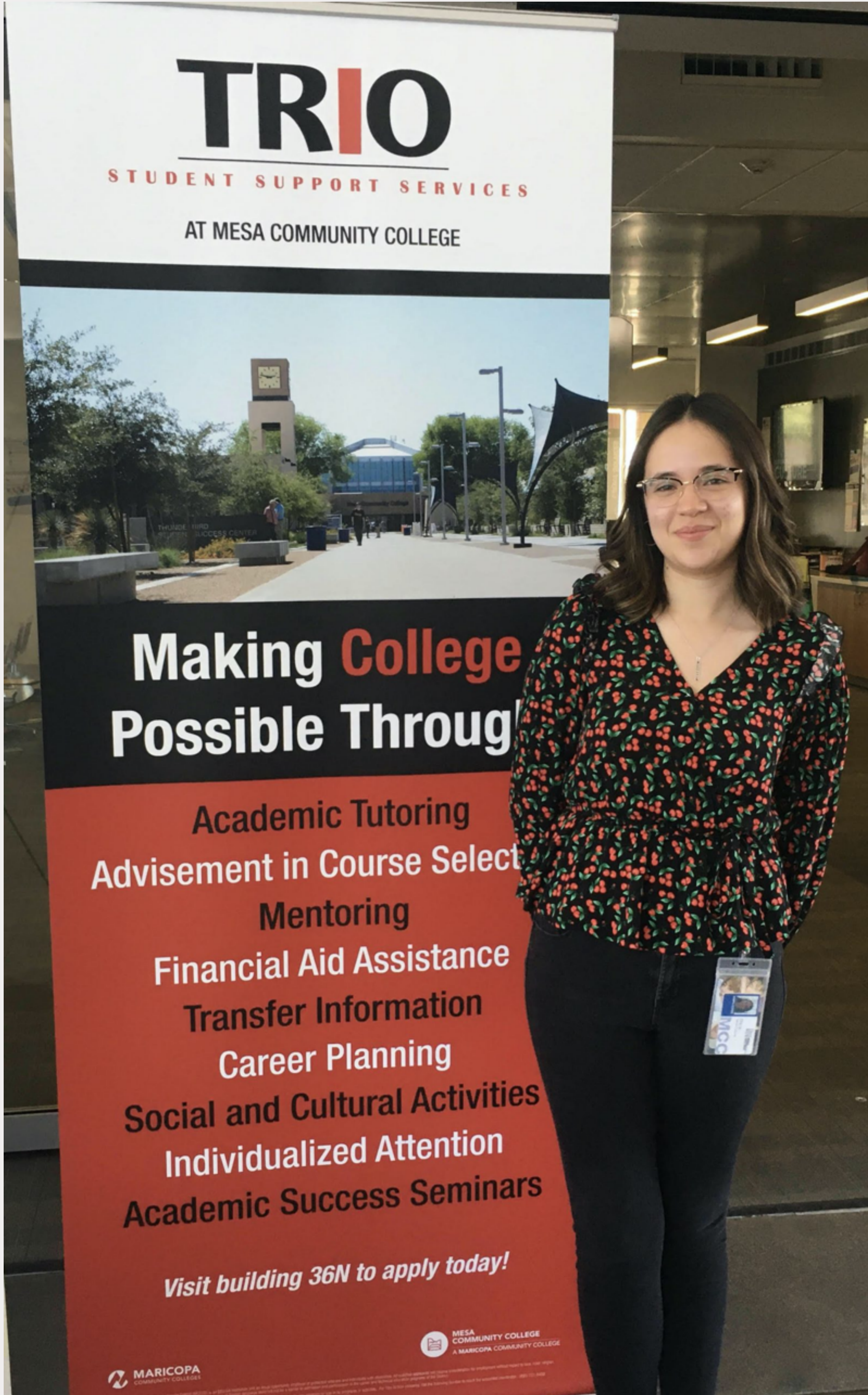




## MCC RECEIVES \$2.6 M TO HELP LOW INCOME, FIRST GENERATION AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SUCCEED IN COLLEGE

OCTOBER 6, 2020 | DAWN ZIMMER | MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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The U.S. Department of Education awards Mesa Community College (MCC) two TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) grants totaling \$2,618,000 over five years.

The grant serves as the sole source of funding for the college's TRIO program, which identifies and provides services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

One of the two SSS grants continues funding for the existing MCC TRIO SSS program initially awarded in 2015 and serves 140 participants. The second, a TRIO STEM SSS grant, serves an additional 120 participants pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering or math.

MCC TRIO SSS programs provide participants with support services, such as tutoring, mentoring, and faculty advising; and foster a campus climate in which limited English proficient students, historically underrepresented students, students with disabilities, homeless students, and other disconnected students feel encouraged to pursue two- and four-year degrees.

"We are excited to be able to continue providing the wraparound support our students need to succeed, especially during this time when even more of our students are struggling to continue their education," said Lydia Perez, program manager for MCC TRIO Student Support Services. "This is the first time we've been awarded a TRIO STEM grant. It will help us not only serve more students but close achievement gaps in this important area."

During the previous academic year, 2019-20, the MCC TRIO SSS grant served 124 students; 11 graduated while many continue their studies.

"TRIO created a tailored plan to ensure my success while at MCC, and even after I graduated, this plan is still helping me at ASU," said TRIO beneficiary and MCC alumna Diana Jerez. "I'm very grateful to this program, and I'm very excited to hear that they are getting funds to continue doing great work at helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds."

Both TRIO SSS grants help college students who are low income, first generation (those whose parents do not have a four-year college degree) or students with disabilities. The array of services the grants provide include academic tutoring, financial aid advice, career and college mentoring, help in choosing courses, and other forms of assistance. Such services enhance academic success and make it more likely that students will graduate or transfer with the lowest possible debt.

SSS began in 1968 and is one of the eight federal TRIO programs authorized by the Higher Education Act to help college students succeed in higher education. TRIO programs recognize that students whose parents do not have a college degree have more difficulties navigating the complexity of decisions that college requires for success; it bolsters students from low income families who have not had the academic opportunities that their college peers have had, and helps students with disabilities remove obstacles preventing them from thriving academically.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the systemic inequality and financial hardships which keep promising students from succeeding in college. Student Support Services are needed now more than ever," said Maureen Hoyler. Hoyler, president of the nonprofit Council for Opportunity in Education in Washington, D.C., which is dedicated to furthering the expansion of college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students, and students with disabilities.

For more than 50 years, the federal Student Support Services program has made important contributions to individuals and society as a whole by providing a broad range of services to help students succeed. Many TRIO SSS alumni have gone on to great success, among them Emmy, Tony and Academy-Award winning actress Viola Davis, U.S. Rep. Gwendolyn Moore of Wisconsin's 4th District and Franklin Chang-Diaz, the first Latino astronaut.

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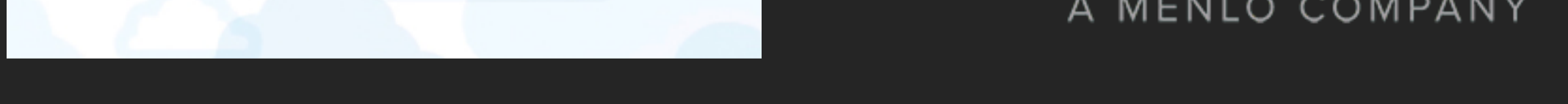
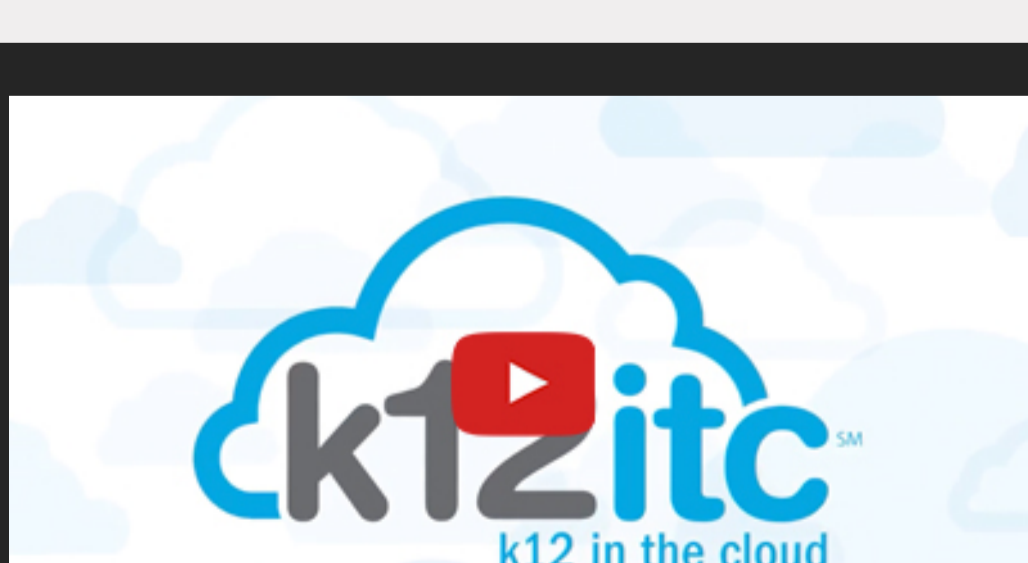
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