Dinner – 5:30-7pm, Housing Classroom  
Eat dinner and play games with your other TRIO students.
- 19 – TRIO Financial Aid Workshop –1-2pm, KT G43
- 21 – TRIO Coffee Hour – 8:30-9:30am, KT G30
- 26 – TRIO Stress Relief Workshop –1-2pm, KT G43
- 27 – TRIO Mentor-Mentee Event –1:30-3pm, KT 239  
Participate in teambuilding activities with TRIO peer mentors!
- 28 – TRIO Coffee Hour – 8:30-9:30am, KT G30

RSVP to events in the TRIO office or by emailing [trioss@pfw.edu](mailto:trioss@pfw.edu)

## TRIO is Publishing Book Three



The third volume of TRIO's book, *Every Student Has a Story: Personal Narratives from First-Generation Students* will launch this fall. TRIO SSS students can write about their first-generation student experience and share their story to inspire others. Life as a first-generation college student can come

with many challenges and obstacles. Through this project, students are able to express how they persevered to make it in college. Students interested in becoming a published author and submitting a story for an upcoming book should contact Stephanie Smith or email [trioss@pfw.edu](mailto:trioss@pfw.edu) for more information. Mark your calendar now for our Book Launch on Wednesday, October 5, 2022 from 6-8pm in Walb Ballroom.



## Annual TRIO Picnic

Each June, TRIO hosts a picnic for current students, alumni, and friends. Attendees enjoy lunch, games, music, and fun giveaways while catching up with TRIO friends. The next TRIO Picnic will be on Thursday, June 22, 2023!

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