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TRIO Student Support Services Enrolling Participants at USFSP

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Story by Robert Baynard, '12

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (March 1, 2011) – USF St. Petersburg received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for the funding of TRIO Student Support Services. Participating students can receive free academic and personal support as of spring 2011, that will help them be successful in their educational and professional goals while at USF St. Petersburg.

“At the heart of the program is connecting TRIO Student Support Services with student mentors and university services to provide social and academic support,” said Diane McKinstry, director of the Student Achievement department at USF St. Petersburg. “We’re accepting applications for student mentors and participants in the program.”

TRIO SSS’s mission is to promote academic success, help students reach their academic potential, and to foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of low-income, first generation students. Counselors will work closely with students to develop an individualized success plan that can help guide students on their journey through USF St. Petersburg.

TRIO SSS assists students with academic tutoring, financial literacy workshops and a mentoring program. The program’s resource center provides a quiet study area with computer access, free printing and cultural activities. Students can receive assistance with finding financial aid, drop-in counseling and career advising.

“We work closely with all university student services, and we work in collaboration with the Career Center to support students’ career development while they are studying at USFSP,” McKinstry said.

The Career Center is open to all USF St. Petersburg students, but TRIO SSS can also assist participants with finding pre-graduation work experience, filling out applications for financial aid, and additional services based on individual needs.

According to federal guidelines, students are eligible to participate in TRIO SSS if they are U.S. citizens from low-income families and/or attending USF St. Petersburg as first-generation college students. Admission is based on students with the most need for academic assistance.

“Going forward, we hope that TRIO participants can become student mentors as they become seniors,” McKinstry said. “We’re connected closely to the Career Center. We want freshmen to build a resume, business etiquette, interview skills and learn how to network.”

Students interested in applying for the TRIO Student Support Services program, can visit the TRIO SSS office located at TER 302, or they can fill out an online application form on the program website, www.stpete.usf.edu/trio. For more information, please contact a counselor by calling (727) 873-4003 or emailing at trio@stpete.usf.edu.

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