

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 18, 2011

South's TRIO Grant Renewed

\$1.5 million federal grant enables college to continue providing critical student services.

(Seattle, WA) South Seattle Community College's TRiO-Talent Search (TS) grant has been renewed by the US Department of Education for the period 2011-2016. This is good news for more than 600 Highline and Seattle Public School students served each year under the grant, which provides a comprehensive array of intensive college access services to low-income students who would be the first in their family to attend college.

Chief Sealth International High School graduate Yesenia Barajas is among the more than 8,400 students who have benefitted from TRiO-TS in the 14 years that South has been funded. Yesenia, who will be attending Gonzaga University this fall, is the second oldest of 8 siblings; her father migrated to the United States from Mexico. Her parents impressed the importance of a college education on her, yet they were unable to guide her through the college process. She will be the first in her family to leave home and go away to college.

"I knew I wanted to go to college, I was clueless on just how to go college," she explained

Her journey with TRiO-TS began as a high school sophomore "I heard about the campus visits TRiO offered and decided to join. I'm so glad I did. With TRiO-TS, I've been able to experience more than just field trips. With help from the staff, I was accepted to several schools and at first I couldn't decide which to attend."

Attending a college tour of campuses during spring break, Yesenia was convinced she found the right school. "TRiO-TS gave me the opportunity to be on campus, see dorms, interact with faculty and students. I'm proud to say that I'm heading to Gonzaga University in the fall".

TRiO programs were established by the federal government in 1965, to "identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds." According to Sebastian Myrick, executive director of TRiO High School Programs, students who participate in TRiO-TS are retained and graduate from high school, as well as enroll in college, at significantly higher rates than non-participants. In the period 2008-2009, for example, 93% of TRiO-TS participants graduated from high school, and 84% applied for post-secondary admissions. In addition, 81% of TRiO-TS participants applied for financial aid and scholarships.

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ADD ONE

Ysenia acknowledges the important role TRiO has played in her educational success.

“TRiO Talent Search staff has become a second family, helping me grow from a child to a self-advocate – from taking me on campus visits and guiding me through the admissions, scholarship, financial aid process and encouraging me to always shoot for the stars, no matter how far away they may seem to be! I now have over \$30,000 in scholarships and grants to help finance my education.”

Yesenia plans to study International Business and looks forward to studying abroad.

“I will be forever grateful for the TRiO Talent Search program for helping make the dream of a college education a reality, not only for me but my entire family. I am determined to show my younger siblings that college is possible.”

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