

Involving TRIO Students and Alumni in Congressional Advocacy Efforts

- 1) Empower your TRIO Board, Leadership Council, etc. to host an event to gather students to call and write their Representatives and Senators.**

Things to keep in mind:

- The students should be responsible for creating the instructional guides, fliers, and creating and sending the e-mails advertising the event.
- No federal grant dollars can be used for the event (i.e. no long distance calls on program phones, no postage, postcard, paper or envelope purchase)
- If TRIO staff are to be present-schedule the event over lunch time or after work hours
- Students can not be required to participate!

- 2) Send requests by e-mail to alumni and current students, asking them to call or write.**

- 3) Ask individuals to write when they express an appreciation for TRIO programs.**

Handy Tip:

- Keep postcards handy in your office (paid for with non-federal funds of course!) and encourage students individually to write to their Senators and Representative about the way TRIO has impacted their lives. This can be done year round.

- 4) Assist students to set up a meeting with their local Representative and Senator's Offices and accompany them to the meeting.**

Sample e-mail:

Dear current students and alumni,

Please take a moment and call or e-mail your congress person's office and urge him or her to include \$780 million for TRIO and GEAR UP in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill of 2009! If you call, you simply need to state that "I am calling to urge Congressman XX to include \$780 million for TRIO and GEAR UP in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill of 2009!" If possible, explain how you have benefited from TRIO programs. That's it! If you e-mail, just state the same thing. The call and e-mail can be very short. A call is most effective. Please help TRIO. This is urgent. If you are from Minnesota, your Senator is Amy Klobuchar (the other seat is still vacant). If you go to the website

below, you can search for your Senator(s) or Representative.

<http://www.senate.gov/>

<http://www.house.gov/> (See the message below for more information.)

Sample Instruction Guide:

Thank-a-Thon/Invest in TRIO

1) Find your representative.

- Go to this website: <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>
- Select your location: Minnesota
- Enter your zip code: _____
- Press contact my representative

2) Find your senator.

- http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm?State=MN

3) What to mention in the letter/phone call/ post card:

- Thank the **Democratic** Members for their work in securing the very significant Pell Grant increase that was included in the Stimulus Bill.
- Ask them to support an increased investment in TRIO funding
- Thank them for supporting TRIO programs in the past

4) Write a personal story how TRIO has helped you and therefore they should increase TRIO funding

Created by: Quyen Duong, St. Olaf College student SSS Board Member, February 2009