

TRIO Day Reception Honors Scholarship Recipients

For more information:

Jane Van Dyk, RMC associate vice president and director, Services for Academic Success

Phone: (406) 657-1128

Email: vandykj@rocky.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILLINGS -- Special recognition for 60 students in the Services for Academic Success (SAS) program at Rocky Mountain College will be held Thursday, March 11, 2010, at 3 p.m., in Fraley Lounge, in the Bair Family Student Center.

Forty-four students will receive scholarships, with another 16 being awarded stipends for faculty-led study trips, according to Dr. Jane Van Dyk, director of SAS at RMC.

The Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) are federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. The name derives from three Lyndon Johnson War on Poverty education programs that were combined.

Faculty-led study abroad opportunities to Costa Rica, Ireland, and Israel have increased this year, Dr. Van Dyk noted. There are also faculty-led study trip programs to New York City and Whidbey Island, Wash.

Details on the faculty-led study trips follow:

- Ireland: Students enrolled in a course titled “Irish Protest” have been studying the history, politics, and culture of Ireland and Northern Ireland. In May they will go on a two-week trip to Ireland. Students will visit Derry, Galway and Dingle in Ireland and Belfast and Derry in Northern Ireland to gain a first-hand experience with the longstanding political and religious conflict in the two countries.
- Costa Rica: Students taking “Rainforest Ecology in Costa Rica” this semester have been studying tropical ecology and will have the opportunity to gain in-country field experience through a nine-day visit over spring break. Costa Rica, a country about the size of Virginia, has as many habitat types as all of North America. It is a small country packed with incredible biodiversity and is one of the few places in the world where endangered species like the scarlet macaws, tapirs, and jaguars can be viewed. Students will observe the different species and biodiversity in four national parks and stay at stay at rustic research stations in the parks.
- Whidbey Island: Taught in conjunction with Bio 410 (Conservation Biology), Bio 480 is a one-credit, one-week field trip to study marine conservation in Puget

Sound during early May. Students will stay on Whidbey Island at the Pacific Rim Institute's field station. Daily classes will focus on marine conservation issues, and there will be field trips to a variety of marine ecosystems, estuaries and intertidal zones, as well as old growth forests and prairies. The course will be a collaborative effort of Dan Albrecht and on-site instructors provided by the Pacific Rim Institute. There are no oceans in Montana, so this field trip will give students a real life experience in marine biology.

- New York City: An English professor will be taking budding writers to New York City in May. Students will attend workshops and seminars on publishing, editing, magazine writing, and project pitching. Students will meet professional writers, editors, and agents who will offer advice on how to get started in the writing industry. One of the students explains, "This trip will get me one step closer to being a writer for National Geographic." The group will visit universities with graduate programs in writing, as well as see the sights, visit museums, and see a Broadway play.
- Bethsaida, Israel: Students are afforded the opportunity to participate in archaeological excavations at Bethsaida. They learn the techniques of excavating, recording, dating, and evaluating finds while exploring the history of the region through visits to other archaeological and Biblical sites and through daily lectures. Accommodation is provided at a kibbutz, where they intermingle with and interview Israelis and become familiar with Israeli politics and philosophy. Three days are spent in Jerusalem where a similar opportunity is provided to gain knowledge of the Arab perspective. They attend lectures by well known scholars on the Arab/ Israeli situation. They also visit Christian sites.

SAS students are from low-income families, first generation college students, or students with disabilities. Students who are receiving the awards will be invited to share their stories of the challenges and barriers they have overcome in pursuit of a college degree.

"College costs are rising every year, and these scholarships really help our students keep their loan levels manageable, participate in a study abroad experience, or take care of an emergency situation that might have forced them to drop out," Dr. Van Dyk added.

The SAS program is supported by a \$312,179 grant from the U.S. Department of Education and smaller foundation grants.

#

3/09/2010