TRIO WORKS!
NEWSLETTER
A monthly newsletter for students

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Welcome to TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) at Texas A&M University-Texarkana!

It is my hope that your semester is off to a great start. We acknowledge that we are living in unprecedented times and this academic year looks very different from previous ones; however, we are here to support you through your academic journey to the best of our abilities. We are in this together! As we enter into the new 2020-2021 academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to share the wonderful services and benefits we have in store for you.

- **Academic Support** (24/7 Online Tutoring, Academic Advising, Peer Mentoring, Academic Workshops & Priority Registration)
- **Financial & Economic Literacy Education** (Workshops & Modules)
- **Professional Development** (Résumé building, Interview Skills, Career Assessment)
- **Cultural/Educational Enrichment Opportunities** (Workshops, Events & Cultural Trips)
- **Technology Assistance** (Computer Lab, Unlimited Printing)
- **Scholarship Search** (We research scholarships that fit your strengths to help you pay for college)

*During this time, most services are provided virtually, but we are accepting computer lab appointments only by email to triosss@tamut.edu or jcannon@tamut.edu, or by phone to 903-334-6656 with a 24-hour notice. Please note that face coverings and social distancing guidelines are required.*

Everyone in TRIO SSS encourages your involvement and participation in all aspects of your educational and personal development. Reach out to the TRIO SSS staff, the campus community (faculty, staff, organizations, and departments), as well as your peers for support as you transform your dream of achieving a college degree into reality. The TRIO SSS staff looks forward to working with you and exploring the various ways to make your time at A&M-Texarkana an exciting and worthwhile experience!

As you read this newsletter, we have a lot of helpful information to assist you during the semester. For more information, please visit our website at https://tamut.edu/Academics/Student-Support/TRIO/index.html or contact us via e-mail at triosss@tamut.edu.

Thank you and best wishes on another successful year at A&M-Texarkana. TRIO WORKS!

*Brittany V. Barnett*

**Director, TRIO Student Support Services**

**Texas A&M University-Texarkana**
In an effort to keep our students and staff safe, as well as due to limited office space, we have had to implement the following changes for the Fall 2020 semester.

- We will be unable to accommodate walk-ins at this time, so you will be required to schedule an appointment to utilize the computer lab and/or meet with our staff (virtually). To schedule an appointment, please email us at triosss@tamut.edu.

- Due to limited space, we will only be able to allow one student to schedule an appointment to use the computer lab at a time. Appointments are for 30 minute increments, and due to limited staffing we ask that you allow us time in between appointments to sanitize.

- Due to limited space, we cannot meet with students physically while following social distancing guidelines. That being said, appointments to meet with our staff will be held via Zoom or the phone.

- Students coming to their scheduled appointment in the computer lab, MUST wear a face mask or some other CDC approved facial covering while in the office. It is important that we each do our part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Office hours for the computer lab have been adjusted to Monday through Friday 8:00am to 12:00pm CST.

- We will have to limit the number of workshops that we provide you with this semester, and they will be virtual via Zoom. Please see the attached workshop schedule for exact dates and times.

- We will not be allowing supplies to be checked out, at this time.

- Many of our forms have become virtual, so you will be able to complete them online rather than having to fill out a piece of paper.

- We have updated our participant handbook to reflect many of the changes. To sign the handbook acknowledgement form, please visit https://tamut.edu/Academics/Student-Support/TRIO/index.html and click the TRIO SSS Participant Handbook Acknowledgement Form Link.
PROGRAM UPDATES:

TRIO Student Support Services at Texas A&M University-Texarkana has been renewed for five (5) more years!

We are so honored and excited to continue to help our students on their educational journey for five more years. That being said, there are some updates that had to be made to keep us in allow us to continue to provide you with quality services and meet our grant requirements.

- TRIO SSS will be able to serve 140 students for the next five (5) years, at this time. This change had to be made to allow us to effectively provide each individual participant with our services.

- Supplemental Grant Aid will no longer be offered. Unfortunately, we could not afford to continue to offer this service. BUT we will continue to work hard to research scholarships that fit your needs to help you pay for college.

- The Grade Point Average (GPA) had to be raised to a 2.8 (institutional) minimum to help support renewing the program for an additional five (5) years. We are proud to say that many of you are already at or above this requirement.

- Those that have not reached the new minimum, will be placed on a program probation, which you will receive more information on soon.

- All participants will need to attend TRIO SSS Orientation again, even if you attended in the past.
Fall 2020 Workshops

TRIO SSS Orientation
*(Required for all participants)*
Thursday, Sept. 17th @
(12:00-1:00pm CST) via
Zoom

Financial Literacy:
*Online Financial Aid Education*
Thursday, October 15th @
(12:00-1:00pm CST) via
Zoom

Career Development:
*Career Goals*
Thursday, November 12th
@ (12:00-1:00pm CST) via
Zoom
COVID-19 SAFE PRACTICES

Slow the Spread of COVID-19

- Wear a cloth face covering
- Wash your hands often
- And stay 6 feet apart from others
- Clean frequently touched objects
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Stay home if you are sick

cdc.gov/coronavirus
COVID-19 SAFE PRACTICES

Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When in public, wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

[Image: cdc.gov/coronavirus]
1. Treat an online course like a “real” course.

When it comes to online classes, you need to have the discipline to sit down and say, “I am going to work on this,” as well as the dedication to actually follow through. Though you can be flexible as to when you choose to complete your work during the week, you can’t put it off indefinitely. One of the easiest ways to ensure follow through is to remember that you are paying to take this online course, just as you would for a traditional, in-person class. You must “show up” if you’re going to get real value out of your class. Treat your online classes the same way you would a face-to-face class—or, better yet, a job—and you’ll be off to the right start.

2. Hold yourself accountable

Set goals at the beginning of the semester, and check in with yourself weekly. In a traditional classroom setting, you’ll often receive verbal or visual reminders of an assignment’s upcoming due date. But without a professor actively reminding you, it’s up to you to make sure you’ve allotted enough time to complete the work so you’re not starting an assignment the day before it’s due. If you’re having trouble holding yourself responsible, pair up with a fellow classmate, or enlist the help of a spouse or friend to check in as an accountability partner. By being organized, proactive, and self-aware, you can get the most from your online class even when life outside of school becomes chaotic.
3. Practice time management.

The flexibility to create your own schedule is often one of the biggest appeals of taking online classes. But that freedom can also be detrimental if you do not have solid time management skills. Without them, you might easily to find yourself cramming before classes or handing in subpar assignments. Though how you manage your time will depend on your schedule, learning style, and personality, here are some universally valuable tips to help you practice and improve your time management skills:

- Look at the syllabus at the start of the semester and make note of major assignments. Mark them on a calendar you check regularly so you know what workload is coming in the weeks ahead. Don’t forget to factor in prior commitments that may interfere with your regular study schedule, such as weddings or vacations, so you can give yourself enough extra time to complete assignments.

- Create a weekly schedule that you follow, designating certain hours each week to reading, watching lectures, completing assignments, studying, and participating in forums. Commit to making your online coursework part of your weekly routine, and set reminders for yourself to complete these tasks.

- When working on your assignments, try time-blocking, allotting yourself a certain amount of time for each task before moving on to the next one and setting a timer to keep you accountable.

- Check in periodically throughout the term, and look at how you’re spending your time. Ask yourself: How much time am I dedicating to course reading and assignments? Am I regularly underestimating the time it’s taking me to get things done, forcing me to cram the nights before the exams? A little self-reflection and adjustment can go a long way.
4. Create a regular study space and stay organized

Set up a dedicated learning environment for studying. By completing your work there repeatedly, you’ll begin to establish a routine. Whether your workspace is your kitchen table, a library, or the corner booth in a local coffee shop, it’s important to determine what type of environment will work best for you.

Experiment to discover which type of setting boosts your productivity. Wherever you choose, make sure there’s high-speed internet access so you’re not trying to take an online course over a lagging connection. Setting up a regular workspace or office will also help you to stay organized. Knowing exactly where important dates, files, forms, syllabi, books, and assignments live will help keep you on track towards hitting your goals. When setting up your study space, make sure you:

- Have a high-speed internet connection
- Have the required books, materials, and software for the course
- Have headphones for listening to lectures or discussions (especially important in shared spaces)
5. Eliminate distractions.

From Netflix to social media to dishes piling up in the skink, you’ll be faced with many distractions that can easily derail your studies. The best online students know how to lessen these distractions and set aside time to focus. Exactly how much of a challenge these distractions will prove to be will depend on your own unique personality and situation. Some might find that they can tune out a noisy home by listening to music. Others might choose to work from a local coffee shop or library to eliminate their urge to multitask at home. Ultimately, you will need to find a strategy that works best for you. Regardless of where you choose to work, consider turning your cell phone off to avoid losing focus every time a text message or notification pops up. And if you’re still having trouble resisting the temptation to check your email or surf the web, try downloading a website blocker. Using applications like Cold Turkey and Freedom can help eliminate distractions by blocking the apps or websites that tend to compete for your attention, such as Facebook and Twitter.

6. Figure Out How You Learn Best

Once you’ve established where you’ll learn, think about when and how you accomplish your best work. If you’re a morning person, make time to study first thing. More of a night owl? Set aside an hour or two after dinner to cozy up to your computer. If the kids require your morning and evening attention, try to carve out a study session mid-day while they’re at school. Brew your usual cup of coffee, put on your go-to playlist, and do whatever you need to get into the zone and down to business.

Not everyone learns the same way, so think about what types of information help you best grasp new concepts and employ relevant study strategies. If you’re a visual learner, for example, print out transcripts of the video lectures to review. Learn best by listening? Make sure to build time into your schedule to play and replay all audio- and video-based course content.
7. Actively participate.

Participate in the course’s online forum to help you better understand course materials and engage with fellow classmates. This might involve commenting on a classmate’s paper on a discussion board or posting a question about a project you’re working on. Read what other students and your professor are saying, and if you have a question, ask for clarification.

Make sure you are checking in as often as you can, too. The flexibility of online learning means that if you have 30 minutes before dinner plans, you could squeeze in a discussion response around your schedule. Set a goal to check in on the class discussion threads every day. And if you do feel yourself falling behind, speak up. Don’t wait until an assignment is almost due to ask questions or report issues. Email your professor and be proactive in asking for help.

8. Leverage your network.

Online classes may sometimes make you feel like you are learning on your own, but this couldn’t be further from the truth. Most online courses are built around the concept of collaboration, with professors and instructors actively encouraging that students work together to complete assignments and discuss lessons. Build relationships with other students by introducing yourself and engaging in online discussion boards. Your peers can be a valuable resource when preparing for exams or asking for feedback on assignments. Don’t be afraid to turn to them to create a virtual study group. Chances are good that they will appreciate it just as much as you will.

Want more tips for learning online? Visit the FACE Keep Learning Page: https://tamut.edu/Academics/Student-Support/Keep_Learning/index.html
WHAT’S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS?

- September 4th: Involvement Fair 2pm-4pm (Virtual)
- September 10th: Boom Boom BINGO 7pm-8pm (online via Twitch)
- September 17th: Follow Me Virtual Escape Room. Several Sessions 6pm; 7:30pm; 9pm (Zoom)

For more information on these events or to register, please go on EagleSync.

Located in SCIT 114, the Eagle Pantry feeds student success by providing essential non-perishable and personal hygiene items to students in need.

The pantry is available to any student in need. All you need to provide is your current student ID card.

**Dates/Hours of Operation:**

- September 14 | 12-6pm
- September 28 | 12-6pm
- October 12 | 12-6pm
- October 26 | 12-6pm
- November 9 | 12-6pm
- November 23 | 12-6pm

Need help outside of our monthly distribution? Email them at foodpantry@tamut.edu.
WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS?

VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

OCT. 7TH

11AM TO 2PM

Virtually Everything Career Expo
- Full-time
- Part-time
- Internships
- Volunteer Opportunities

DRESS TO IMPRESS AND HAVE COPY OF YOUR RESUME ON-HAND AND AVAILABLE TO EMAIL.
Career Coffee Chats

Virtually join TAMUT Career Development Wednesdays at 11:00 AM!
Learn how to be career ready!

September
Your Career Starts Now  
9th
The Standout Resume  
16th
Branding Yourself  
23rd
Ask the Recruiter  
30th
Five Steps to Stand Out at Virtual Career Fair

October
Job & Internship Searching: COVID Version  
14th
Be the STAR in your Interview  
21st
Preparing for Virtual Interviews  
28th

November
Job & Internship Searching: COVID Version  
4th
Know Your Worth: The Art of Salary Negotiation  
11th

Check your email for the Zoom link and password

career.development@tamut.edu
903.334.6707
www.hireaneagle.work
TRIO STAR STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

GEOVANNI LEON

Major: Computer Science
Classification: Senior
1. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

My name is Geovanni Leon, currently a senior studying computer science in my final year in Spring 2021. I began my educational journey at Texarkana College at 2015 then transferring to Texas A&M University – Texarkana at 2017. It is taking me long time to get it done, and it had some challenges (especially now with this year...). But the Lord and amazing people around me (talking to you TRIO) has been helping endure the journey and I am grateful for them. The things I like to do in my spare time is playing the piano, messing around with microcontrollers, and reading books; to get ahead on the things I would like to build and contribute in the future. As a professional career, I see myself working in Information Technology, and as a passion, to work as a developer/programmer in music and/or robotics.

2. Are you involved in any organizations or clubs, do any volunteer activities?

I participate with the activities TRIO has for its members, but unfortunate events made it not possible for this year though. Outside of school, I am worship member in my church - playing piano and singing praises for my Lord. ♪♪

3. Are there any accomplishments, awards or scholarships you would like to share?

I was selected, for the FIRST TIME, by the SWASAPscholarship committee to receive their SWASAP Collegiate Scholarship of $500 for this year. I am also selected by the Hispanic Scholarship Fund organization to be an HSF Scholar and to receive a scholarship from them (hopefully... they’re still sorting it out. Lol).

(A thought I would like to share: I honestly didn’t think I would get any scholarships before I graduated from this university. Since high school to now, I saw students getting their semester tuition or the full tuition paid because they were among the 10% of their school or had 3.8 GPA and higher. I did not consider myself a bright person in high school, and I did not believe I would ever get a scholarship. But in my heart, I did desire a scholarship. So, in my early college years, I work hard and put the effort in my studies, and my results were pretty good. However, I did not know where or how to apply scholarships since it was foreign thing to me. No one helped me and I couldn’t figure it out. As semesters passed, I slack in my classes and my GPA did go down, and so when I did apply for a transfer scholarship given in Texarkana College, I didn’t get it and it discourage me in believing that I would ever get one. And throughout my time in this university, I still had hope that I will receive one eventually. I sacrifice my braincells and good nights sleep for good grades and mid-high GPA. I applied for scholarships from the university, but I did not receive anything of them. After the disappointments, I stop believing that I ever get a scholarship and made peace that all the investments to making good grades and improving my GPA was done in vain. However, TRIO had an event regarding to scholarships and provided information on where to apply.

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...It did give me some hope that I could get something, but I didn’t go far with it and stopped. But TRIO didn’t stop though, they were emailing scholarships to everybody in TRIO this year! They found scholarships I felt I had a chance since it required to write something about myself and why I should be given a scholarship. I pour my SOUL into the words I wrote on those applications, prayed, and submitted it. The sense of excitement for a response was gone a long time ago and I expected the same results as usual. But when I got an email telling me, “Congratulations Geovanni”, and receiving the news; I knew all the hard work and effort I gave was acknowledged and rewarded. It was a heartwarming moment, and the sense of happiness and joy overcame me after years of rejection. And all of this couldn’t be possible without the people of TRIO. They contribute something no one else in the world could now give me; my very first scholarship and the comfort to know hard work does paid off for me. This was the best gift you guys can give, especially in my final year in the school. I couldn’t ask for better people to help me in educational journey than the people of TRIO, and I know you guys will continue to help other students like you helped me. Thank you.

4. Why did you choose A&M-Texarkana?

It was the best option for me since I am living in Texarkana. Considering that I moved around a lot, if the Lord placed me here, then I’ll be here.

5. What do you like about TRIO SSS?

What’s not to like about TRIO SSS? The TRIO staffs are great, the TRIO members are great, the benefits are great, their events are great, the food in the events are great - TRIO SSS overall is just great. It has a community vibe that you don’t feel anywhere else in the university – that’s good thing to because it makes TRIO special and I like that.