

TRiO Activities Held at State Capitol

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Six Upward Bound students at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford recently attended TRiO Day activities at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City. Attending were (from left): Devin Ragsdale, Thomas-Fay-Custer; Julia Lee and Saranda Keesling, both of Weatherford; Justin Johnson, Burns Flat-Dill City; and Lorena Medina and Whitley Jefferson, both of Weatherford. Also attending but not pictured are SWOSU Upward Bound Director Jamie Novey and SWOSU Associate Provost Cindy Foust.

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In an effort to provide educational opportunity for all Americans and eligible non-citizens, Congress initiated the federal TRiO programs through the Higher Education Act of 1965. TRiO offers seven educational outreach programs that are designed to motivate, support and advocate for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

TRiO Day provides an opportunity to spotlight TRiO and educate Oklahoma state officials, media, and others regarding the importance TRiO programs have on the state of Oklahoma.

Over 1,000 individuals attended this year's annual event. Among the guest speakers were Lt. Gov. Jari Askins, Chickasaw Gov. Bill Anoatubby, State Treasurer Scott Meachum, and Rep. Tom Cole. Jamie Novey, director of the Upward Bound program at SWOSU, said former TRiO participants also spoke, sharing their stories of how TRiO helped them overcome barriers that may have potentially kept them from obtaining a college education.

Novey said there are 83 TRiO programs across the state of Oklahoma that serves 27,601 individuals. Nationally, there are over 2,700 programs serving nearly 873,000 individuals.

At SWOSU, Upward Bound is a college preparatory program designed to help students who have "college potential" but often do not recognize or understand their academic and career option beyond high school.

Students who participate in an Upward Bound program receive academic instruction, tutoring, personal and career counseling, ACT test preparation, professional mentoring, exposure to cultural events, and assistance in completing college admission and financial aid applications.

SWOSU's Upward Bound program serves 74 students. Those who attended the TRiO Day activities included: Devin Ragsdale, Thomas-Fay-Custer; Julia Lee, Saranda Keesling, Lorena Medina and Whitley Jefferson, all of Weatherford; and Justin Johnson, Burns Flat-Dill City.

Additional information about the Upward Bound program is available by calling 580.774.7129.