

THE PILLAR

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE TRIO SSS COMMUNITY

“Helping Students Realize Their Full Potential”



December 2024
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Mission Statement

The University of Colorado Denver TRIO Student Support Services Program is a holistic student development program that is dedicated to helping each student reach his or her full academic potential.



Student Spotlight - Juan Reveles Hernandez



The TRIO Student Support Services program is happy to spotlight Juan Reveles Hernandez. He has been an active member of the program since the fall of 2021 and will be graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture with a Minor in Landscape Architecture.

When asked about his college experience Juan stated, “College for me was an incredible journey of growth and self-discovery. As a first-generation student from Greeley, moving to Denver was both exciting and daunting. Adjusting to life in a big city had its challenges—navigating the RTD, tackling four-lane highways, and getting used to the density of city life all felt overwhelming at first. My first year was full of trial and error, trying to figure out campus life, learn time management, and juggle a challenging schedule that included commuting back to Greeley every weekend for work.

It was a steep learning curve, but one that ultimately helped me develop resilience and adaptability. Looking back, I’m proud of the connections I made that continue to shape my life today. During my freshman year, I joined Latinx Student Alliance, where I found a supportive community and made some of my closest friends. The organization quickly became a big part of my life, and now, as the president, I have the privilege of welcoming new members and fostering a sense of belonging for others. I earned strong grades and was even recognized on the Dean’s List for some semesters. Now, as I prepare for graduation and look ahead to applying to graduate school, I’m filled with gratitude for my time at CU Denver. This journey has shaped me in ways I could never have imagined, and I’m thankful for each experience, challenge, and lesson along the way.”

Juan shared that his favorite memory in college was going to his first Latinx Student Alliance meeting where he met so many people, including his best friend. When it comes to his hobbies and interests, Juan is known to be adventurous and traveling is his favorite, with New York being Juan’s top destination. He mentioned “whether it is trying new food, binging different shows, exploring the city or nature, traveling (far or short), and even meeting new people.” Juan is always looking for something new to do or try.

Juan is determined to meet his current goal of securing a position within his field by completing his architecture portfolio. These goals will help Juan become a strong candidate when applying to graduate school.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ...

Student Spotlight Continued — Juan Reveles Hernandez



Someday, Juan hopes to own a house with a cat and dog, while working as a licensed architect. Later on, Juan hopes to become a professor teaching architecture. This all starts by getting into graduate school to earn his M.Arch degree.

When first starting his educational journey, Juan wished he knew college would not be full of strict professors like his high school teachers had told him. Juan understands the responsibility of being a college student, stating “there’s no one to hold your hand or keep you accountable except yourself.” He mentions how most professors are approachable and understanding but ultimately everything falls on you.

Juan has had great success at CU Denver despite some challenges faced when earning his degree. He stated his biggest challenge was “discovering and narrowing down my true interests. I’ve known since high school that I wanted to pursue Architecture, but I was also curious about exploring other areas. At one point, I declared three minors, eager to dive into diverse subjects and see where they could take me. However, as I balanced my coursework with the financial and time constraints of being a student, I realized I needed to be more selective. After taking a

few courses in those minors, I found that they didn’t resonate with me as much as I had anticipated. With scholarships, time, and focus in mind, I made the decision to stick with Landscape Architecture as my minor. This choice felt right, as it complements my major by allowing me to explore the connections between landscape and building design, which I’m truly passionate about. In the end, this process taught me the value of intentionality in my academic journey, helping me build a degree path that aligns with my goals.”

Since high school, TRIO has been a strong support system for Juan. Juan stated, “Through Upward Bound, I received essential support in preparation for college which made my transition to college much smoother and equipped me with the skills I needed to succeed in higher education. Now, as part of the SSS program, I feel fortunate to have consistent resources that have offered me guidance throughout my college journey. The program doesn’t just help me academically, but it also strengthens my personal growth through workshops. I recommend that other TRIO participants take advantage of all the resources TRIO provides. Whether it’s to attend workshops and connect with mentors and professional staff because TRIO can be supportive, both academically and personally.”

Juan’s favorite quote is “You learn more from failure than from success. Don’t let it stop you. Failure builds character.” He stated, “This quote resonates deeply with me, especially as a first-generation college student. Every time I’ve faced setbacks, I’ve had to find the strength to pick myself up and keep moving forward. Each failure was a lesson in resilience, and over time, those lessons have shaped who I am. This quote reminds me of my journey, the struggles, the persistence, and the growth that comes from overcoming challenges. As I near graduation and continue my education, I can look back and see how each failure contributed to my success and self-confidence. I think many first-generation students will find meaning in this quote, as we often face unique struggles, doubts, and pressures. It’s a reminder that setbacks aren’t the end; they’re part of the path that makes us stronger and more capable.” We wish Juan continued success in his personal and academic endeavors. **YOU DID IT!**

December Word Search



WORD BANK

COLD	WINTER
DECEMBER	SKIING
FIREWOOD	SLUSH
GLOVES	SLED
HOT COCOA	SNOW
ICY	SKATE
NUTMEG	



Don't miss out!

TRIO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

SPRING START-UP

Friday, January 17, 2025

8:15 am - 2:00 pm • Student Commons 1500

Join us the Friday before classes to hear from a stellar keynote speaker, attend up to 3 workshops, and enjoy a delicious lunch that all meet the Program & Book Scholarship requirements!

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Keynote speaker Nicole Caridad Ralston, PhD
- 3 skill-building workshops
- Etiquette lunch for SSS & McNair



Attend all **3** workshops to be entered to win a **\$500** scholarship!
Attend **2** workshops to be entered to win a **\$100** scholarship!

Register here:



[forms.office.com/
r/pXBX8KFPOS](https://forms.office.com/r/pXBX8KFPOS)



Holiday Activities in Denver

The Mile High Tree Presented by Xfinity

Nov 22 – Dec 31 from 5:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Civic Center Park – 101 W. 14th Ave, Denver, CO

Enjoy the display of colorful lights and holiday music. Along with this, the opportunity to view the light shows presented by the "The Mile High Tree Presented by Xfinity."

Website: <https://www.denver.org/milehighholidays/mile-high-tree/>

Denver's Mile High Holiday Drone Show

Nov 22 – Dec 31 (check the website for available times)

Colorado Railroad Museum – 17155 W 44th Ave, Golden, CO

Reoccurring at 7:00 pm every night, 400 drones will soar into the sky, creating holiday-themed animations. The Mile High Drone Show isn't just a typical light display—it's a state-of-the-art performance featuring a dozen or more festive animations that span nearly 400 feet high and 500 feet wide.

Website: <https://www.denver.org/milehighholidays/drone-shows/>



Colorado Ballet: "The Nutcracker"

Nov 30 – Dec 29 (check the website for available times)

Ellie Caulkins Opera House – 1400 Curtis St, Denver, CO

Come and enjoy the Colorado Ballet holiday production of "The Nutcracker"

Website: <https://coloradoballet.org/>

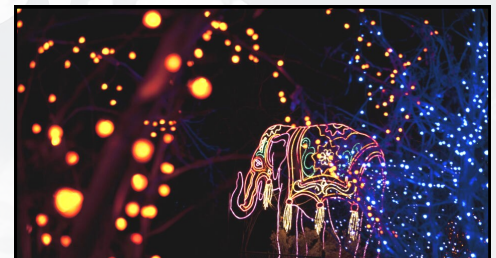
Zoo Lights

Nov 23 – Jan 5 from 5:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Denver Zoo – 2300 Steele St, Denver, CO

Come by and say hello to our animal friends and enjoy the holiday cheer through the various light displays and the presentation of beautiful ice sculptures!

Website: <https://denverzoo.org/events/zoo-lights/>



Downtown Denver Rink

Nov 21 – Feb 2 (Check website for times)

1601 Arapahoe St, Denver, CO

Come with friends and family to enjoy the winter season as you ice skate across the rink!

Website: <https://www.winterindenver.com/rink>

Recipe—Homemade Creamy Hot Cocoa



Homemade Creamy Hot Cocoa

Nothing compares to homemade hot chocolate. Try this delicious recipe, perfect for those who like a creamy hot cocoa with a hint of vanilla. Best served when hot and topped with marshmallows, whip cream, and a candy cane.

View the full recipe and nutrition label on the website:

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/20211/creamy-hot-cocoa/>

Step 1

Combine sugar, cocoa powder, and salt in a saucepan; add boiling water and whisk until smooth. Bring mixture to a simmer, stirring continuously to prevent scorching, and cook for 2 minutes.

Step 2

Stir in milk and heat until very hot without boiling.

Step 3

Remove from heat; add vanilla.

Step 4

Add cream to each mug to help cool cocoa to drinking temperature then divide hot cocoa between 4 mugs.

Step 5

Serve hot and enjoy!

Prep Time

5 min

Cook Time

5 min

Total Time

10 min

Servings

4

Ingredients










- * $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar, or to taste
- * $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- * 1 pinch salt
- * $\frac{1}{3}$ cup boiling water
- * $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups milk
- * $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
- * $\frac{1}{2}$ cup half-and-half cream

A Note About FAFSA

FAFSA[®]
Federal Student Aid
An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

The 2025 –2026 FAFSA officially opened late December. If you need help filling out your FAFSA, TRIO SSS Professional Staff are here to help! Reach out to your TRIO SSS Coordinator and schedule an appointment. Don't have time during the semester? Do not fear, we will be available to help during Winter Break! To schedule your appointment after the semester is over, please send an email with your availability to either Henry or Jenny. We look forward to working with you.

December Workshop Calendar

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2 	3 1Wellness: Find Balance and Build Resiliency 1:00 pm—2:00 pm Zoom 	4 1Graduate School Preparation 2:00 pm —3:00 pm In-Person  SC, Suite 2000	5 1Facing Imposter Syndrome with A Growth Mindset 1:00 pm—2:00 pm Zoom 	6 1Coping with Stress Using Art: Winter Crafts and Painting 10:00 am —1 2:00 pm In-Person  SC, Suite 2000
9 1Beginners Guide: Resume Basics 2:00 pm — 3:00 pm In-Person  SC, Suite 2000	10 2TRIO SSS Financial Literacy: Debt Repayment with Dr. Emily Schwartz, MidFirst Bank 2:00 pm—3:00 pm Zoom 	11 1Think Ahead: Creating SMART Goals 2:00 pm — 3:00 pm Zoom 	12 1Procrastination: Now or Later? 11:00 am — 12:00 pm In-Person  SC, Suite 2000	13 <div style="border: 2px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> 2nd Program/Book Scholarship Deadline!! </div>

Legend for In-Person and Zoom Sessions

IN-PERSON



ZOOM



Workshop Registration

REGISTRATION REQUIRED—Non-TRIO workshops are subject to change.

1TRIO SSS Skill Building Workshops: [Registration Required: RSVP: HERE](#)

2TRIO SSS Financial Literacy Session: [Registration Required: RSVP: HERE](#)

REGISTER NOW!

Online Workshop Evaluation

To receive credit for attending Skill-Building Workshops and Financial Literacy Sessions be sure to fill out a TRIO SSS Workshop Evaluation. You can pick up an evaluation form in the TRIO Office, or complete the online evaluation at:

<https://forms.office.com/r/AYPVeIXvZA>.

TRIO SSS Fall 2024 Satisfaction Survey

We hope you are doing well. Our office would like your assistance in completing the Satisfaction Survey, which is mobile friendly. TRIO SSS strives to provide quality services. You can help improve these services by completing the anonymous survey. It should take 2-3 minutes of your time. We would appreciate your help to reach our goal of 50 surveys completed.



Please click the link to complete survey at:

https://ucdenver.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bBJ6ZPPm9sm7Lwi

With gratitude,
TRIO Student Support Services Team