

# THE PILLAR

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE TRIO SSS COMMUNITY  
*"Helping Students Realize Their Full Potential"*



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## Mission Statement

The University of Colorado Denver TRIO Student Support Service Program is a holistic student development program that is dedicated to helping each student reach his or her full academic potential.

## Student Spotlight — Atal Esan



The TRIO Student Support Services program is happy to highlight Atal Esan in this month's edition of "The Pillar" newsletter. He is working to complete a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. Atal was asked what his college experience was like and he stated, "I was born in Kabul, Afghanistan and along with my family, I became an immigrant moving from one country (Afghanistan) to another (Ukraine) and finally to the United States of America in the hopes of building a stable future. My journey as a college student at CU Denver has been appealing. I am a first-generation college student, and as you can imagine, that itself is not an easy concept to get accustomed to. I spent a major part of my college experience trying to navigate my way around the college education system. I had to learn to create a balance between my personal and academic life and how to tie that around my goal of going to Dental School."

Atal spent a good part of his freshman year learning about the importance of his courses, which led him to establish an unconditional passion for Biology. Upon taking courses like General Biology, he became intrigued by the many fascinating similarities between human cells and the cells of plants, and even smaller organisms such as bacteria. It has made him evaluate life in the terms that everything that is present in this world is connected. He noted that although we are unique in so many ways, that we are not so different after all. During his freshman year, he became very interested in community service. He began volunteering at "Food for Thought," which was the best decision he has ever made in his life. By the end of the year, he had created another goal and that was to create a non-profit charity organization to help not only individuals at his community level, but also globally. Community service is and will always be part of his life as he progresses towards an advanced version of himself.

When asked about challenges he faced while earning his degree he stated, "The biggest challenge I had to overcome was to learn how to manage my time. My first year of college, I was so focused on my education to the point where it had affected my mental health. I forgot the things I used to love such as hanging out with friends, going to the gym, playing soccer, etc. It took me nearly two years to realize that life needs a natural balance." Atal mentioned that he can manage his time to study, have a healthy relationship, and most importantly go to the gym to better his mental health.

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## Student Spotlight Continued — Atal Esan

He noted that the program has helped him in several ways. Atal stated, "TRIO has been able to provide resources for my success not only in my education but also personal life as well. I was able to utilize workshops that were provided by TRIO to gain knowledge on how to manage my money, how to write a resume/cover letter, etc. Additionally, I had great peer mentors and coordinators that have given me tremendous amount of advice and honestly without them I would not have been able to succeed in certain parts of my education." The advice he offers other TRIO participants is to enjoy and utilize everything provided by TRIO. Something that he wished he was told before starting college is to cherish every moment of your life that you experience. His favorite memory in college was receiving the Outstanding General Chemistry Award.

His hobbies include playing soccer, going to the gym, and rock climbing. Atal's short and long-term goals include applying to dental school this year and becoming a dentist. If Atal were to win a million dollars, the first thing he would do is invest the money to make a healthy profit. His favorite quote is, "The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing."- Socrates. This is his favorite quote because it has always kept him open-minded to have a mentality to capture something new. We wish Atal good fortune in the future.



## Student Spotlight — Erika Chavez



The TRIO Student Support Services program is happy to highlight Erika Chavez. She will be graduating this semester with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in Accounting. She has been an active participant in the program since she transferred from the Community College of Denver. Her favorite quote is, "All our dreams will come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." This quote reflects what she has been working for her whole life. She did not let fear or challenges stop her from accomplishing her goals of coming to a new country, learning a new language, and earning her accounting degree.

Attending college to pursue her degree was the best decisions she has made. CU Denver has provided her not only financial support but gave her the opportunity to meet great classmates, mentors, and to increase her professional network. She mentioned that balancing school and work full-time was not easy but she was able to obtain solid grades every semester and even made the Business School Dean's List. Her favorite memory in college was when she was selected

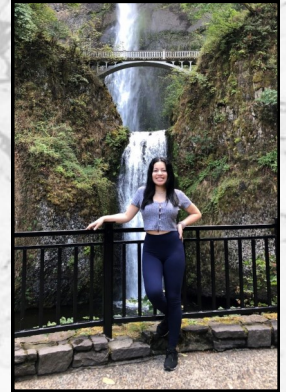
as a scholarship recipient. She was invited to attend the 2023 Celebration of Success with other students, professors, and donors. She noted there was a special guest, Daymond John, who she had been watching on television for years. She was selected among other students to meet with him separately and was able to ask him more specific questions. Erika noted, "It was an honor getting to talk to him in person and I appreciate the great advice he gave us."

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## Student Spotlight Continued — Erika Chavez



We asked Erika one thing she wished she was told when she started college. She noted, "It's okay if you need to slow down a little and take longer in getting your degree. Maybe you need to work less hours or take less classes to make sure that you are balancing everything appropriately and not overwhelming yourself." Erika noted, "Getting higher education in my second language was my first biggest challenge. Also, my college journey was hard because I needed to work full-time while being a full-time student to be able to cover tuition and personal expenses." These challenges taught her how to be more organized and to persevere even when things were not as simple because all the hard work and effort would be worth it in the end.



Erika was asked how TRIO has helped her in her journey. She noted, "Everyone was so great at giving me advice and showing me all the resources that were available at CU Denver. Whenever I did not know where to find something or how to apply for something, Henry would find it quickly and send me the links or show me how to do it." If you need assistance with anything, Erika noted that TRIO will help you every time. Her short-term goal is to start her Master's Program in Accounting this fall 2023 semester to earn the necessary credits for her CPA License. Goals for the future include owning her own house by next year and to start her career as an Accountant. Her hobbies and interests include dancing salsa, and watching movies. If she won a million dollars, the first thing she would do is buy a really nice house. The TRIO SSS Program wishes Erika continued success!

## Student Spotlight — Jazmin Teran Balbuena



TRIO SSS is delighted to highlight Jazmin Teran Balbuena, who will be graduating this semester with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in Marketing. She has been an active member of the program since the fall 2020 semester. When asked about her CU Denver college experience, Jazmin noted she gained so much knowledge and made many new friendships she will never forget. During her time at CU Denver, she participated in the Student Government Association (SGA), Peer Advocate Leaders (PALs), TRIO SSS Program, Student Life and Campus Community, and the Latin Student Services. She is grateful for her experiences with these organizations and she looks forward to sharing her knowledge in her future career. Her favorite memory in college was being the Student Government, Director of Events and Planning where she organized events such as the Carnival De Lynx, Cultural Diversity Festival, and CU Denver's first Spring Formal. Jazmin mentioned that the amount of people she was able to get to know in the short-time was absolutely amazing and some friendships she will never forget.

Her favorite quote by Albert Einstein is, "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." This quote resonated with Jazmin because it shows that education has no limits but that it has to be applied specifically for you so you can learn the most. She noted, "Growing up with learning disabilities, it was a reminder that I was able to learn and become successful." One thing she wished she would have known when she started college was learning about campus resources and organizations during her freshman year. Having someone tell her about them would have been helpful. The biggest challenge of earning her marketing degree was studying and passing her mathematics, finance, and statistics course. She noted that math has never been her strong suit. Growing up with a learning disability, it was very difficult for her to achieve a higher education with a system that was not for her to learn. The TRIO SSS program has helped her connect to campus resources that have helped her succeed. If it was not for the program, the obstacles would have been higher for her to graduate. Her advice to other TRIO students is to make sure you are communicating with mentors because they can truly guide you with any college issues or advice for the future.

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## Student Spotlight Continued — Jazmin Teran Balbuena



Her short-term goal is to have a position where she can use her marketing degree in education to equip future students who struggle with Dyslexia to be more prepared for their educational journey by marketing tools that can help students with learning disabilities. Besides having a job that helps her promote equipment to help students with learning disabilities, she would like to help grow MHC Realty Group that was started by her husband to help people buy or sell a home. She would like



to put her skills to the test and market the company in hopes to find people that need help buying or selling a home. She would also like to start a family and teach her kids about education and why it is so important to learn because it is one thing that can never be taken away.

Her hobbies and interested include spending time with her family and exploring different parts of the United States because it means she can grow her Starbucks collection every time she visits a new state. If she won a million dollars, the first thing Jazmin would do is put 40% of this money into a mutual fund then she would buy small properties to rent out and buy a home for her family to live in. The TRIO SSS Program wishes Jazmin continued success in her personal and career endeavors. You did it!

## TRIO News and Kudos

kudos

Have an accomplishment? Please tell TRIO about it. You can stop by the TRIO Office located in the Student Commons Building, Suite 2011 to share your News and Kudos.

- ★ Eduardo Galindo was offered Product Engineer position at Altec AIR. He accepted offer.
- ★ Diana Truong was accepted into the CU Denver/CU Nursing Bridge Pathway Program.
- ★ Tiffany Roman was chosen as the recipient of the CLAS Outstanding Undergraduate Award and was accepted into MSUD Social Work Program.
- ★ Kalkidan Astatike was interviewed and accepted into the Health Interest Program @ Denver Health for 2023-2024.
- ★ Mia Jannika Lim was accepted into the Generation Teach Summer Teaching Fellowship.
- ★ Nhi Nguyen successfully completed the Health Interest Program @ Denver Health and will be applying to Dental School this year.

***Congratulations and great job on your hard work. Keep it up!***

## Podcast Spotlights



**Rotten Mango** - Interested in true crime stories? Stephanie Soo is the host of Rotten Mango that goes through bone-chilling crimes with her amazing storytelling and commentary. With little doses of comedy and commentary from her fiancé, the two duos make the stories come to life and feel like you're listening to the stories with friends.



**Stuff You Should Know** - A deeper dive into random things you don't know about. With our hosts Josh and Chuck, you go on a deep dive into the history and inner workings of random things like Ivy Leagues, Flamingos, and so on. You never really know what exactly you'll learn next, but you always be accompanied by the chemistry of the amusing and relaxed hosts: Josh and Chuck.



**Dissect** - A deeper analysis of beloved artists and their music. Each Season our host Cole Cuchna goes through analyzing every song of one album from Tyler the Creator, Frank Ocean, Beyoncé, etc. Dissect is like a documentary in an audio form where we get to learn an artist's history and intentions of their songs. It's a calm and interesting podcast soothing to the ear.

**Monica Vu | TRIO SSS Peer Mentor**

## Spring DIY— Easy Tulip Wreath



### SUPPLIES

Faux tulip stems | 3" burlap ribbons | 14" straw wreath form | Wire cutters

As you can see you will need a about a fair amount of small tulip bundles. For this project, 13 bundles where used. You can buy these at your local craft store, perhaps even at Walmart or Dollar Store.

1. To start off you will need to wrap your ribbon around your straw wreath. Making sure that the ribbon is loose enough to be able to stick the stems in the seams but not too loose that they will fall out (Leave plastic wrapping on wreath).
2. Begin cutting the tulip stems from the main one using your wire cutters.
3. Now that you have your single tulip stems start working your way around pushing each stem into the seams of the ribbon. (Side note: Insert your stems through the plastic wrapping for extra security)
4. Continue to fill empty spot you find and once you "fluff" it to your liking you will be set.
5. Hang your wreath in your front door!



**Cristal Sarmiento Garcia | TRIO SSS Peer Mentor**

## Apply To the FaM Business Program!

### Join the First-generation and Multicultural Business Program!

**FaM Eligibility:** Undergraduate students pursuing a business degree at CU Denver who identify as either a first-generation, multicultural, or both. Students entering the program in Fall 2023 must have at least 60 credits remaining in their degree.

#### The FaM Experience:

- ✓ Year-round programming
- ✓ Community of first-gen and multicultural peers
- ✓ Internships and learning outside the classroom
- ✓ Focus on inclusive leadership, service, and career pathing
- ✓ Financial support - scholarships and paid internships
- ✓ Mentorship - peers, alumni, and business professionals

Apply today! The preferred deadline to apply is June 1st!  
<https://tinyurl.com/FaM-Student-Application>  
Have Questions? Email Us: [Fam.Business@UCDenver.edu](mailto:Fam.Business@UCDenver.edu)



## Business School Graduate Programs Information Session

### Graduate Programs Information Session...

Wednesday, May 31, 2023 9am to 10am

☒ I'm Interested Register →



Join us for an online graduate programs information session to learn about all of the MBA and MS offerings at CU Denver Business School.

Wednesday, May 31, 2023  
9:00 am to 10:00 am  
Register [HERE!](#)

## Sports Corner: Japan Winning the MLB World Baseball Classic



The MLB World Baseball Classic is an international tournament that occurs every 3 years after the main MLB season ends. The tournament consists of the best baseball players from around the world joining together to find out which region is the best. In previous years, Japan's baseball league had bested every other region winning in 2006, 2009, and now in 2023. The country of Japan consists of possibly the best players in baseball history such as Yu Darvish, Roki Sasaki, and Shohei Ohtani. Ohtani has been the most popular baseball player in recent history as he is known for being the only two-way player in the current MLB season, being a pitcher and batter for the Los Angeles Angels. The last time the MLB had a two-way player like Ohtani was Babe Ruth back in 1914 but Ruth eventually gave up pitching in the middle of his career

just to focus on batting. Japan won against powerhouse countries in baseball such as the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and the United States. The final game of the World Classic resulted in a 3-2 victory for Japan against the United States where Shohei Ohtani threw the game winning pitch striking out his LA Angels teammate Mike Trout.

**Huy Duong | TRIO SSS Peer Mentor**

## Director's Corner



Dear SSS Participants,

It is with mixed emotions that I write this farewell newsletter article, as I will be ending my tenure as Director of this remarkable program in mid-June. As I prepare to embark on a new chapter in my professional journey, I want to reflect on our collective achievements, express my gratitude, and share some parting thoughts.

First and foremost, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each of you. It has been an absolute privilege to work with such an exceptional group of students and to lead a team of dedicated individuals who consistently demonstrate unwavering commitment and passion to our program participants and first-generation college students everywhere. To the TRIO SSS professional and student staff, our collective efforts have resulted in tangible impacts, making a difference in the lives of countless students we serve.

To you, our SSS participants, I encourage you to continue pushing boundaries, embracing change, and striving for excellence. Remember that success is not measured solely by the destination but by the journey itself. Embrace every challenge as an opportunity for growth, and never lose sight of the tremendous potential within each of you. Remember, too, that you have a dedicated SSS team who will support, advocate, and cheer you on every step of the way.

Serving as the SSS Director has been an honor and a privilege. I will cherish the memories and friendships forged here, and I am excited to see what the future holds for each of you. As I embark on my new journey, I carry the valuable lessons and experiences gained from our time together. I eagerly look forward to witnessing your continued success and the impact of TRIO SSS. Remember, TRIO WORKS!

With heartfelt gratitude,  
Sonia Valencia  
Director, TRIO SSS & McNair

## TRIO SSS Student Employment Opportunities

The TRIO Student Support Services program will be hiring for several work-study positions including Office Assistants, Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics (STEM) Peer Mentor, and a Humanities & Social Science Peer Mentor. To view the position descriptions on Handshake, please visit the links below.

[STEM Peer Mentor](#)  
[Humanities & Social Science Peer Mentor](#)  
[Office Assistants](#)

TRIO SSS is a 100% federally funded program that provides low-income, first-generation students and/or students with disabilities academic and personal support to help students complete their undergraduate studies. The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

— JOIN THE TEAM —  
*We're hiring!*



## Summer Studying Tips

Summer is around the corner and as you prepare for your summer courses, consider the following study tips.

### ★ Find a space that is favorable to studying

- ✓ Have a desk | A comfortable chair | Proper lighting | Do not lay on your bed to study.

### ★ Create a playlist that helps you focus

- ✓ It is suggested to play music that has no words. According to surveys, playing classical music while studying is said to lead to more favorable scores in tests or quizzes.

### ★ Get rid of distracting devices

- ✓ Put your devices on "do not disturb." Leave your phone in a different room than the one you're studying in. "Studies show that even the presence of a phone nearby is adequate to stop most people from studying efficiently."

### ★ Don't be afraid to experiment with a mix of study methods (Try a variety of study methods)

- ✓ Pomodoro Study Method (breaking down studying time into increments)
- ✓ Feynman Technique (Teaching the topic to someone younger)
- ✓ Leitner System (Using flashcards for memorization)
- ✓ PQ4R Study Method (Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, and Review)
- ✓ SQ3R Study Method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review)

### ★ Work with a study group

- ✓ Meet up with peers from your classes so that you are able to keep each other accountable, quiz each other, solve problems together, compare notes, and teach concepts to each other.

### ★ Take Breaks

- ✓ Keep study breaks between 5-minutes to an hour. A study break can refresh your brain while increasing your energy, productivity, and focus. Activities to do on a break can include:
  - Breathing exercises | A brisk walk | Stretching | Power nap | Eating a healthy meal | Meditation | Yoga

### ★ Maintain a healthy balanced diet

- ✓ Give your brain the nutrients it needs and drink plenty of water. Brain stimulating foods include:
  - Berries | Dark chocolate | Nuts | Protein | Avocados | Fish | Red, green and orange vegetables

### ★ Other Tips

- ✓ Start early | Create a study schedule | Give yourself more time for your toughest classes | Make sleep a priority

### ★ Resources

- ✓ <https://www.pointloma.edu/resources/undergraduate-studies/10-study-tips-surviving-finals-week>
- ✓ <https://www.fastweb.com/student-life/articles/the-20-study-tips-for-finals>
- ✓ <https://e-student.org/best-study-methods/>

**Juan Reveles Hernandez | TRIO SSS Peer Mentor**

## Colorado Dragon Boat Festival

### Colorado Dragon Boat Festival

**JULY 22ND & 23RD, 2023**

**SLOAN'S LAKE PARK IN DENVER**

### Celebrate!

The mission of Colorado Dragon Boat is to build bridges of awareness, knowledge, and understanding between the diverse Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and the general public through cultural education, leadership development, and athletic competition. Join Colorado's annual celebration of Asian and Asian American heritage with the biggest Dragon Boat Festival in the US!

Visit: <https://www.cdbf.org/>

