

AAC Alumni Connections

Academic Advancement Center Updates

Volume 2, Issue 1

Winter 2013

We wrapped up another busy fall semester at the Academic Advancement Center and are excited to update you on the work the AAC accomplished over the past few months.

Fall semester began with student staff training and two new orientation sessions for incoming students. This year's orientation sessions were offered for our transfer and non-traditional students and a separate orientation for new first-year participants. Orientation attendees learned more about the AAC program resources and the greater TRiO network. We welcomed more than 70 new students into the AAC program this year!

In October, the AAC staff attended the annual ASPIRE regional conference held in Billings, Montana to network and learn from other TRiO professionals. It was a great time of professional development and connecting with colleagues.

This fall 25 student tutors provided tutoring support to 161 AAC students. Over the course of the semester, students and tutors logged over 1,500 hours of tutoring at the AAC in all academic subjects.

Our peer mentoring program continues to grow! In addition to the one-on-one peer mentoring offered at the

AAC, a series of transfer and non-traditional student gatherings provided time for students to share tips and resources with each other. Our mentoring group also had fun with a variety of group outings including a night at the corn maze, volunteering at Lee Martinez Farm, attending a showing of "A Christmas Story" on campus, and a bowling outing to end the semester.

The AAC continues to work on graduate school initiatives for AAC students. This semester AAC students attended the Law School Fair held at the University of Colorado-Boulder and visited the Anschutz Medical Campus in Denver to learn more about medical, nursing, and public health programs.

In addition to all of the wonderful programs in the office, the AAC welcomed a new staff member, Clark Erwin-Billones, to the AAC. Clark is serving in a new position as



Colorado State University

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the program coordinator for the AAC and joined the staff full-time in December. We are glad to have her on board!



AAC Peer Retention Specialists and Shawanna Kimbrough, Assistant Director for Retention at Fall 2012 Student Staff Training

CSU Alumni Career Services

Are you currently in need of career assistance? Are you in the process of job searching, making a change in your career, or just looking to add on to your professional skills? Did you know that the CSU Alumni Association, in partnership with the CSU Career Center, offers career support services to CSU alumni?

Within the first year following graduation, all CSU alumni have free access to all of the CSU Career Center services including career counseling, career assessments, attendance at career events, and access to CareerRam, an online career service center with job postings.

Beyond the first year after graduation, alumni may utilize a variety of career services for free or a small fee. Alumni Association members receive discounts on career services. All of the alumni career services are being coordinated by Andrea Karapas, a licensed professional counselor and Associate Director of Alumni Career Counseling.

Andrea is available for one-on-one career



Andrea Karapas, Associate Director of Alumni Career Counseling

consultation appointments with alumni. All alumni may schedule a free initial consultation session with Andrea. She also provides document critique sessions on resumes, cover letters, and other professional documents, as well as videotaped mock interview sessions and career assessment interpretations. Andrea has over five years of experience in career counseling and is a certified facilitator in career assessment tools such as StrengthsFinder, Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Strong Interest Inventory.

The Alumni Association provides other career resources including the online Alumni Business Connection where CSU alumni can search for businesses with a CSU connection. There are also various alumni groups on LinkedIn.

If you are looking for ways to increase your competitiveness in the job market or grow as a professional, the Alumni Association partners with the CSU Division of Continuing Education to offer classes.

In addition to the resources provided by the Career Center and Alumni Association, some colleges and departments on campus offer special programs to assist alumni with career services.

For an overview of all of the career services available, visit the Alumni Association website at alumni.colostate.edu.



If you would like to provide career support to a current AAC student, consider signing up to be a career mentor! The AAC needs AAC alumni who are willing to provide career guidance and support to current students. You can sign up to be a career mentor by contacting Jill Putman at jill.putman@colostate.edu or by completing the "Get Involved" form on the AAC website at www.aac.colostate.edu/get-involved.



TRiO Achiever: Shawanna Kimbrough

Each spring, the Colorado Chapter of ASPIRE (CCA), which is composed of individuals representing TRiO programs across the state, recognizes Colorado TRiO Achievers for their accomplishments in their professions. For spring 2012, Shawanna Kimbrough, Assistant Director for Retention at the Academic Advancement Center, was recognized as a 2012 Colorado TRiO Achiever.

Shawanna is an AAC CSU alumna and earned her Bachelor's degree in Speech Communications from CSU in 2000. She began her employment with the AAC while she was a first-year student on campus and has been a member of the pro-

fessional staff since 2000. Shawanna earned her Master's degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education in 2006 while working at the AAC.

In her role as Assistant Director for Retention, Shawanna is responsible for supervising the counseling component of the AAC program as well as the Peer Student Retention Specialists on staff. Shawanna manages the student information database for the office and the application and admission process for new AAC participants.

In addition to her work in the AAC, Shawanna serves on numerous CSU

committees focused on underrepresented student populations. She has been a volunteer mentor for the Black/African American Cultural Center on campus as well as a Ram Mentor for first-generation students. Congratulations to Shawanna for her accomplishments and dedication to the Academic Advancement Center and students!



Upcoming AAC Service Learning Trip

This summer, ten AAC participants will have the opportunity to participate in the trip of a lifetime to the Dominican Republic to complete a service-learning project with the AAC.



Lucy Paltoo in the Dominican Republic, January 2013

The purpose of the experience is to provide an opportunity for students to learn about the history of the Dominican Republic while exploring issues of identity, immigration, and social justice. Students participating in the trip will be working alongside community members on development projects in a rural Dominican community. Projects will include the construction of a school or house as well as a sustainable agricultural initiative. The projects and program logistics will be coordinated by the non-profit organization, Bridges to Community (<http://www.bridgestocommunity.org/>).

The cost of the trip is approximately \$1950 per student, not including airfare, passport, or personal expenses. Student will be responsible for funding the experience on their own.

The trip is scheduled to last for two weeks, from May 18—June 1, 2013. During the trip students will be housed

together in a community center located in the village where they will be completing their service-projects. There will also be time during the trip for students to enjoy the beaches and explore historical sites.

AAC staff member, Lucy Paltoo, will accompany the students on the trip. The study abroad experience is being coordinated in conjunction with the Office of International Programs at CSU.

If you are interested in supporting these students on this international experience, we encourage you to contact our office. You can also provide financial support online by going to <https://advancing.colostate.edu/AAC> and indicating that you would like your donation to go toward the Dominican Republic service-learning trip.

Academic Advancement Center

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The Academic Advancement Center (a Student Support Services Program) has served more than 9,625 students at CSU since its arrival on campus in 1978. The Center is primarily funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, with additional funds from the Colorado State University Division of Student Affairs and Student Financial Services. A grant from FirstBank Community Fund of Colorado also allows for enrichment of programs.

As one of the 1,028 federally funded TRiO Student Support Services programs in the nation, our mission is to help low-income, first-generation college students, disconnected youth, and students with disabilities to stay in college until they earn their baccalaureate degrees.

The mission of the Academic Advancement Center (AAC), a federally funded TRiO Student Support Services program at Colorado State University, is to provide support for first-generation, low income students, and students with disabilities in their transition, persistence and graduation. The AAC is committed to providing guidance and support to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed their academic, personal, and professional goals. Staff members in the AAC foster a welcoming and inclusive community for success, connect students to campus resources, encourage engagement and involvement, and promote self-advocacy.



We Want to Hear From You!

Would you like to be featured in an upcoming issue of *AAC Alumni Connections*? Are you hoping to reconnect with former CSU and AAC classmates? If so, we want to hear from you! In future newsletters, we will be highlighting the stories, accomplishments, and updates of our AAC alumni, and we would love to know what is new with you. Whether it's news about your career, family, or anything else, we want to hear from you!

Send your stories to Jill Putman at Jill.Putman@colostate.edu, or submit them online by completing our "Get Involved" form at <http://www.aac.colostate.edu/get-involved>.

