



November 6, 2012

Dear TRIO Conference attendees,

I am truly disappointed that I could not join you today. An unavoidable conflict developed after I had enthusiastically accepted your invitation from my long-time colleague and friend, Barry Lofton.

Please do not interpret my absence as a lack of interest, support or belief in the TRIO mission. No statement could more untrue.

I have actively supported and championed these vital programs for almost 40 years. I have personally witnessed the fruit of your passion and commitment at three different universities since the 1970s.

At a time when much of the world is searching for relevance and meaning in their daily lives, you know that these programs and your devotion to the students they serve change lives and often save lives. You can tell stories, true stories of young women and men who see both themselves and the world differently because you and TRIO were there to educate, serve and care. The meaning of your work is in the faces and aspirations of those students who have passed your way.

The TRIO story is a powerful yet challenged one as all government and society struggle with shrinking budgets and shifting priorities. The challenges will not disappear quickly. Your persistent efforts via TRIO reach out to those who might never catch up on their own. We must be focused and vigilant in telling the TRIO story. We all know those whose futures depend on these programs and on you. We must get them into college and accompany them on their paths to graduation.

Had I been with you for this session, I would have been eager to meet many of you and to be invigorated by your focus on your students and their success. Despite the prevailing circumstances, your efforts on behalf of these students have never been more needed nor more important.

You make the difference for so many. You and these vital programs represent the hope for a meaningful and successful life powered by learning, persisting and graduating. Continue to welcome them to a life of learning, self-respect and success based on their passion, talent and hard work.

Thank you for shaping the lives of those you will never know, but who will, in turn, be influenced by your TRIO students.

You are in very experienced and capable hands tonight with my colleague, Dr. Bill Pink.

And my warm wishes to you, Barry.

Take good care,

Don Betz

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