

CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

PUERTO RICO & VIRGIN ISLANDS



ASOCIACIÓN CARIBEÑA DE PROGRAMAS
DE OPORTUNIDADES EDUCATIVAS



FACTBOOK 2020 - 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year has brought some significant challenges to all of us. From health and security issues, to lack of technology supplies and connection that has made this journey quite difficult. Our island serves over 15,000 students from underrepresented backgrounds, and this pandemic has made our TRIO community stronger and even more necessary while proving how essential the access to education is through this critical time. Each of the 42 funded programs in Puerto Rico ensures educational opportunity services that result in success stories of the alumni like the ones included in this factbook.

I can proudly say that TRIO programs in Puerto Rico have emerged from the crisis and have ensured that every participant has access to the needed services to achieve not only their goals but their dreams. Being able to work among an amazing group of professionals throughout so many changes has been one of the most amazing experiences as a leader.

We invite the reader to take a glance out of the great stories, achievements, and statistics that can confirm that even in the hardships, TRIO works!

Best Regards,

Fabiola A. Falto

CAEOP President



WHAT IS TRIO?

The TRIO Programs are federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. Although the name “TRIO” initially came into use after the first three programs were authorized under the Higher Education Act, there are currently eight distinct programs that comprise the federal TRIO programs. Each plays a unique role in providing educational opportunity for eligible students. These programs targeted to serve, motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Also, they assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, individuals with disabilities, home-less youth, those in foster care, English as a second language learners and other disconnected students to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post baccalaureate programs. TRIO programs provide academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary for educational access and retention. TRIO also includes a training program for directors and staff of TRIO projects. In Puerto Rico, we have 42 TRIO programs, and we have representation from each of the federal programs.

The Federal TRIO Programs in Puerto Rico are:

- Regular Upward Bound
- Upward Bound Math & Science
- Veterans’ Upward Bound
- Talent Search
- Student Support Services -STEM and ESL
- Educational Opportunity Centers
- Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement

UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM

Upward Bound is part of the TRIO Programs funded under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and amended in 2008. Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits.

Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. There are two specialties under this program: Upward Bound Math and Science, that prepare students in careers in Science and Mathematics; and Veterans Upward Bound, that prepare returning veterans to enter colleges and obtain a postsecondary degree.

Services:

Academic instruction and tutoring in Mathematics thru Pre calculus, Laboratory Sciences, Composition, Literature, and Foreign Languages, Guidance and counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, work-study programs, education designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students; programs and activities previously mentioned that are specially designed for students who are: limited English proficient, traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths, students who are in foster care or are aging out of foster care system and/or other disconnected students.

Regular Upward Bound Programs in Puerto Rico (13):

- Academy of Medical Directors of Puerto Rico (60)
- Ana G. Méndez University: Bayamón (50), Gurabo (110)
- Aspira de Puerto Rico, Inc.: Carolina (78)
- Inter American University of Puerto Rico: Barranquitas/Aguadilla (144), Ponce (85) and San Germán (106)
- LULAC: Bayamón (63)
- Pontifical Catholic University: Ponce (76), (60)
- UPR-Humacao (65), Río Piedras (88)
- Sagrado Corazón University: Santurce (82)

Upward Bound Math and Science Programs (2)

- Inter American University of Puerto Rico: Guayama (60) and Aguadilla (60)

Upward Bound Veterans Program (1)

- ASPIRA of Puerto Rico, Inc.: Carolina (140)

Number served: 1,327

Budget: \$6,082,158.00

RESULTS: (10/16 PROGRAMS)

- LI+FG PARTICIPANT SERVED: 67%
- CUMULATIVE GPA 2.5 OR BETTER: 91%
- PROFICIENT LEVEL STATE ASSESSM: 7%
- RETENTION RATE: 82%
- RIGOROUS SECONDARY SCHOOL: 83%
- POST SECONDARY ENROLLMENT: 72%
- PS GRADUATION IN SIX YEARS: 36%

TALENT SEARCH PROGRAM

The Talent Search program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to and complete their post-secondary education. The program publicizes the availability of financial aid and assists participants with the postsecondary application process. Talent Search also encourages persons who have not completed education programs at the secondary or postsecondary level to enter or reenter and complete postsecondary education. The goal of Talent Search is to increase the number of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who complete high school and enroll in and complete their postsecondary education.

Services:

- 1.Academic, financial, career, or personal counseling
- 2.Exposure to college campuses
- 3.Information on student financial assistance
- 4.Tutorial Services
- 5.Career exploration and aptitude assessments
- 6.Counseling, mentoring programs and workshops
- 7.Guidance on and assistance in secondary school reentry, alternative education programs for secondary school dropouts and entry into general educational development programs or postsecondary education
- 8.Information on postsecondary institutions and education or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students
- 9.Assistance in completing college admissions and financial aid applications
- 10.Assistance in preparing for college entrance exams
- 11.Special activities for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders
- 12.Workshops for the families of participants

Talent Search Programs in PR (4):

- Ana G. Méndez University: Gurabo (800)
- Aspira de Puerto Rico, Inc.: Carolina (1,894)
- Inter American University: Ponce (500)
- University of Puerto Rico: Río Piedras (1,046)

Number served: 4,240

Budget: \$2,330,766.00

RESULTS: (2/4 PROGRAMS)

- LI+FG PARTICIPANT SERVED: 69%
- RETENTION RATE: 57%
- HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES: 36%
- POST SECONDARY ENROLLMENT: 31%
- PS GRADUATION IN SIX YEARS: N/A

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The federally mandated purpose of the SSS Program, as stated in 646.1 of the federal legislation, is to: a) increase the number of disadvantaged low income college students, first generation college students, and college students with disabilities who successfully complete a pro-gram of study at the post secondary level. SSS Services program should also improve the financial and economic literacy of students. The SSS Program provides opportunities for aca-demic development, assists students with basic college requirements, and serves to motivate students towards the successful completion of their postsecondary education. The SSS goal is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

Services:

- 1. Individualized education plan
- 2. Communication Skills
- 3. Mathematical skills
- 4. Technological skills
- 5. Motivational and Socio-cultural activities
- 6. Career and study skills course during summer component
- 7. Academic, financial and personal counseling services during academic year
- 8. Program Services Delivery

SSS Regular Programs in Puerto Rico (13):

- American University: Bayamón/Manatí (140)
- Ana G. Méndez University: Cupey (215) and Gurabo (283)
- Antillean Adventist University: Mayagüez (140)
- Inter American University of Puerto Rico: Aguadilla (227) and Barranquitas (144)
- Politechnical University: San Juan (237)
- Sagrado Corazón University: Santurce (618)
- San Juan University College: San Juan (315)
- University of Puerto Rico: Arecibo (221), Humacao (300) and Río Piedras (412)

SSS ESL Programs (2):

- Antillean Adventist University: Mayagüez (140)
- Politechnical University: San Juan (140)

SSS STEM Program (1):

- Politechnical University, San Juan (140)

Disabled (1)

- Sagrado Corazón University: Santurce (100)

Number served: 3,772

Budget: \$5,536,959.00

RESULTS: (7/16 PROGRAMS)
LI+FG PARTICIPANT SERVED: 64%
DISABLED SERVED: 10%
GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING: 88%
RETENTION RATE: 89%
PS GRADUATION IN SIX YEARS: 29%

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER

The goal of the Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) is to increase the number of adult participants who enroll in postsecondary education institutions. The Educational Opportunity Centers program provides counseling and information on college admissions to qualified adults who want to enter or continue a program of postsecondary education. The program also provides services to improve the financial and economic literacy of participants. The goal of the EOC program is to increase the number of adult participants who enroll in postsecondary education institutions.

Services:

- 1. Personal counseling
- 2. Academic advising
- 3. Career workshops
- 4. Information on postsecondary educational opportunities
- 5. Information on student financial assistance
- 6. Tutoring
- 7. Assistance in completing applications for college admissions, testing and financial aid
- 8. Coordination with nearby postsecondary institutions

EOC Programs in Puerto Rico (5):

- Inter American University of Puerto Rico: Arecibo (1,950)
- Inter American University of Puerto Rico: Barranquitas (1,000)
- Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico: Ponce (1,200)
- Inter American University of Puerto Rico: San Germán (1,000)
- Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico: Ponce (1,000)

Number served: 6,150

Budget: \$1,695,437.00

RESULTS: (4/5 PROGRAMS)

- LI+FG PARTICIPANT SERVED: 54%
- HANDICAPPED: 3%
- HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES: 58%
- POST SECONDARY ENROLLMENT: 61%
- FAFSA COMPLETED: 55%
- APPLICATION COLLEGE ADMISSION: 49%

RONALD E. MCNAIR

The federally mandated purpose for the McNair Program is to award grant institutions of higher education for projects designed to provide disadvantaged college students with effective preparation for doctoral studies.

Services:

1. Internships
2. Seminars and Workshops
3. Field Trips
4. Cultural Events and Academic Program
5. Academic Advising
6. Financial Aid Assistance
7. Research opportunities

First generation and low income students

Post– Baccalaureate Program (PBP)– Graduate School Enrollment

Post– Baccalaureate Program (PBP)– Continued Enrollment in Graduate School

Research and Scholarly Activities

Ronald E. McNair Program in Puerto Rico (1):

- Inter American University of Puerto Rico: San Germán (33)

Number served: 33

Budget: \$299,981.00

RESULTS:

- LI+FG PARTICIPANT SERVED: 66%
- PBP –GRADUATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 21%
- PBP—CONTINUED ENROLLMENT IN GRADUATE SCHOOL: 100%
- DOCTORAL DEGREE ATTAINMENT: 0%

DATA PRESENTED ABOVE WAS TAKEN FROM TRIO HOME PAGE
[HTTPS://WWW2.ED.GOV/ABOUT/OFFICES/LIST/OPE/TRIO/INDEX.HTML](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html)

COMPARISON TRIO PROGRAM AWARDS IN PUERTO RICO
2019 - 2020 AND 2020 - 2021 DATA

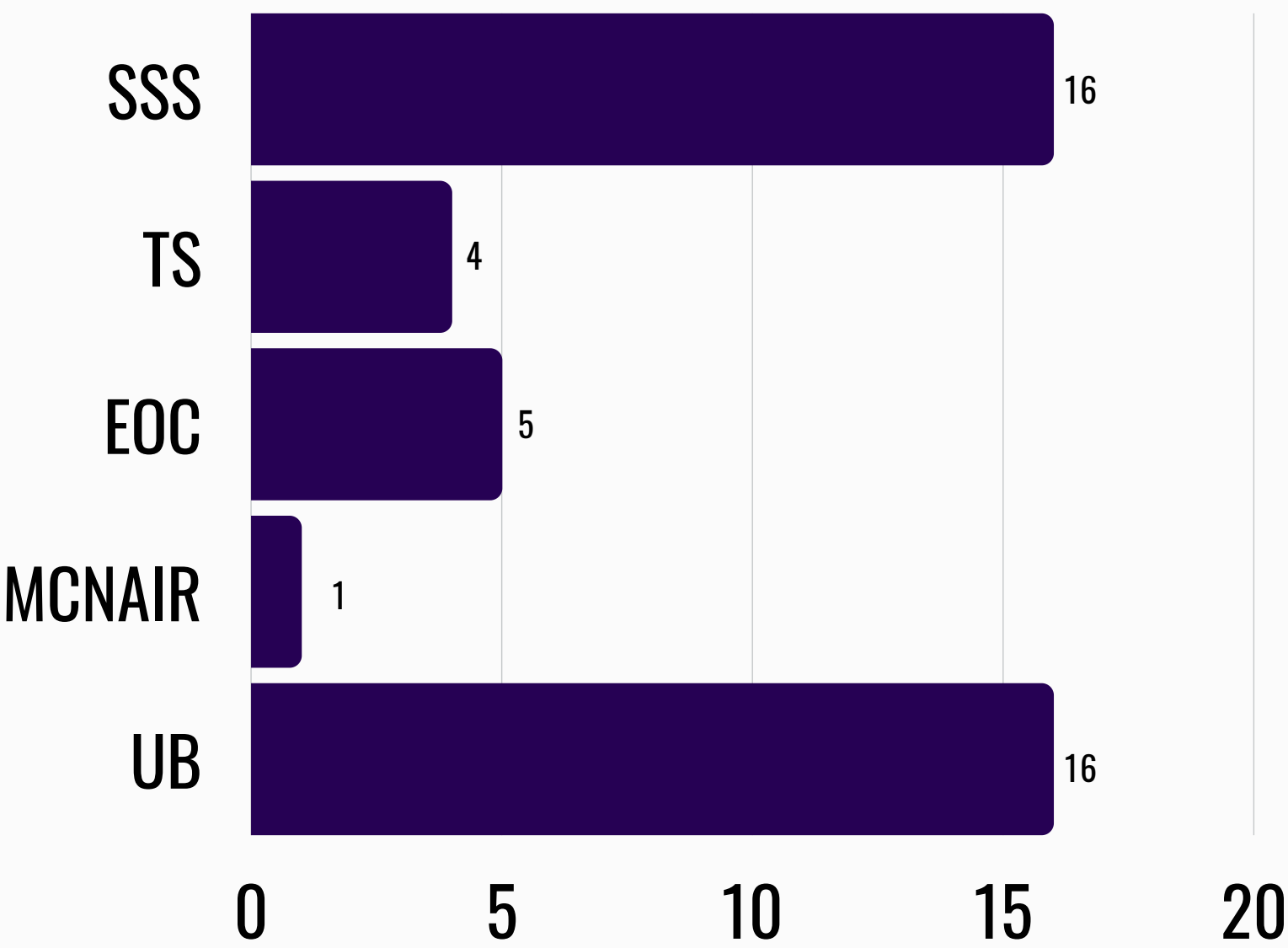
PROGRAMS	# GRANTEES 2019 - 2020	# GRANTEES 2020 - 2021	PARTICIPANTS 2019 - 2020	PARTICIPANTS 2020 - 2021	FUNDING PROJECT YEAR 2019 - 2020	FUNDING PROJECT YEAR 2020 - 2021
EOC	5	5	6,150	6,150	\$1,638,103	\$1,695,437
MCNAIR	1	1	33	33	\$289,837	\$299,981
SSS	16	16	3,937	3,772	\$5,475,667	\$5,536,959
TALENT SEARCH	4	4	4,240	4,240	\$2,411,947	\$2,330,766
UPWARD BOUND	13	13	1,067	1,067	\$4,953,903	\$5,127,290
UB MATH & SCIENCE	2	2	120	120	\$575,074	\$595,202
UB VETERANS	1	1	140	140	\$347,503	\$359,666
TOTAL	42	42	15,687	15,687	\$15,692,034	\$15,945,301

\$253, 267 MORE FUNDS

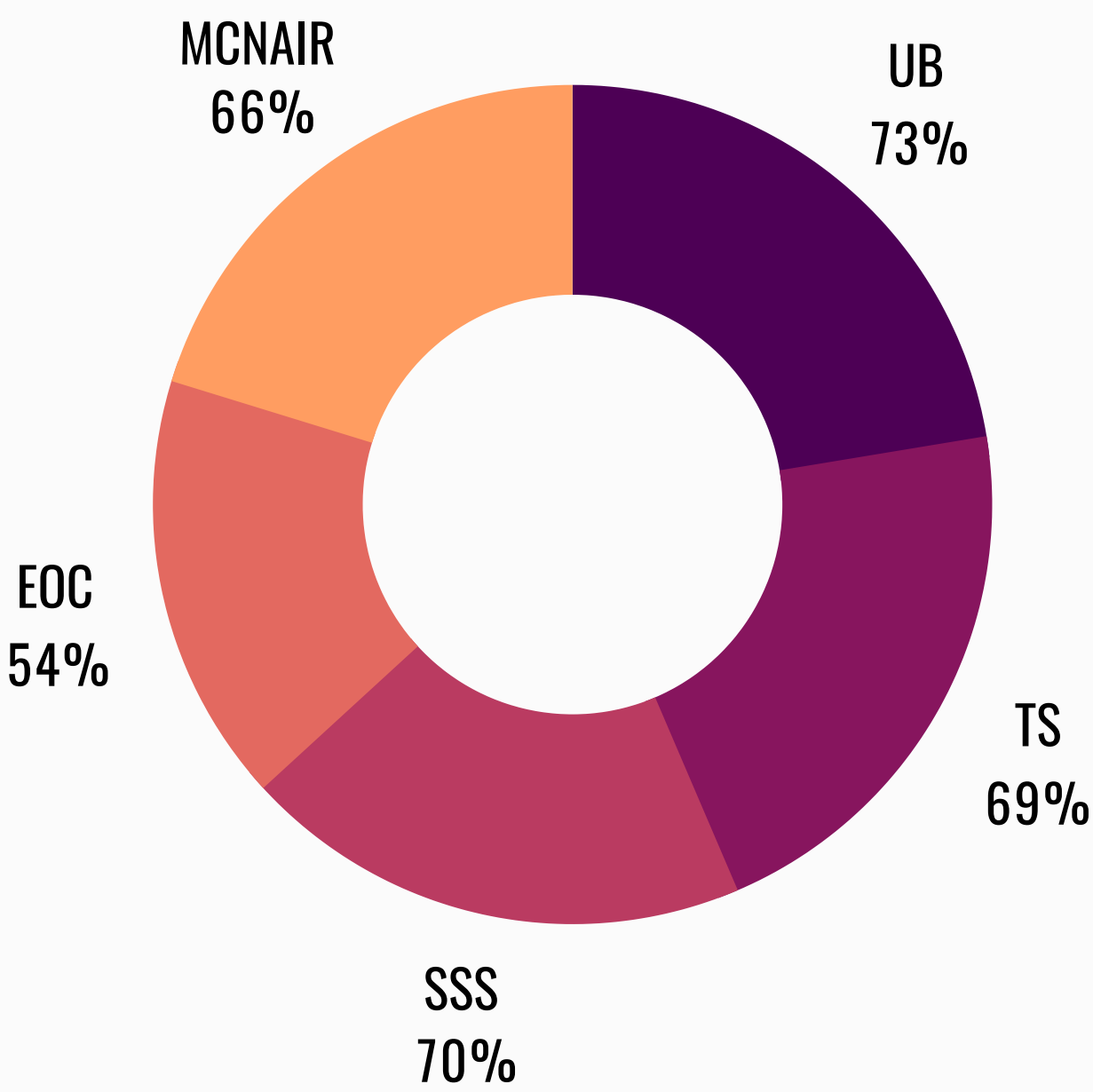
DATA TAKEN FROM TRIO HOME PAGE 2019 - 2020 AND 2020 - 2021
[HTTPS://WWW2.ED.GOV/ABOUT/OFFICES/LIST/OPE/PROGRAMS.HTML](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/programs.html)

STATISTICS

TRIO PROGRAMS IN PUERTO RICO

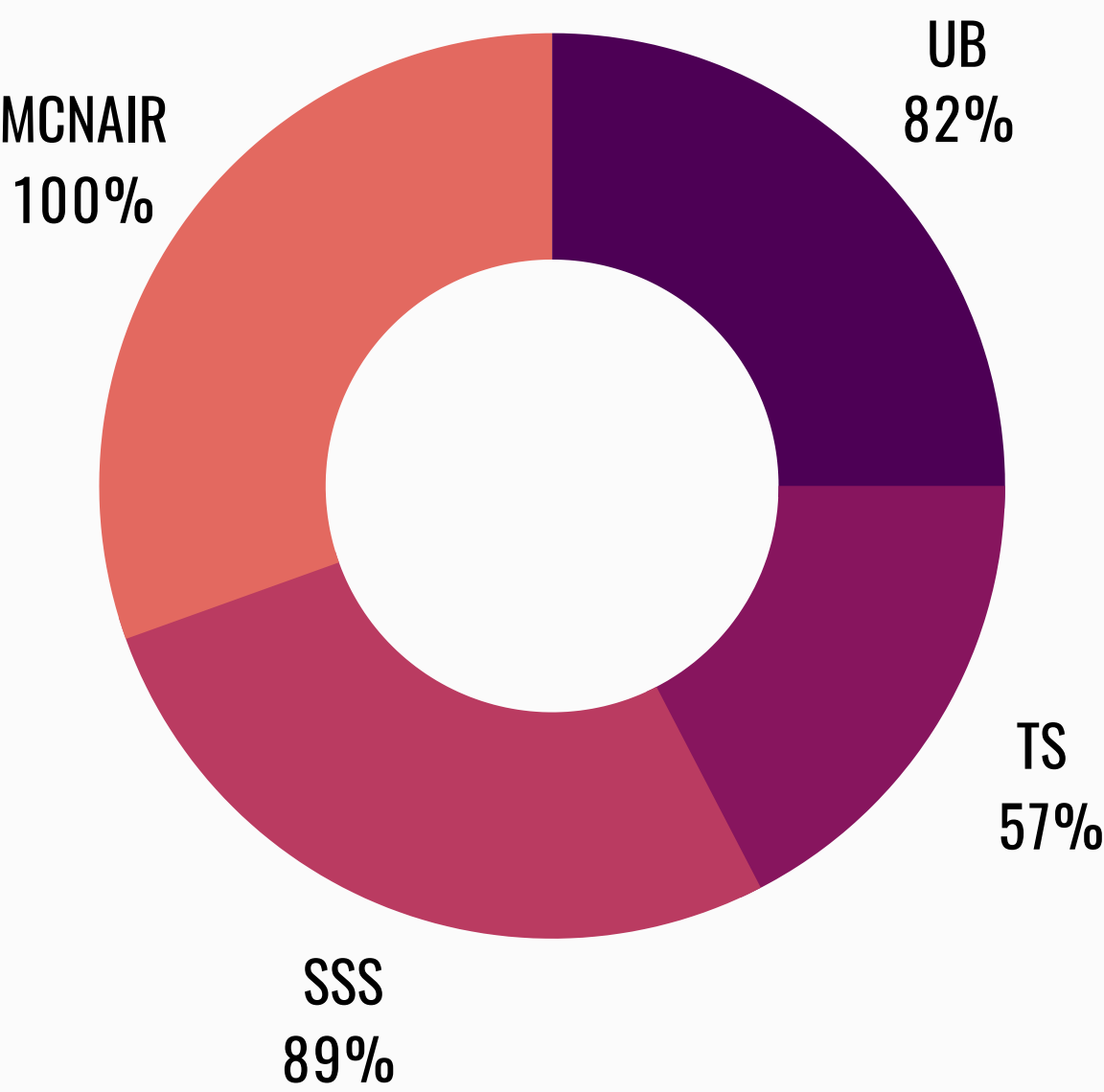


LI & FG PARTICIPANTS IN PUERTO RICO

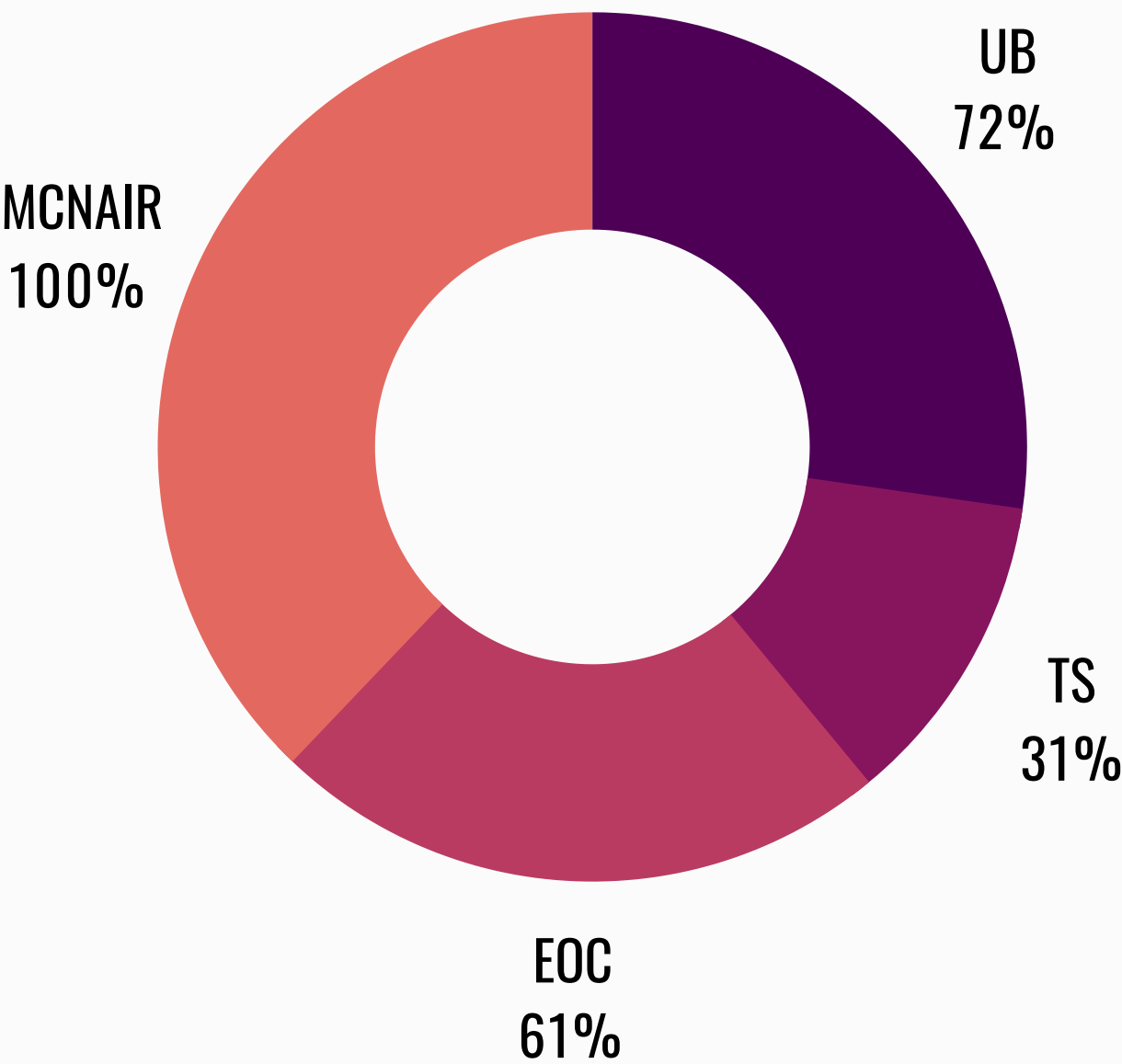


STATISTICS

RETENTION RATE

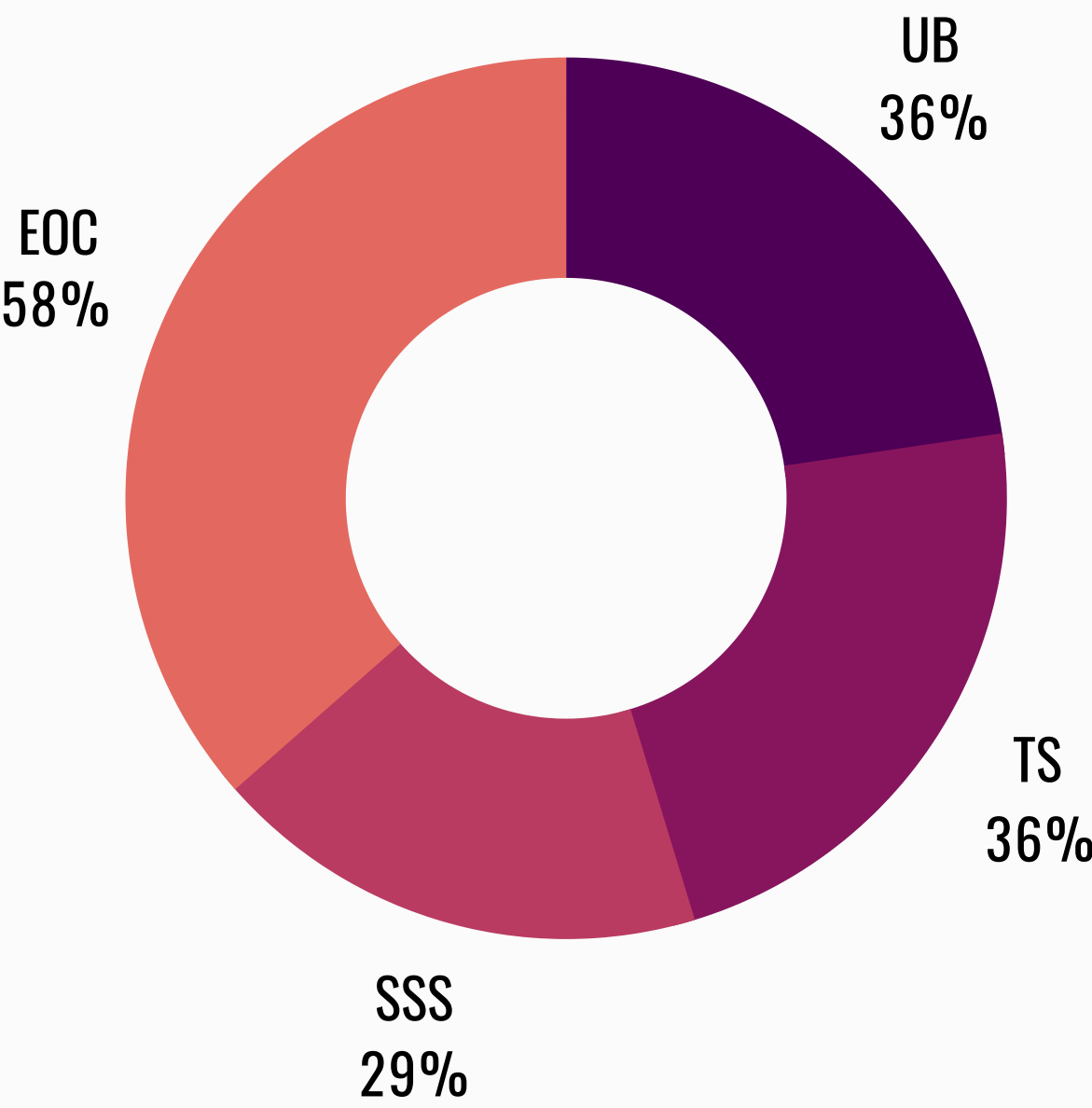


ENROLLMENT PSE



STATISTICS

GRADUATION RATE



ACADEMIC STANDING

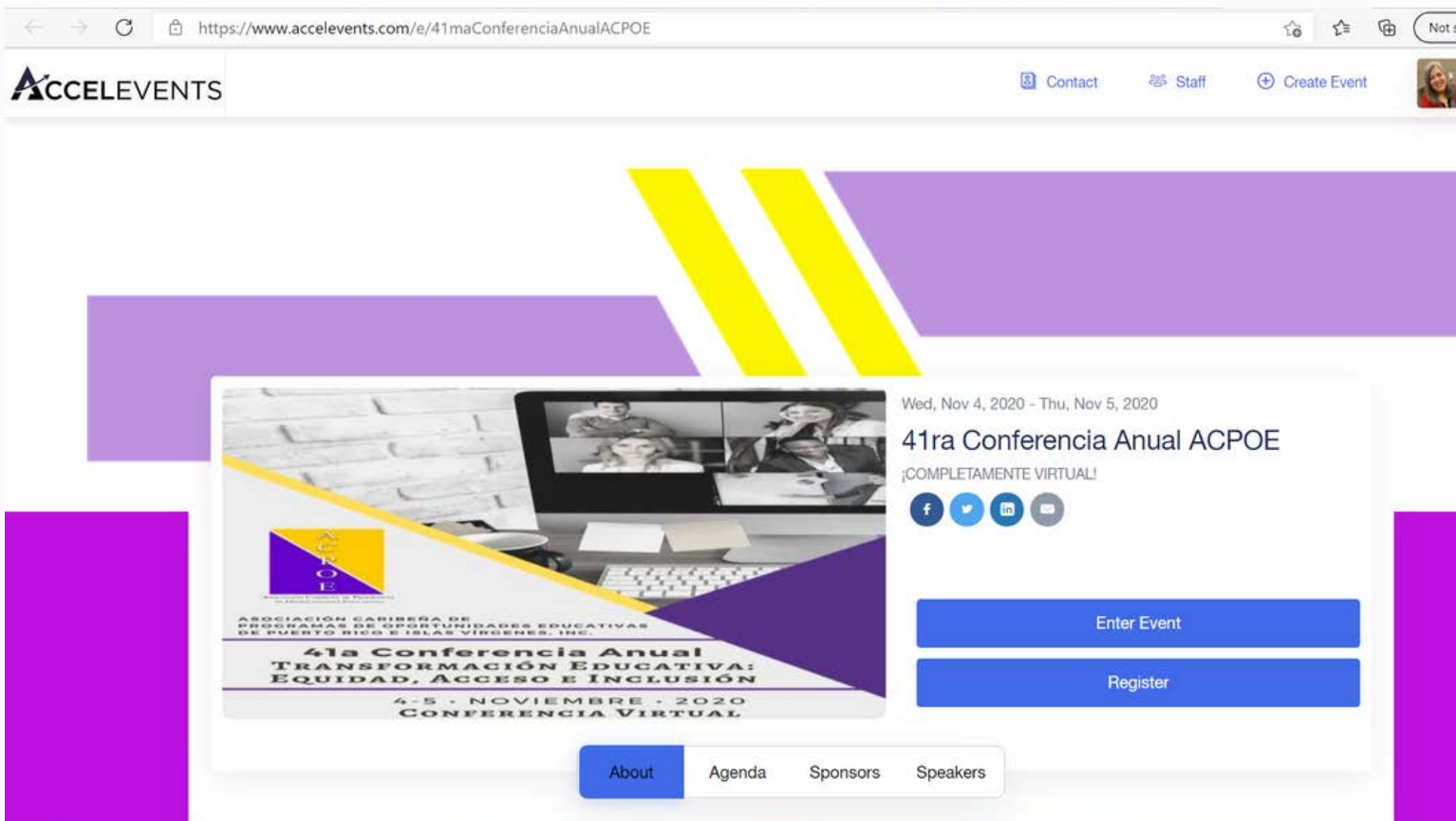


ACTIVITIES

COE VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020 - CAEOP REGION



CAEOP VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020



2020 NATIONAL FIRST GENERATION STUDENT DAY



ACTIVITIES

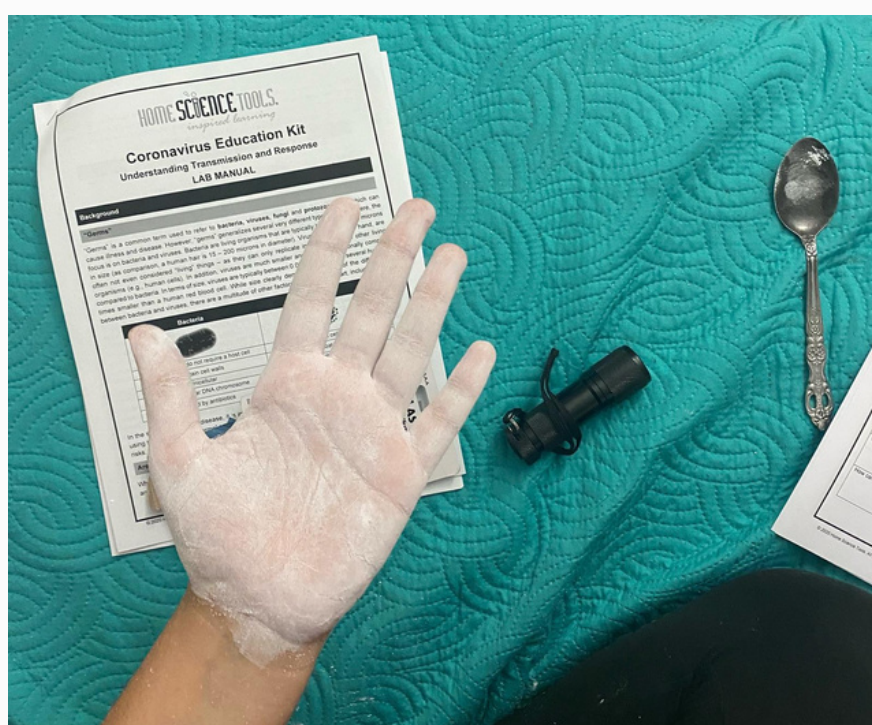
DELIVERY OF ELECTRONIC TABLETS TO STUDENTS



SOIL PH MEASUREMENT WORKSHOP



CORONAVIRUS EDUCATION KIT - LABORATORY FOR TENTH GRADERS



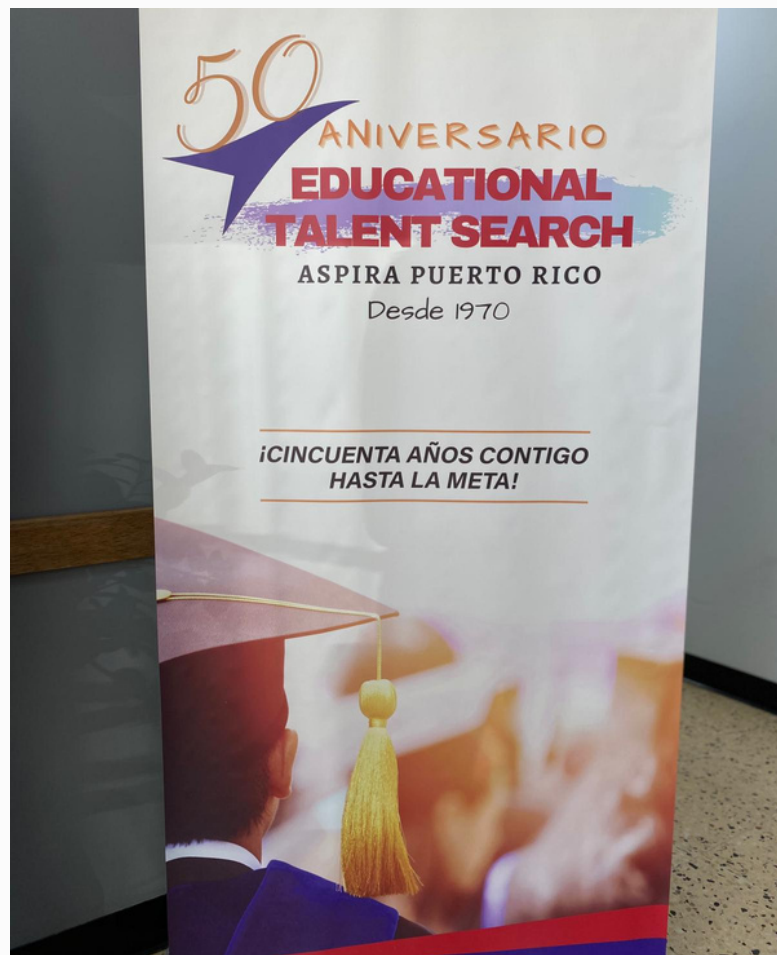
ACTIVITIES

SATURDAY NATIONAL STEAM ACADEMY



ACTIVITIES

ASPIRA TALENT SEARCH 50TH ANNIVERSARY



ACTIVITIES

VISIT TO THE PUERTO RICO ECOEXPLORATORY SCIENCE MUSEUM

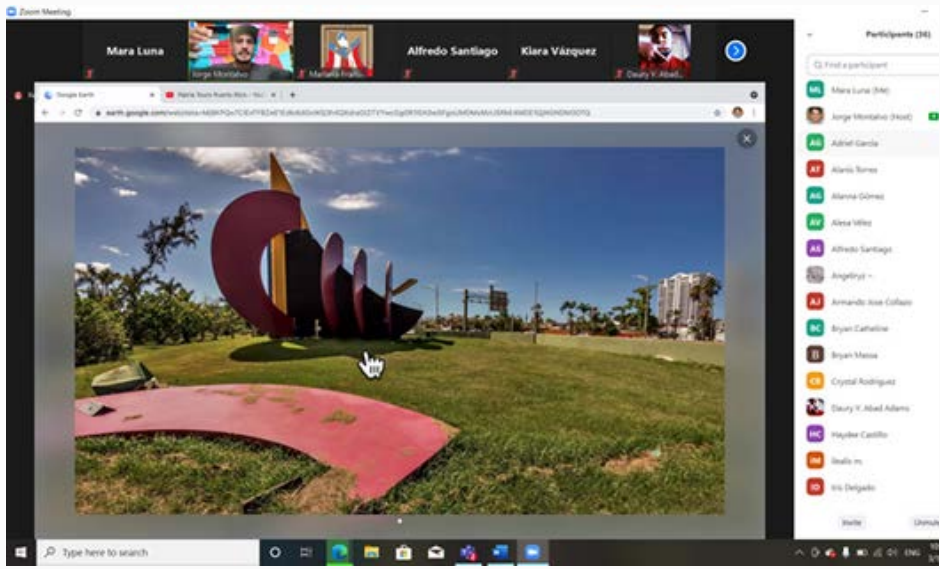
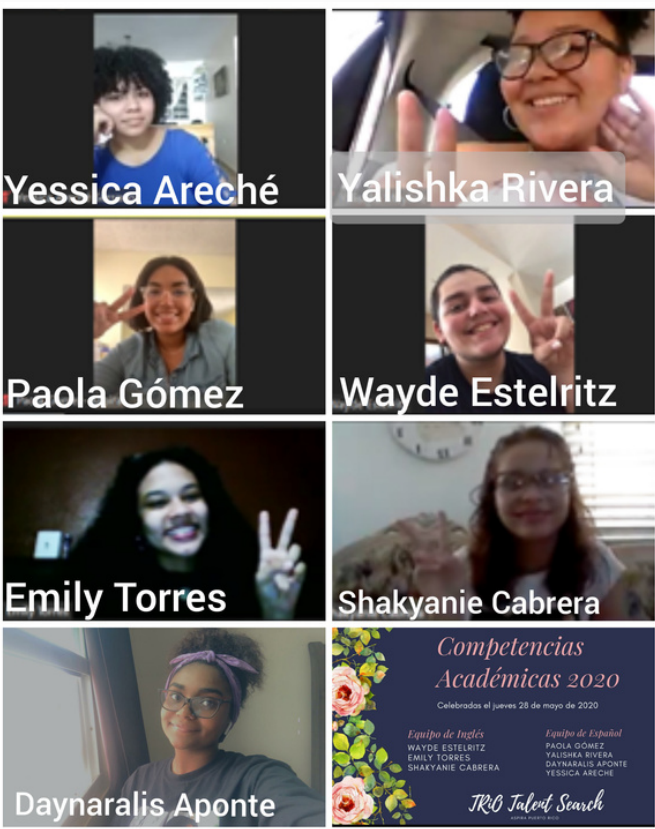


VISIT TO THE CARIBBEAN CREOLE CENTER OF SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY - C3TEC



ACTIVITIES

STUDENTS VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL TRIO DAY 2021

NATIONAL TRIO DAY 2021 CAEOP REGION
CAEOP'S REGION NATIONAL TRIO DAY ACTIVITIES WERE A BLAST!!!
With two main events, the CAEOP region promoted the presence, services and successfulness of all the 42 TRIO projects in Puerto Rico

MEDIA TOUR 2021
TRIO staff throughout the island participated on TV & Radio interviews and provided information about TRIO programs in PR, which were posted on social media.

PAINTED MASKS
Masks were painted by TRIO participants & delivered to Senators, mayors, artists, newscasters, and Influencers with a note explaining what TRIO meant for the students. After receiving them, the recipients posted photos on social media wearing their masks using the hashtags #trioprworks and #NATIONALTRIODAY. A sample of the social media posts are shown below.

Singer Juan Vélez

"Candyman" Radio Presenter

Meteorologist and newscaster Ada Monzón

Senator Henry Newman

Actress Yizette Cifredo

Senator Elizabeth Rose

Influencer estegumercindo



ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL TRIO DAY 2021



SUCCESS STORIES



Kaisha González, PhD - McNair Participant

Kaisha was accepted into the Ronald E. McNair Program of the Interamerican University of PR, San Germán Campus in 2002. She obtained her BS in Biology with a Minor in Medical Technology in 2004 and she completed successfully her master's degree in Science and Doctor in Philosophy majoring in Microbiology and Immunology from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry in August 2012.

She is currently a Senior Scientist at DiaSorin Molecular LLC/Focus Diagnostics based on Cypress, California. Kaisha's primary responsibility is to provide support and assistance globally through on-site training in adopting DiaSorin Molecular LLC reagents and serve as field based technical and clinical expert on molecular diagnostic products for genetic and infectious diseases. Kaisha discovered her voice and passion in research. Her desire to spark change, her commitment, success, humbleness, and solidarity make us proud every day.



Krizia Pieratoni Pacheco - EOC Participant

Krizia is now 37 years old, she began the process to obtain her high school diploma at the age of 33 with the support of her EOC Professional Counselor. In February 2020, at the age of 36, she obtained her high school diploma; in May 2020 she enrolled in a postsecondary institution and began studying a Preschool Teacher Assistant technical course. She has also taken Conversational English and Sign Language online workshops. Krizia is passionate about working with children with special needs and aspires to complete a bachelors degree in that area.

“Achieving the high school diploma opened the doors to education for me and I was able to study what I always dreamed of”. -Krizia Pieratoni, EOC-PUCPR participant

SUCCESS STORIES



Merry Manso Dávila, MS. - Talent Search Participant

Merry Manso Dávila, holds a master's degree in Public Health from the University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus and a bachelor's degree in Integrative Biology from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus.

Currently, she works as the Contact Trace Investigation Officer of the Municipal System of Case Investigation and Contact Trace (SMICRC) in the Municipality of Loíza. In addition, she is the Coordinator of the Alzheimer's and Related Dementias Component of the Puerto Rico Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (PRGWEP) and Event Coordinator of the EcoExploratorio: Museo de Ciencias de Puerto Rico. Merry Manso has specialized in both the health and education fields. In the health field, she is certified in COVID-19 Contact Tracing, Mental Health First Aid for Adults and Children and Social/Behavioral Research Course. In the field of education, she is certified as a STEM educator by G-Works, Inc, certified in neuroeducation: multisensory education. In the professional and community field, she recently completed a professional certificate in Proposal Writing and External Funds Management from UPR, Río Piedras and the Natural Disaster Awareness for Community Leaders AWR-310 from FEMA.

Manso has participated in different research projects, the last one being a research during her master's degree on burnout syndrome entitled "Descriptive Correlational Study on factors that influence the level of stress in workers who worked during the response, recovery and reconstruction process after the passage of hurricanes Irma and María". This research was presented at the American Public Health Association (APHA) convention in California.

SUCCESS STORIES



Emmanuel Pantoja Morán - SSS Participant

Emmanuel Pantoja Morán is an excellent TRIO alumnus. In 2009, he participated in the Student Support Services Program as a first-generation and low-income student. He was admitted to the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages and completed a certification in Cooperativism. Before graduating, he studied French abroad in a summer intensive program of MICEFA France. He graduated with honors in 2014 and continued studying in order to complete his graduate studies in the Graduate Program of Linguistics in the UPRRP.

In 2018, he finished a Master's degree in Linguistics with research on attitudes towards Code-Switching. In 2019, he volunteered in CAUCE's Adult Educational and Literacy Program serving as a tutor, contributing to community service. Emmanuel is interested in seeking a Ph.D. in Leadership and Innovation or in Second Language Acquisition. He is currently working as an Advising Officer in the Student Support Services Program in the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. He is a young diligent professional who is paying forward to the Student Support Services' students the service he received when he was a student. Indeed, he will succeed in all the endeavors he engages in. TRIO works.



Mayra Vaner Villar - Upward Bound Participant

The young Mayra Vaner Villar is a recent graduate of a high school in the Justice System with a minor in Psychology. As part of her experiences of personal and professional growth, she obtained the opportunity to participate in the Jorge Alberto Ramos Coma Internship where she was able to put her knowledge of the justice system into practice. The young woman is now on her way to continue her doctoral studies in law.

SUCCESS STORIES



Elián Flores García - SSS Participant

Elián Flores García is a student from Sagrado Corazón University and participant of the Student Support Services Program who promises to “get the ball out of the park”. He recently joined the production team of the television program Playing Hard Ball/Jugando Pelota Dura, broadcast on local tv station TeleOnce.

He has gone through several challenges to study at Sagrado

"When I began to study in Sagrado I was just 17 years old, I am a native of Juana Díaz and that also challenged me personally because I had to start a life outside my home, family and friends. But my dreams of being able to create my professional career were immense. It was a huge challenge to study at the University because when I started, I was supposed to be in the last year of high school, so the change of scenario was very sudden, but my discipline and desire to learn led me to get good grades and better understanding. I faced the challenges of a change of study schedules, managing university stress and being able to create study habits".

The Student Support Program accompanied him through his studies

"The Student Support Program was my faithful companion during my university studies. My counselors, SSS's team at Sagrado Corazón, is well prepared and committed to the students. When I had any doubts about enrollment procedures, minor concentrations, or classes, I never hesitated to ask, and they - the SSS team - helped me get on the right track. I am more than grateful for the help".

He was also part of Upward Bound

"I have to point out that from my seventh to tenth grade I had the opportunity to participate in Upward Bound, where I had one of my best experiences as a student. I never lacked the guidelines of tutors and teachers.

SUCCESS STORIES

The various workshops were key to my preparation for the university, so, I will always be grateful to the extended family of UB TRIO. In addition, the excursions that Upward Bound created for the students were excellent. Thanks to them I was able to visit the now-closed Arecibo Observatory. I also visited El Yunque Forest, Caguas Botanical Garden, among other attractions in Puerto Rico".

His duties at Pelota Dura include preparing the program's rundown, posting content on social media, producing reports, and providing studio assistance. Elián's student career shows that he has plenty of talent, energy, persistence, and training to "play" very well with the group of experienced professionals around him. Born in Juana Díaz, this dolphin is 20 years old and is about to finish his bachelor's degree in Journalism at the Ferré Rangel School of Communication (ECFR) in Sagrado. In addition, he will also have a minor concentration in Psychology. Prior to this job opportunity, the young man worked as a reporter and news editor for the regional newspaper El Sol de Puerto Rico and was an announcer on Radio Leo 1170 AM. He began his professional practice in the newsroom of Noticentro, but - due to the pandemic - he ended it in the newscast Report 79, on MegaTV. According to Elián, his time at Sagrado has been essential to be able to perform effectively in all these professional experiences.

"My laboratory to execute what I learned in class was the university's web station, Radio Activa, when I was announcing the program Sobrevuelo 360; and when I served as an anchor reporter for the Sagrado student newscast, STV Noticias. This was an enriching experience, where I forged myself with the help and mentoring of my teachers", commented the new talent from the news analysis program.

For this sagradeño, being part of the Playing Hard Ball team is a dream come true. "I am more than grateful to all the production for hosting me; for believing in the new breed of journalists. I am grateful for the opportunity given because with it, I feel that I reap the first fruits of my incipient journalistic career", he expressed.

Elián affirms that Sagrado is and will always be his alma mater

"I have to highlight the excellent teaching staff at ECFR. To those who gave me the Journalism courses: thank you. They prepared me to face all kinds of scenarios. I think it has been a success now that I am entering the professional field", he concluded.

He plans to pursue graduate studies

"As soon as I finished my baccalaureate, I will begin my master's degree at George Washington University in Political Communication and Governance. I also see myself working as a reporter for a television channel in Puerto Rico."

SUCCESS STORIES



Janiel Hernández Aponte - Upward Bound Participant

Janiel Hernández Aponte, a graduate student of the Upward Bound UPR Humacao Program in 2015, began studies at the University of Puerto Rico in Humacao in the Department of Communications in which he demonstrated outstanding from the beginning, working as a videographer of the Partnership for Reseach and Education in Materials (PREM) program sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the UPR.

In his department he also excelled as an announcer of the Radio Program "Nada es lo que parece" of the UPRH He did his practice on Telemundo Puerto Rico's Channel 2, working for the "Puerto Rico Gana Program." He graduated with a BA in Audio and Video Communications in 2020. At present the Janiel is doing a boarding school for NASA in which one of his greatest achievements has been NASA's Spanish-language transmission for the Mars Perseverance mission. We are very proud to have been part of the academic training of Janiel Hernández Aponte.

SUCCESS STORIES

"Several years have passed since I participated in the Upward Bound Program at the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla Campus. A program that motivated me to pursue university studies than later led me to a rewarding professional career. The jump to college can be overwhelming if no one in your family has ever been to college; this was my case. For this reason, I am very grateful to have been part of the Upward Bound Program, its services, financial help and staff were the key to my educational and professional success.

I was 15 years old when I moved to the town of Aguadilla. I was born and raised in New Jersey. I had never lived in Puerto Rico, but I had visited it several times during Christmas to share with my paternal grandparents in Cayey. I arrived during the summer and started classes in August. I adapted to the Spanish classes and inquired about the extracurricular activities that the school offered, but none interested me. I was never an outstanding person in sports, nor did I consider myself an outstanding student to be in advanced classes. I was a normal young woman with average grades.

Through a friend, I discovered the Upward Bound Program at the UIPR, Aguadilla Campus. Some Saturdays I went to the beach and noticed that my friend couldn't go because she was at the University. It made me a little curious, because I wanted to enter the University when I finished the twelfth grade. My friend explained to me about the program and I was immediately admitted. I had the vision of entering the University, but I did not know how and I did not have any family member who could guide me; the Upward Bound Program was exactly what I needed. It was the first step towards realizing myself as a university student. That first day was exciting. I remember taking Spanish, English and Math classes, as well as participating in educational excursions and best of all, attending the camp that was held at the San Germán Campus of the Interamerican University of PR during the summer with other Upward Bound programs. My experience in the Program was a holistic one where I met new people, learned about the university process and grew as a person. I will always be grateful to all the teachers, tutors, and the program director.

In the blink of an eye, the young woman I was became a mother. This did not take away my vision. I entered the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla Campus and obtained my Bachelor of Education in English as a Second Language at the secondary level. While studying, I had the great opportunity to be an English tutor for the Upward Bound Program. This time I was serving others. There is nothing more satisfying than helping others. When I graduated, the University sent me to a federal job fair through a program of the Department of Labor and the UIPR. I submitted my resume to various agencies related to the area of Education. After several months and an arduous interview process, I began working as a federal environmental educator in the state of Georgia.

SUCCESS STORIES

My job was primarily to educate and inform the public about the natural and cultural resources that federal national parks offer. Many of my groups have been from schools or universities, Boys and Girls Scouts, among many others. While working with the agency 40 hours a week, I was also studying at Valdosta State University in the Public Administration master's program. It was honestly not easy. Two years later, I completed the master's degree accompanied by a newborn, my second son.

After working in Georgia for 6 years, in 2004, the agency I work for moved me to Puerto Rico to work with the community in Vieques. The US Navy had withdrawn from the island and our agency was in charge of the land. For more than 7 years I lived and worked hand in hand with the Viequenses' community educating about the island's natural resources and the cleaning process that the US Navy was carrying out in areas previously used for military practices. I loved working with the community, especially with the youth who participated in the Youth Conservation Corps Program during the summers. YCC is a program for youth ages 15-18. It reminded me a lot when I was a participant on Upward Bound. I have been serving the public for 22 years. It is a very satisfying feeling when I meet the students, middle school, high school or university who were my volunteers or YCC participants, all turned professionals. They greet you and remember that little help you gave them to graduate, enter veterinary school or obtain their certification as a Scout Eagle.

It all started with a desire and the vision to enter in college. My family thought it was a very difficult and expensive process since I had a baby. That simple moment of entering the Upward Bound Program set me on the path and prompted me to break the mold and create my own story. Thanks to the UB Program and its faculty for placing seeds in the garden. I am very grateful for my academic and career success and for being able to help others".

-Gisella Burgos, Upward Bound Participant

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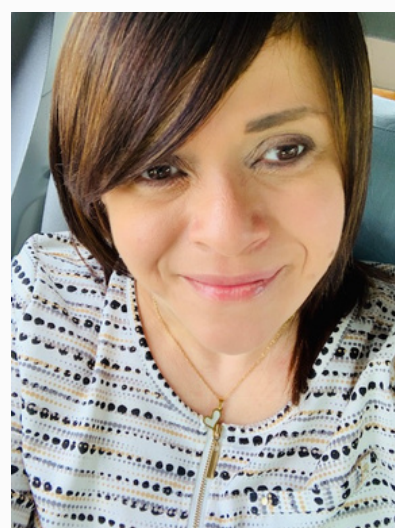
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SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

The first TRIO programs were approved under the U.S. Congress Educational Opportunities Law in 1964. Prior to that law, the Upward Bound program was already established in the United States and, when the law was enacted two additional programs were created under that legislation: Student Support Services and Talent Search.

In Puerto Rico, the first Program started services at the Inter American University of Puerto Rico, in the Barranquitas and San Germán Campuses, in 1965. After that, several programs were developed in different institutions: Aspira of Puerto Rico Talent Search Program, Student Support Services at the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras, the Upward Bound Program at Sacred Heart University, and in 1973, the Aspira of P.R. Veterans Upward Bound. Later on, more programs were approved to provide services to Puerto Rican communities. Programs established belonged to Region II of the former Department of Health and Well-Being that included New York, New Jersey, U.S. Virgin Islands, Panamá, and Puerto Rico.

Region II authorized the selection of two representatives from Puerto Rico as a mechanism to facilitate the direct communication with the programs. The Association for Excellence and Equality in Education, known as AEEE, was established in the United States. It grouped TRIO professionals in New York and New Jersey. Due to the ties to the Puerto Rican community, some directors of TRIO programs in Puerto Rico became members of AEEE. Taking advantage of the AEEE, a proposal for creating an organization that dealt with the needs of the Caribbean area was presented in the directors' meeting of TRIO programs in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. The directors of TRIO programs in Puerto Rico met and voted in favor of its incorporation through an organization that would serve as a link to exchange impressions and ideas about the effective administration of TRIO Programs in Puerto Rico. To that effect, The Caribbean Association of TRIO Programs of Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands was incorporated through the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as the organization that groups the directors of TRIO programs in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands; created in 1979.

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

The Caribbean Association of TRIO Programs began the process to join the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations (NCEO) of which it has been part ever since. The NCEO changed its name to Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) to broaden the scope of its work.

In 2011, the Caribbean Association of TRIO Programs changed its name to Caribbean Association of Educational Opportunity Programs to include other Programs such as, Gear UP, and other state and institutional funded programs with similar educational objectives as the TRIO Programs. Currently, CAEOP represents 42 TRIO Programs that serve 15,687 students.