TRIO Student Support Services

[Music]

Receiving the TRIO grant means the world to us here at Thomas. It means that students who are TRIO eligible, so students who are first-gen to college, students who are low-income, and students who have identified disabilities get additional support than another student here. That they have opportunities to meet one-on-one with a staff member regularly, that they get to have scholarship opportunities.

In addition, they get to have trips and career advancement support, and just an unending amount of support and really a just a go-to place that they know that they're welcome, that they belong, and that they're important to Thomas.

Students who are first-gen, low-income, or students with identified disabilities, or like me, don't really have a road map to college. They don't have someone in their back pocket that they can call and say, "Hey, I don't know what this thing called FAFSA means or I didn't know that I had to buy textbooks."

They can't just call up their parents and have their parents understand what they're going through. And so, TRIO is that place that they can go to and say, "Uh, I don't know what's going on. Can you please help?"

And often times as first-gen students or trio eligible students, we're told to just kind of like pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and just do it and not ask for help. And we're the program that says it's okay to ask for help and we're the ones that you can go to.

I'm hoping that students feel comfortable coming into the office. We kind of have a revolving door. So, I'm hoping that is their takeaway, is that this is a safe space for them to kind of come in with whatever their concerns are and know that those will be addressed, and that they'll be taken care of.

Coming into college, it was a little like scary and whatnot and I really leaned on the TRIO program here and they helped me with academics and they just really were like another support system for me, and they were they were just like that little helping hand that I needed and they really helped me through that challenge.

It's not only focused on your student success, but comfortability as well, which is why we have a really neat open area. And so, it's like, oh, I can also just talk to people here and like

kind of open up a little bit more. And so, it helped me kind of like grow out of my shell and adventure around.

TRIO students all kinds of have like that commonality that they are in the program. And so, we kind of focus heavily on holding programming and different things for them to kind of come in and meet their trio peers. A lot of them come from very similar backgrounds or they have experiences that they can kind of relate to with their peers. And so, it provides them with a space to feel safe, to kind of share those things, but also know that there are people that can sympathize and empathize with kind of maybe what they might have experienced in their lives.

If we look at our surveys and our data, they end up saying that TRIO was the best community that they were involved with on campus. And the majority of our students then go to be leaders in other parts of the campus and build their community networks even wider.

So, I love to see it as like the foundation of their success here at Thomas.

They genuinely care and they're just like another family to me. They've been there since day one and they're still here today.

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