



# **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

## **2020-2021 Annual Report and 2021-2022 Annual Plan**

### **1. Introduction**

The Student Services' First-Generation Student Center (First-Gen Student Center) houses four pre-college programs supporting high school students (Three Upward Bound programs and an Upward Bound Math and Science program) and four college programs supporting students attending UNR (TRIO Scholars, TRIO STEM Scholars, First in the Pack, and McNair Scholars program). Seven of our eight programs are funded by the US Department of Education TRIO programs, which defines them as:

The Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) are Federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs.

One additional program, First in the Pack (FITP) is funded by UNR through the President Sandoval's Diversity Initiative and the Division of Student Services and mirrors the structure and services offered by TRIO.

In the academic year 2020-2021, the First-Gen Student Center served a total of 790 participants, 246 of which were high school students and 544 UNR students. These numbers represent a fraction of the population that meet qualifications for participation but illustrate the increasing number of first-generation and low-income students searching for support in order to access institutions of higher education as well as the number of qualifying students enrolled at the university (the percentage varies from 24% to 40% depending on the first-generation definition while 31% received federal Pell Grant and 28% met the federal definition as low income). In addition, all participants of the programs under the First-Gen Student Center face academic challenges that indicate that are underprepared to succeed in higher education: low-high school or college GPA, five or more years out of the school/college system, English language learners, identified by faculty members as at-risk, low ACT/SAT scores, etc.)

Our 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 goals directly correspond to the principles and the foundation of the Civil Rights Movement, which motivated the creation of all TRIO programs. The need to foster an academic environment conducive to providing access to higher education and increasing the retention and graduation rates of the population are fundamental to our existence.

However, the same goals also reflect restrictions, policies, and regulations common to all college access and graduation programs funded by the federal TRIO office and the values and principles of our ever-changing society.

### **2. Department Foundation**

#### **a. Vision**

All students should have an equal opportunity to prepare for, attend, and graduate from college without limitations dictated by family background, economic status or disability.

## b. Mission

The Student Services First-Generation Student Center aspires to achieving college access and success for all first-generation, low-income, underrepresented students, and students with disabilities at UNR.

## c. Values

**Social Justice and Inclusion:** Fostering a learning environment equitable to all groups while striving to remove barriers to higher education. Demonstrate culturally inclusive advising and supporting coaching strategies.

**Growth:** Learning from shared experiences for new opportunities and self-development.

**Engagement and citizenship:** Promoting a campus and community culture that supports the free exchange of ideas, civic engagement, and the free expression of identities and beliefs.

**Knowledge:** Creating opportunities and experiences that develop the whole student for lifelong learning and success.

**Student-Centered:** Fostering an environment that is supportive, embraces students' unique needs and talents, diverse backgrounds, interests, and goals.

**Advocacy:** Integrating research, reflection, and experience into action

**Commitment to Excellence:** Striving to surpass existing standards that could benefit individuals and the larger community.

**Empowerment:** Developing agency and the social capital of students and colleagues to promote leadership

**Community:** Promoting a working and learning environment that contributes to the development of collaborations, partnerships, networks and provides opportunities for individual and collective growth.

## d. Diversity Statement

Emanated from the struggles and achievements of the Civil Right Movement and President Lyndon Johnson's "unconditional war on poverty", our programs have the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the core. All programs under the administration of the First-Generation Student Center strive to provide access and opportunities to minoritized populations in higher education.

## e. Overall Department Goals

**Pre-College programs** (Upward Bound programs and Upward Bound Math and Science):

To increase the rate at which participants access and successfully complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education.

**College Programs** (TRIO Scholars, TRIO STEM Scholars, First in the Pack, McNair Scholars Program):

To develop the necessary agency in first-generation and income-qualified students to meet their educational, social, and career goals and to increase the number of income-qualified, first-generation, and underrepresented students who pursue and complete a doctoral degree.

### 3. Goals/work related to DEI and addressing systemic barriers in 2020-2021 *(please provide information related to the 2020-2021 year)*

#### 3.1 To institutionalize the First in the Pack program.

As the number of first-generation and low-income students seeking programs and services that can address their academic challenges, interests, and strengths increases, First in the Pack has offered academic support services to address those needs. The program was created to replicate services and activities offered by the TRIO Scholars program, which by federal regulations is limited to serve 184 students. FITP has evolved from a program serving 100 freshmen in 2014-2015 to assisting almost 200 students in 2020-2021 supported by several university funds:

- 56% of participants were low-income,
- 74% were students of color, and
- 26% come from rural areas.

Institutional data demonstrate that the number of students meeting the above-mentioned criteria will continue to grow which underlines the need to secure other sources of funding to supplement university resources and to institutionalize the program. In 2020-2021, our Center applied and was selected to receive an US Department of Education five-year grant to serve 120 of the first-generation, low-income First in the Pack students pursuing STEM and health related majors.

#### 3.2 To promote the retention of low-income student parents by assisting with the cost of childcare: The Childcare Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) Grant

In the 2020-2021 academic year, our Center submitted a proposal to the US Department of Education that, if funded, will support the retention and graduation efforts of student parents who are Pell Grant recipients or equivalent (low income) and who have difficulties covering the cost of childcare. The grant will combine provision of funds (\$215,173 per year for four years) with academic support services for undergraduate and graduate student parents. If funded, the program will start operations in the fall 2021 and will continue until the year 2025 with an opportunity to reapply for funds. This effort is a partnership with UNR Child and Family Research Center and with the College of Education.

#### 3.3 To actively engage local school leaders and educators with the purpose of gathering resources, building partnerships, and establish networks with the goals of:

- Strengthening the UNR First-Generation Coalition  
The First-Generation Coalition is a campus-wide organization of academic and administrative faculty members committed to increasing the awareness of the unique challenges of first-generation students faced at UNR. In most cases, members of the Coalition are first-generation themselves. Members highly motivated to offer their time, leadership, experiences, and mentoring skills to students in order to carry out the mission of the university. For the year 2020-2021, our Center established a needed structure, crated a website, expanded the membership of the Coalition, and served as a hub for the exchange of ideas, activities, and services organized by campus offices and organizations that benefited first-generation students.
- Prepare and submit highly competitive *Upward Bound* (three) and *Upward Bound Math and Science* (one) proposals for refunding.
- Prepare and submit an *Upward Bound Math and Science* proposal for refunding and a new proposal for funding.  
Since many changes have occurred in the school district since the last submission of the UB and

UBMS grant proposals four years ago, there was a critical need to create, reestablish, and engage community and school leaders in order to continue serving and potentially increase the number of first-generation and low-income high schools (schools with high percentages of students who qualify for free/reduced price lunch) served by our programs. Through the year, program personnel have organized and sustained individual meetings with community partners to assess needs, establish alliances, and define and develop common goals. These partnerships will allow our proposals, due at the beginning of the fall, to have higher chances for success.

### 3.4 Identify the department goals or systemic barriers to minoritized students related to DEI.

**Goal 1.** Increase the participation of minoritized students by removing program recruitment practices that lead to exclusion.

Given the high number of students referred by our precollege programs (Upward Bound programs and Upward Bound Math and Sciences) and by program participants, our TRIO Scholars program does not actively recruit new participants. This might lead to many qualifying students on campus unaware of services offered by our programs.

**Goal 2.** Identify, assess, and create program selection policies that lead to more inclusive practices.

*McNair Scholars Program:* Although federal regulations guiding selection of participants are heavily based on GPA, higher grade point average is not the sole indicator of graduate school success/persistence. The current application process can be improved to provide equitable opportunities to historically disadvantaged students.

**Goal 3.** Promote community building by identifying office practices that acknowledges identity complexities and their impact in student and personal development.

The use of terminology and images as part of office printed and digital materials reflect identities and have a direct impact in our participants personal development. Common practices have shown the need to revise our practices and language to reflect principles related to inclusion.

### 3.5 Describe progress towards each.

**Goal 1.** Increase the participation of minoritized students by removing program recruitment practices that lead to exclusion.

- TRIO Scholars, TRIO STEM Scholars, and First in the Pack:

Our efforts to correct current and very limited recruitment practices required staff discussion and involvement, examination of historical data, revision and modification of printed materials, and the development of a plan that can be implemented during the academic year while remaining in federal compliance related to participant eligibility requirements. As a result, our staff has reached out to diverse student groups on campus including multiple student organizations (particularly those serving underrepresented students) and ASUN. Other organizations utilized to establish this pathway are the OPS southern office in Las Vegas, the Washoe County Equity and Diversity Office, faculty and staff through the First-Generation Coalition (comprised of academic and administrative faculty across campus), the Community Health Sciences Advising team, the College of Engineering, the Honors College, The Center, several Deans, Counseling Services, and Res Life and Housing.

New conversations will begin with Multicultural Greek Letter organizations on campus – some of which have many of our program participants as members.

- McNair Scholars Program:

New recruitment efforts specific to the population served by the McNair Scholars Program include: In-classroom presentations to classes and clubs, tabling at career and graduate school fair, collaboration with GRAD FIT, the Honors College, the Office of Undergraduate Research, Information sessions open to all UNR students, dissemination of program information through social media recruitment.

Recruitment activities take place year-round.

**Goal 2.** Identify, assess, and create program selection policies that lead to more inclusive practices.

- Upward Bound/UB Math and Science:

Points System was updated in the 2020-2021 Program Handbook. For immediate implementation.

- McNair Scholars Program:

The likelihood of each applicant to persist through the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate/graduate programs will be assessed based on all aspects of their application materials.

Review of related literature and implementation starting in the November 2020.

**Goal 3.** Promote community building by identifying office practices that acknowledges identity complexities and their impact in student and personal development.

All administrative faculty have pronouns identified in their signature lines within their emails. All images used in social media and webpages are under revision.

#### **4. First-Gen Student Center DEI plan**

*Goal Area 1: Education for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

- Establish calendar of DEI training opportunities offered through the Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel or WESTOP, a regional association of TRIO personnel), NASPA, and University offices.
- Collaborate with TRIO offices within the WESTOP geographical area (Nevada, Arizona, Pacific Island, and California) to identify and address key policies and practices that support systemic bias and discrimination in the workplace.
- Establish common understanding of DEI key terms and definitions, the Divisions' strategic plan, and implications for the First-Gen Student Center.

*Goal Area 2: Student Recruitment, Access, Engagement and Retention*

- Establish internal recruitment procedures that identify and address potential bias and discriminatory practices within programs and instead reflect institutional mission and values.
- Revise and refine access and student engagement practices that reflect productive changes on service delivery yield by the experiences of the pandemic.

*Goal Area 3: Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention*

- Assist First Gen Student Center staff developing Annual Evaluations following ACPA/NASPA Competency Areas of Social Justice and Inclusion and the Student Services Division regulations and guidelines.

## 5. Appendix: First-Gen Student Center DEI plan

### *Goal Area 1: Education for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

- Establish a calendar of DEI training opportunities offered through the Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel or WESTOP, (a regional association of TRIO personnel), NASPA, and University offices.
  - By the end of the summer 2021, the First-Gen Student Center will gather baseline data related to professional development and training activities attended by Center personnel.
  - By the end of the summer 2021, the First-Gen Student Center will research DEI training and professional development opportunities offered by WESTOP, the Council for Opportunity in Education, NASPA, and other university offices.
  - By the end of the spring 2022, all First-Gen Student Center personnel will review and revise professional evaluation plans to include/reformulate DEI goals for the year.
  - By the end of summer 2022, the First-Gen Student Center will facilitate or collaborate with other offices on campus to provide professional development activities for its personnel.
- Collaborate with TRIO offices within the WESTOP geographical area (Nevada, Arizona, Pacific Island, and California) to identify and address key policies and practices that support systemic bias and discrimination in the workplace.
  - By the end of the fall 2022, the First-Gen Student Center will develop a collaborative plan and calendar that will include professionals from at least three institutions in the WESTOP area.
  - By the end of the spring 2022, the First-Gen Student Center will implement the above-mentioned plan identifying resources and addressing identified key issues.
- Establish common understanding of DEI key terms and definitions, the Divisions' strategic plan, and implications for the First-Gen Student Center.
  - By the end of fall 2021, the First-Gen Student Center will establish a collaboration with The Center Every Student, Every Story to facilitate our annual professional development day and to guide the dialogue.

### *Goal Area 2: Student Recruitment, Access, Engagement and Retention*

- Establish internal recruitment efforts that identify and address potential bias and discriminatory practices within programs and instead reflect institutional mission and values.
  - By the end of the fall 2021, the First Gen Student Center will review and refine social media and other digital communications platforms content and images to engage potential program participants and other audiences.
  - By the end of the fall 2021, the First Gen Student Center will review and refine digital communications platforms content and images to engage university partners and collaborators assisting with recruitment and retention efforts.
- Revise and refine access and student engagement practices that reflect productive changes on service delivery yield by the experiences of the pandemic.
  - By the end of the summer 2021, the First Gen Student Center will review practices that although originated by the need to adapt to the realities of the pandemic can be incorporated to increase student engagement and participation:
    - Interviews of applicants
    - Communication with faculty members related to class performance and progress

- Interactions with faculty mentors
- Virtual/in person internships
- Virtual/in person campus visits
- Virtual/in person tutoring and mentoring sessions
- Hybrid presentation of workshops and activities
- Acquisition of technology commonly inaccessible to low-income participants
- Access to in person and virtual appointments with program personnel before and after office hours to benefit participants who work

*Goal Area 3: Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention*

- Assist First Gen Student Center staff developing Annual Evaluations following ACPA/NASPA Competency Areas of Social Justice and Inclusion and the Student Services Division regulations and guidelines.
  - By the end of the summer 2021, the First-Gen Student Center will use baseline indicators of the Social Justice and Inclusion competencies to help staff member's asses their level of knowledge, awareness, and skills.
  - By spring 2022, the First Gen Student Center will establish yearly Social Justice and Inclusion goals for each staff member.
  - By spring 2022, the First Gen Student Center will develop competency markers for individual staff that will be incorporated into the annual evaluation process.
  - By spring 2022, all staff recruitment materials will reflect the social justice and inclusion goals guiding the Division.