

TRiO Day celebrates first-gen students' success, research

by Alex Hummel - Tuesday, April 09, 2013

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Opposites may attract, but they don't necessarily last.

If you had to sum up Fabiola Navarro's research topic and findings, that just might cover it.

The first-generation college student from Green Bay, attending the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and on track to graduate in December, picked what some might consider a doozy of a research topic: Love.

... Or, more precisely and scientifically, "Matching Sensory Channels of Relating in Romantic Partners."

By measuring the way 33 partners related to one another and, examining the length and satisfaction of their relationships, Navarro and UW Oshkosh psychology department research mentor, Anca Miron, Ph.D., concluded that the magnetism that often draws two very different people together in the beginning of a relationship is, often, initially intense but weak glue. The relationships didn't seem to stick when such different characters were involved.

"Love is very abstract," Navarro said, reflecting on the challenges and findings within her work. "You can try to do research on it, and you can only get so close... Really, you really want to try to find someone who is similar you to as opposed to different."

Navarro's is just one example of the array of research Ronald E. Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program Scholars like her have undertaken. Her work and educational journey has been beneficiary of one-third of the programs that comprise the federally-funded TRiO programs. TRiO was created to, as National TRiO Day stressed April 9 at UW Oshkosh, "support and motivate students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree."

UW Oshkosh's Student Support Services (SSS) serves 300 students each year while the McNair Scholars program serves 25. The number of students each program serves is set by the U.S. Department of Education.

Courtney Hawkins, a UW Oshkosh student who helped coordinate the first TRiO Day events on campus and continues to support the event, said the programs have thrived with a strong, sustainable corps of students not only succeeding but reaching out to support peers new to them.

"A lot of our students who start in the groups actually become group leaders – not only are they in it, they help keep the program going," said Hawkins, who will also graduate in December.

Hawkins' success story is just one of several that is part of the TRiO legacy at UW Oshkosh.

Hailing from tiny Brownsville, WI, and as a first-generation college student, Hawkins was awarded the

College of Letters and Science's Service Recognition Award for her work in not only the TRiO recognition efforts but also in helping UW Oshkosh market and ramp up the launch of the institution's innovative, general education program transformation -- the University Studies Program -- this fall. She is also a past recipient of a Ralph J. Pruitt Scholarship, which is awarded through the TRiO program nationally to academically successful students demonstrating a track record of involvement in co-curricular and community activities.

Research wasn't the only student work on display during April 9's TRiO Day events. Student groups supported by the programs also entered the spotlight, giving their members a chance to explain their impact.

Trent Michalek, 18, of Manitowoc, helped emphasize the value of the "Global Citizens" program to guests to attending the TRiO open house event in Reeve Memorial Union. Michalek said his Global Citizens peers helped him not only open his eyes to the value of Fair Trade business, markets and diversity initiatives in the region but also in supercharging the fundraising campaign he developed to support a current Manitowoc K-12 students back home battling lymphoma.

"It really gave me the leadership traits I needed to succeed," Michalek said.

Learn more:

- [UW Oshkosh Student Support Services](#)
- [UW Oshkosh Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program](#)