

# THE PILLAR

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE TRIO SSS COMMUNITY  
"Helping Students Realize Their Full Potential"



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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—Kalkidan Astatike



The TRIO Student Support Services program is happy to spotlight Kalkidan Astatike. She has been an active member of the program since the fall 2021 semester. She is on the pre-medicine track and will be graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry with a Minor in Biology. When asked about her college experience Kalkidan mentioned she was involved in the Denver Future Doctors Club, Marketing Club, TRIO SSS, and CU CHANGE Club. She was able to meet other like-minded individuals and advisors who helped her get through school and make her time at CU Denver fun and meaningful. In her second year of school, she was able to build her leadership and communication skills from being a Learning Assistant, Grader, and Research Assistant at the Chemistry Department. Her biggest challenge in earning her degree was believing in herself, that she belonged and could make it through her degree and achieve her dream of becoming a physician.



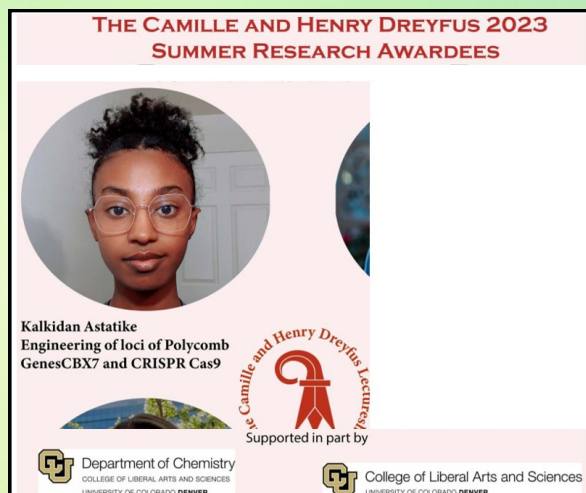
Kalkidan's hobbies and interests include spending time with her siblings and doing the most random and non-sensical things while laughing. She enjoys reading books about human nature, psychology, neuroscience, and money. When asked about her favorite memory in college Kalkidan stated, "Some of my favorite memories in college are my time in the healthcare interest class where I got to watch neurosurgical procedures and learn about the healthcare system at Denver Health for a year, and the time, I spent in Dr. Xiaojun Ren's lab in the chemistry department where I was able to work on epigenetics research studying polycomb proteins, specifically the first day I saw a neuron under the microscope." Her current short term goal after graduation is to take a two year gap to work as an EMT, taking the MCAT,

building her CV, then going to Medical School for six years. After medical school, her long terms plans are to be finish her residency in neurosurgery in 13 years, then become an attending neurosurgeon—neuroscientist in 14 years.

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## Student Spotlight – Continued

When first starting out college Kalkidan stated, “I wish I knew that things would not get easier, however, it is possible to become stronger than my challenges and never have to do any of it by myself.” Kalkidan stated TRIO has been able to help combat her lack of sense of belonging as a first-generation student. She stated “After joining TRIO, I got to meet multiple students like me through the workshops which helped with creating a sense of belonging for me. Furthermore, my TRIO professional advisor was there for me offering me guidance and resources every step of the way. For any TRIO participants, I highly recommend taking advantage of all the resources TRIO has to offer, workshops, professional and peer advising, research opportunities, everything (believe me in the end you will thank yourself for doing it).”



If Kalkidan won one million dollars, she would start building her dream 10,000 bed hospital specializing in surgical specialty care with a research facility to study neurological disorders. Her favorite quote is “You can’t ever reach perfection, but you can believe in an asymptote toward which you are ceaselessly striving.” – When Breath Becomes Air: Paul Kalanithi Neurosurgeon-Neuroscientist. She stated, “This quote resonates with me because it shows that perfection is not something that we can reach, however, that fact is not something that should stop us from striving to always do our best either.” We wish her continued success in her personal and academic endeavors. YOU DID IT!

## Spring Word Scramble

Can you unscramble the Spring words below?

- UBSDGYAL \_\_\_\_\_
- BIBART \_\_\_\_\_
- SASGR \_\_\_\_\_
- GIPCRHNI \_\_\_\_\_
- DESES \_\_\_\_\_
- ZEREBE \_\_\_\_\_
- NISUHESN \_\_\_\_\_
- TELFRISEBTU \_\_\_\_\_
- WONDABIR \_\_\_\_\_
- ADGERN \_\_\_\_\_
- YINRA \_\_\_\_\_
- FOLIDAFD \_\_\_\_\_
- CICPNI \_\_\_\_\_
- MRAW \_\_\_\_\_
- LESPTA \_\_\_\_\_
- OELSRWF \_\_\_\_\_
- LOSBMSOS \_\_\_\_\_
- PITLUS \_\_\_\_\_
- ENEGR \_\_\_\_\_
- WOESRSH \_\_\_\_\_

# Recipe – White Chocolate Popcorn

## TIME FOR PREPARATION

✓ 1 hour 15 minutes

## SERVINGS

✓ 24

## INGREDIENTS

- ✓ 2 (3.5 ounces) packages of plain microwave popcorn
- ✓ 17 ounces of white chocolate chips
- ✓ 1 tablespoon of butter

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pop one popcorn package at a time in the microwave on high heat until popping begins to slow down (this could be about 2 1/2 minutes, without letting the popcorn burn).
2. After both bags are completed, open them carefully and transfer the popcorn to a large plastic bag, removing any burnt pieces of popcorn or unpopped kernels.
3. Melt the white chocolate chips with butter on top of a double boiler over simmering water, string the chocolate frequently and scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula. Keep mixing until the mixture is creamy (This could take about 5 minutes).
4. Drizzle the melted chocolate over the popcorn. Close the plastic bag and shake until the popcorn is thoroughly coated with chocolate (this could take about 3-4 minutes).
5. Place the popcorn in the refrigerator for about an hour to cool.



For more information visit: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/245687/white-chocolate-popcorn/>

Anahi Andres | TRIO SSS Peer Mentor

# March Word Search

MARCH  
BASKETBALL  
FLOWERS  
RAIN  
CLOVER  
SUN  
PINK  
GREEN  
WIND  
TULIPS  
SPRING  
SHAMROCK  
GOLD  
BLOOM  
TIME CHANGE

L	W	I	N	D	I	O	N	E	N	I	L	E	L
B	R	E	S	F	G	U	A	I	B	P	O	E	W
A	E	G	P	L	N	L	I	R	C	G	S	H	K
S	S	L	K	O	I	R	G	N	T	G	O	U	E
K	V	T	A	W	R	I	M	D	M	M	A	L	N
E	U	O	M	E	P	E	S	A	I	N	M	G	D
T	E	P	C	R	S	U	R	N	M	I	O	S	S
B	K	I	N	S	N	C	S	I	M	N	O	E	H
A	N	N	K	A	H	C	O	D	E	I	L	M	A
L	E	I	I	P	U	S	L	E	W	A	B	O	M
L	R	O	E	P	N	L	R	O	S	R	S	E	R
S	I	O	R	I	G	G	K	R	V	M	B	I	O
T	I	M	E	C	H	A	N	G	E	E	C	L	C
T	U	L	I	P	S	I	M	E	S	L	R	U	K



# TV Show Review—K-drama: Business Proposal

*Business Proposal* is hands down one of my favorite K-dramas. It's the kind of show that pulls you in right from the first episode and keeps you hooked with its perfect mix of romance and comedy. The story follows Shin Ha-ri, who ends up on a blind date pretending to be someone else, only to realize her date is Kang Tae-moo—her company's CEO. What should've been a disaster somehow turns into a fake relationship, and from there, things only get crazier (and funnier). The way this drama balances humor and heart makes it such an easy and enjoyable watch, never dragging or feeling overcomplicated.

What really makes *Business Proposal* so special is the cast. Ahn Hyo-seop and Kim Se-jeong have such great chemistry—it's impossible not to root for them. Their playful banter, unexpected sweet moments, and slow realization of feelings make the romance feel natural and exciting. And don't even get me started on the second couple—Seol In-ah and Kim Min-kyu are just as charming and hilarious. Every episode has moments that make you laugh out loud, but also those that catch you off guard with how heartwarming they are. It's one of those rare dramas where both the main and side couples are equally fun to watch.

Honestly, this drama just hits all the right notes. It's lighthearted without being shallow, funny without being over-the-top, and romantic in a way that feels fresh and exciting. The cinematography is bright and vibrant, the OST is catchy, and the story never feels like it overstays its welcome. It's one of those shows I could rewatch anytime and still enjoy just as much. If you're looking for a feel-good rom-com that keeps you entertained from start to finish, *Business Proposal* is the perfect pick.



Angel Lupian Alvarez | TRIO SSS Peer Mentor

## New TRIO SSS Office Assistant



Hello, everyone!

My name is Kendra, and I am the new Office Assistant for the TRIO SSS Program. As a student at University of Colorado Denver, I am majoring in Architecture with a minor in Psychology. My long term career goal is to create sustainable architecture that not only lessens the carbon footprint on the construction industry but also provides more affordable housing to combat the current housing crisis. I am to create structures that co-exist better with our environment while also accommodating affordable living!

Outside of my academic passions for sustainable architecture, I enjoy reading, painting, hitting the gym and walking my dog. After a long day of classes and studying I really enjoy getting some exercise or curling up with a good book. My newest literary interests are; psychology, mystery/thriller and fantasy adventure novels. During my free time I enjoy going to concerts, shows or really any event with live music.

Overall, I have a passion for learning and growing as a person. I strive to challenge myself academically, professionally, personally. These values not only help me succeed but also encourage me to keep showing up as my best self despite any circumstances life throws my way. All in all, I believe any difficult task can be accomplished with a little hard work and a positive attitude!

As a new member of the TRIO SSS staff, I'm not only grateful for this opportunity but I'm also excited to begin working with and supporting students on their next journey!

Kendra Sevren | TRIO SSS Office Assistant

# Free events around Denver & on campus

## Free Day at the Denver Botanic Gardens

Monday, March 10th | 9:00 am—4:00 pm | 1007 York St., Denver, CO 80206 | <https://www.botanicgardens.org/events/free-days>

Spend a few hours walking through the York Street Botanic Garden all for free! Even in the winter, there is still a lot to see and explore throughout the gardens.

## Free Day at the Denver Art Museum (DAM)

Tuesday, March 11th | 10:00 am—5:00 pm | 100 W. 14th Ave. Pkwy., Denver, CO 80204  
<https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/free-days-dam>

Enjoy the many art exhibits that the Denver Art Museum has to offer! Engage with art, experience onsite activities, and explore the art on view all while enjoying free general admission at DAM!

## Free Events On Campus

Events are from the University Events Calendar. Find more information and events by going to: <https://ucdenver.campuslabs.com/engage/events>

## Weekly Crochet and Chit-Chat Hang Out

Mondays Weekly | Starts at 3:30 pm | North Classroom 1314



Join us as we create! We welcome all crafters of all experience levels. Each week we have a meeting where anyone is welcome to stop by to get involved. We can show you some basic crochet tips, or feel free to bring your current projects and share any fun crochet ideas. Studying, snacking and laughing are encouraged!

## UNO Tournament

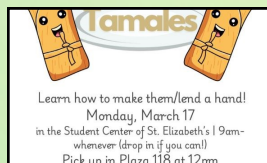
Tuesdays Bi-Weekly | 12:30—1:30 pm | Learning Commons 2231



Join the PALs for a six-week long UNO Tournament! There will be 5 different kinds of UNOs, prizes for winners, and snacks! You do NOT have to attend all 6 events to win. Weekly winners receive a prize with one grand prize for the ultimate winner at the end of the semester.

## Free Tamales with SALSA

Monday March 17th | 9:00 am —12:00 pm | St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church



Join us from anytime between 9am to 3pm for SALSA's first event making some Tamales at the kitchen inside of St. Elizabeth of Hungary! This space is open for all students and is located on the side of the church through the spiral so come join us and learn how to make some tamales! The tamales will be ready to eat by noon (12pm)! If you can't stop by for too long, just come, get some free food, and learn about the new Spanish and Linguistics Student Association (SALSA!)




























## Plant Painting

Thursday March 20th | 12:00 pm —3:00 pm | North Classroom Atrium C



This event is designed to give members of the Biology Club (and others who are not yet members) a much needed break from midterm stress before the start of spring break with some arts and crafts fun! There will be succulents that students will be able to place inside of clay pots that they can paint and decorate however they like! There will also be some snacks and juice to fuel up.

# March Workshop Calendar

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
3	4	5 <b><sup>1</sup>Chemistry Conquerors: Mastering the Elements Of Success</b> 11:30 am—12:15 pm In-Person Learning Commons 	6 <b><sup>2</sup>Procrastination: Now or Later?</b> 10:00 am—11:00 am SC, Suite 2000  	7 <b><sup>2</sup>Coping w/Stress Using Art: Painting</b> 9:00 am—10:30 am SC, Suite 2000 
10 <b><sup>2</sup>Build Your Study Skills w/TRIO and CACE</b> 12:00 pm—1:00 pm In-Person SC, Suite 2000 	11 <b><sup>1</sup>Study Buddy: Using AI As A Study Tool</b> 11:30 am—12:15 pm In-Person Learning Commons 	12 <b><sup>1</sup>Communicating With Your Professor</b> 11:00 am—11:45 am Zoom 	13 <b><sup>2</sup>Resume Basics</b> 3:00 pm—4:00 pm SC, Suite 2000  	14
17 <b><sup>2</sup>Manage Academic and Life Stress</b> 11:00 am—12:00 am Zoom  	18 <b><sup>1</sup>Due Today ≠ Do Today: Avoid Procrastination</b> 11:30 am—12:15 pm In-Person Learning Commons 	19 <b><sup>1</sup>Due Today ≠ Do Today: Avoid Procrastination</b> 11:00 am—11:45 am Zoom 	20  <b><sup>2</sup>Graduate School Basics</b> 3:00 pm—4:00 pm SC, Suite 2000 	21 <b>1st Book Scholarship Deadline!!!!</b> 
24  Campus Open, No Classes	25  Campus Open, No Classes	26 <b><sup>3</sup>Navigating Financial Decisions</b> 10:00 am—11:00 am Zoom  	27  Campus Open, No Classes	28  Campus Open, No Classes
31 <b><sup>2</sup>Organization: Getting It Together</b> 11:00 am—12:00 pm Zoom 				

## Legend for In-Person and Zoom Sessions

IN-PERSON 

ZOOM 

## Workshop Registration

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

<sup>1</sup>Learning Resource Center Workshops: [Registration Required: RSVP: HERE](#)

<sup>2</sup>TRIO SSS Skill Building Workshops: [Registration Required: RSVP: HERE](#)

<sup>3</sup>Wellness Center Financial Wellness Workshop: [Registration Required: RSVP: HERE](#)



## 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/LBReKhGpSY>.