Triton College students prepare for graduation

Twenty-five-year-old Jennifer Roman began her educational journey at Triton College in 2008, but endured a setback when she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis the same year. Because of her illness, she was in and out of classes and was later confined to a wheelchair.

At that point, she stopped attending Triton, as she felt subconscious about her wheelchair and health issues, and wasn’t sure if she would ever be well enough or feel brave enough to return.

By the end of 2010, she had better control of her health, no longer needed a wheelchair to get around and returned to Triton to continue her studies. During her time at Triton, she participated in clubs, including L.A.S.O., TCSA, Student Ambassadors and the Veterans Club, and made lasting friendships. She’ll tell you that her time at Triton woke her up to all the positive things the world has to offer her, and she couldn’t be more proud about graduating, stating “I finally made it. I still can’t believe I’m graduating.”

To prepare students for graduation day, Triton College held a Graduation Fair in March, providing students with a one-stop shop to be fitted for their cap and gown, obtain their honors pins and take graduation photos. They also were able to learn about opportunities to further their education.

And also for students, Triton College held Success Fest in April to celebrate students who have completed their educational goals and to motivate those who are on their way to finishing their studies at Triton.

The Triton College 48th Annual Commencement ceremony will be held at 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 17, at Rosemont Theatre, as students look forward to sharing the special day with their family and friends and to take on the world with their Triton education.

For more information about Triton College’s commencement, visit

www.triton.edu/commencement
Triton College strategically aims to keep students focused on completing their education.

Twelve members of Triton’s faculty, staff and administration attended the Achieving the Dream (ATD) annual conference in February to engage and learn about best practices in support of student success implemented at other colleges and universities around the nation.

Triton College is a participant in the national initiative that works toward improving the number of students to complete their educational studies.

Practices that were discussed that other educational institutions have found helpful included eliminating late registration, providing placement test reviews, focusing on engaging students in their first year at the institution and making orientation and advising mandatory for students – much of which either currently is implemented on Triton’s campus or will be implemented.

“A primary focus of the conference was the importance of engaging students in their first year,” said Triton faculty Shelley Tiwari, who serves as liaison for the core ATD team at Triton. “After attending this conference, I understand that early engagement of students really matters and that it can be critical when we assess how our students will perform and spend the rest of their time at Triton.”

Students have once again played an active role in achieving their dreams at the Commit to Complete rally held on March 27. The bi-annual event is a call to action by the Triton College Student Association, the college’s student government, to encourage and inspire students to complete their studies. On-campus resources were available to provide students with ways on how they can assist in students’ educational pursuits.

“It’s important that students make the commitment to see their education through to the end in order to be successful when they leave here,” said Triton College student Nathan Bailey, who is graduating with an associate’s degree in hospitality in May. “I made it despite obstacles that got in my way; I know others can.”

The rally comes on the heels of a visit from the ATD coaches later this April, when the college will showcase their initiatives and plans in place as aligned with ATD’s mission. Specific initiatives that will be highlighted will include ending late registration and piloting a college success course for at-risk students who’ve tested into two or more developmental courses.

Other student success strategies highlighted during the ATD conference and from the coaches will be considered in the content development of Triton’s new seven-year strategic plan, of which Year 1 actions for the plan were recently endorsed by the College Council with expectations for the full seven-year plan to be reviewed at the council’s May 2014 meeting. The plan will be implemented for FY2015.
Triton College employees recognized for their hard work, contributions to the institution

Several Triton College employees were recognized for going above and beyond their job responsibilities in contributing to the institution’s mission of student success with a luncheon with the college’s President. And for some, it was more than their first recognition by the President.

The Excellence in Service award is an employee recognition program that tracks an employee’s efforts in volunteering, overseeing a community service projects and other examples of exemplary service with pins. When an employee earns their fifth pin, they are recognized with a luncheon.

Associate Vice President of Facilities John Lambrecht, Associate Vice President of Human Resources Joe Klinger and Coordinator to the Board of Trustees Susan Page each earned five pins. Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs Cheryl Antonich, Associate Vice President of Business Operations Kevin Kennedy and Engineering Technology Faculty Antigone Sharris each earned 10 pins.

Klinger said he is appreciative that Triton recognizes his contributions to the institution. “It’s a rewarding feeling that continues to inspire me to work toward student success, whether through my position at the college or volunteering with other departments when needed.”

Alumni Spotlight: Mario Lamar

Triton student’s educational path leads him to Morehouse College

Mario Lamar is carving out his own slice of success. A Maywood resident and the ninth child out of 14 siblings, Lamar has found his path to success with the guidance of Triton College, and he is excited about what the future holds for him, as a full-time student at the historically black institution, Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Growing up in Maywood, Lamar was homeschooled by his mother from
kindergarten to 12th grade. It was ideal for Lamar and his siblings. But when it came time for him to attend college, he was denied because his diploma was not recognized by the state. With aspirations to go to college, he decided to get his GED from Malcolm X College before enrolling at Triton to pursue his associate’s degree in general studies.

An active reservist in the U.S. Navy, Lamar completed his studies toward his associate’s degree in December 2013. Unfortunately, because he will be on active duty at the time, Lamar will not be available to walk the stage to receive his diploma on May 17, 2014, at the 48th Annual Triton College Commencement ceremony. He wishes his fellow classmates the best of luck.

Lamar is currently pursuing his bachelor’s in International Studies and Spanish at Morehouse, as he gains real-world experience through an internship with Experian.

To read more about Mario Lamar’s educational journey, visit the Triton College Alumni Relations webpage.

Alumni Relations Office introduces newsletter, holds events to encourage engagement

Triton College alumni will now be in the know of what’s going on around campus, when the Alumni Relations Office sends out its first bi-annual newsletter to alumni households in May. The newsletter will include pertinent Triton news, opportunities to engage with the college community and campus and alumni events.

“We’re very excited about the launch of this newsletter,” said Triton College Alumni Relations Director Lisa Scalessi. “The purpose of the publication is to keep alumni informed, involved and invested in the success of their alma mater, its students and fellow alumni, and this newsletter is a wonderful avenue to provide that.”

On April 24, the Alumni Relations Office held its second Triton Trojans Athletics BBQ, outside on the baseball field by the Robert M. Collins Center. Current and former student athletes were invited to watch a Triton Trojans baseball game and to mingle with another over barbecue.

The Alumni Relations Office will provide yet another opportunity to engage alumni with the college at the second Alumni Family Picnic from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 14, in the Triton College Botanical Gardens. The free event will have food, music, games and face painting for families to enjoy.

To be included on the newsletter mailing list or for more information about the Alumni Relations Office, call (708) 456-0300, Ext. 3960, or email alumni@triton.edu.
Triton College Foundation and Alumni team up to offer scholarship opportunity

The Triton College Foundation and Alumni Relations Office introduce the Alumni Legacy Scholarship to benefit current Triton students who are immediate relatives of a Triton College graduate.

The Alumni Legacy Scholarship was established in 2014 by the inaugural members of the Triton Alumni Association Council to honor Triton College alumni and to support the education of immediate relatives of Triton alumni to promote a lasting legacy of a Triton education.

Those who apply must be:

- Be a full-time or part-time student with a 2.5 GPA or higher,
- Be enrolled at Triton for the following fall or spring semester after deadlines for applications (i.e. must enroll in fall 2014 semester when submitting application for scholarship by June, 1, 2014),
- Be a degree- or certificate-seeking student, and
- Be an immediate relative of a Triton College graduate (child, grandchild, sibling or parent).

The scholarship amount is up to $250 per semester for tuition, books and fees, and requires the completion of a service in support of alumni activities.

Applications are available in the Alumni Relations Office in the A Building and the Triton College Scholarship Office, located in Room B-216W of the Student Center. All applications should be accompanied with a 500-word essay describing the impact of a Triton College education on the applicant. Applications are due June 1 for the following fall semester and October 1 for the following spring semester.

For more information, contact the Alumni Relations Office at (708) 456-0300, Ext. 3674, or at alumni@triton.edu, or contact the Triton College Foundation at tcfoundation@triton.edu.

Phi Theta Kappa honor society inducts new members

More than 80 Triton College students were inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa honor society for exemplifying leadership and upholding high academic standards. An induction ceremony recognizing this achievement was held on March 29 in the Robert M. Collins Center on Triton’s campus.

Inductees and their families were present for the ceremony that featured guest speaker Ruth Naval Dantis, a faculty member in the Nursing Department of the University of Illinois’ Chicago campus who is also a community college graduate and currently pursuing her Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) at UIC. The new officers – president and vice president – were also inducted into their positions that same evening.

To be eligible for membership into the Phi Theta Kappa honor society Chi Zeta chapter, students must currently be enrolled at Triton College, have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and have completed 12 semester hours toward a degree.
Triton College student Saul Alarcon was selected to the 2014 All-Illinois Academic Team.

Alarcon is a graduate of Proviso Mathematics & Science Academy and is also a participant of Triton’s selective Scholars Program. He serves as the vice president of Scholarship for the Chi Zeta chapter of Phi Theta Kappa and volunteers his time at a local homeless shelter and tutors in mathematics at Triton.

“It’s nice to be recognized,” he said, and because the All-Illinois Academic Team is based on students who apply for the honor he intends to spread the word for more community college students to apply.

Triton College granted accreditation for the next 10 years

The Triton College community is happy to announce that the institution was recently granted a 10-year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The positive news follows a visit from the HLC Team who came on campus to learn about the college’s mission and operations to ensure it is compliant with HLC standards in serving its students, employees and the community.

Accreditation is important to the institution as it provides opportunity for state and federal funding and financial assistance for students that otherwise would not be available to the college. In addition, it encourages the Triton community to continue improving on all organizational levels, while also assuring the public and employers that Triton’s students receive a quality education.

Following the fall 2013 visit, Triton College was presented with a report from HLC that details the college’s strengths and challenges to address. While the HLC recognized and commended Triton on its mission to foster student success, as well as the institution’s resources and services, the HLC encouraged the college to improve its assessment process and revise some of its policies to enhance shared governance, where faculty and staff have more of a hand in an integrated process of planning and decision making at the institution.

“We are excited to remain an accredited institution, as it contributes to our mission to support our students, but we understand our work needs to continue,” Triton College President Dr. Patricia Granados said. “The entire campus community will engage in discussions to enable the college to move forward in improving our institution.”
Triton-bred leaders unite for President’s Leadership Academy’s all-years gathering

All participants of the President’s Leadership Academy came together for an afternoon of engagement and to share their unique perspectives and experiences in leadership development.

The academy, which was created by Triton College President Patricia Granados in 2008 to instill and inspire leadership among Triton’s current employees, has cultivated a total of 132 leaders to date through its program that fosters leadership through workshops, guest speakers and individual and group projects. The annual program welcomes a class of about 25 individuals each year from various campus departments and employee groups to engage in a wide range of professional development seminars and activities in addition to the work associated with developing and executing a group project that lends itself to Triton College’s mission toward student success.

“The annual gathering of all President’s Leadership Academy members is absolutely wonderful,” said Dr. Granados. “I truly enjoy being among them, catching up on their professional growth and institutional projects. The room was packed and full of energy with close to 100 leaders in attendance. This event is an opportunity for leaders to get together and share their struggles and accomplishments. It also affords the current class of 2014 to network with leaders from past years. It is inspirational to observe the interactions among them and the support they give each other. This energy transcends to their daily work at the college. I am very proud of all the leaders.”

At the event, the current class presented their group project to develop a character ambassador for Triton with the input of students that can be utilized by a multitude of departments for various purposes.

“This project touches on so many aspects of the college – from admissions to athletics – that it was important to have a well-rounded group representing various areas of the college to develop it,” said Sam Tolia, director of Marketing and a member of the FY2014 President’s Leadership Academy class. “The character ambassador, or mascot, will have a lasting impact on not only our students, but our K-12 partnerships as well.”

For some leadership classes, the projects and also the friendships have been ongoing. The FY2012 and FY2013 classes have each reignited their group projects, teaming up with on-campus departments and restructuring their plans to bring their visions to fruition.

The FY2012 team is developing a Distinguished Alumni Wall of Fame with the help of Triton College’s Alumni Relations Office. The goal is to develop a wall of the most notable alumni to celebrate the college’s past and acknowledge the institution’s success throughout its history to inspire current and future students.

“Recognizing the achievements of our alumni is vital as the academic and career success of our graduates is living proof that Triton College fulfills its mission of student success,” said Lisa Scalelli, director of Alumni Relations. “The Distinguished Alumni Wall of Fame will be a meaningful reminder of that for the campus and the surrounding community.”
The FY2013 class project is to design a structure for the college’s north entrance to signal the entryway to the campus. The design is student generated and will emphasize Triton pride and provide a fresh image to the campus entrance.

After connecting with the appropriate on-campus resources, the group was able to move forward in presenting their project to the Board of Trustees, who committed to funding part of the project. A completion date has yet to be determined.

“Since I’ve been here from 2000, I’ve never seen construction on the scale of what we’re seeing now on the north side of campus,” said faculty Kent Randall and a participant in the FY2013 academy, referring also to the H Building and asphalt replacement renovations on the north side. “The timing of our sign structure at the north entrance couldn’t have come at a better time to give the entryway a completely new look for the 50th anniversary that kicks off in August.”

Planning is currently underway to form the FY2015 President’s Leadership Academy for another exciting year of leadership development.

Area chambers gather on Triton’s campus in the name of partnership

On March 4, about 115 chamber members from area district communities attended Triton College’s Multi-Chamber of Commerce After-Hours event, which is intended to cultivate and strengthen partnerships with area businesses.

The communities that were represented at the event included Bellwood, Bensenville, Forest Park, Franklin Park/Schiller Park, Hillside, Maywood, Melrose Park, Rosemont, Oak Park, River Forest, Westchester and Riverside.

Triton College President Patricia Granados welcomed the chambers in attendance. “We’re very pleased to host our chambers and to showcase our institution as a tremendous resource for you to take advantage of,” she said. “We’re your area community college, and we have a lot to offer.”

With a focus on the importance of partnerships, guest speaker Doug Whitley, president and CEO of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, provided reasons as to why businesses should have a vested interest in their community college. “As an employer, it is important to get involved with your area college, so that the college can know what’s going on in the community and respond to the community’s needs,” he said. “Without this communication, colleges will be slow to respond to the changing economy, of which affects the capabilities of your future employees.”

Mayor of Schiller Park Barbara Pittaver enjoyed meeting other chamber members at the event and supported the words of Whitley. “The students at Triton are our future voters and they need to know what’s going on in our communities,” she said.

“Mr. Whitley stated it perfectly,” said Triton College Board Chairman Mark Stephens. “All chambers should know we’re here to serve them. We want to make sure we get the message out to businesses and organizations that we, as a community college, are here to help.”
Community members, organizations join Triton College in celebrating Black History Month

Throughout February, Triton College recognized and celebrated the achievements of African-Americans with many educational and social events open to the community during Black History Month.

Coordinated by the Black Heritage Council at the college, the Black History Month 2014 celebration, themed “Celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Civil Rights Act,” was meant to educate and motivate students and community members to strive for success with a monthlong of events that address topics important to the black community.

Check out these pictures from the many events held on Triton’s campus in recognition of Black History Month.

Dr. Carol Adams, president and CEO of the DuSable Museum of African-American History, spoke at the Triton College Black History Month Kickoff celebration held on Feb. 3.

Triton College students stopped by tables for information on how to improve their health at the Black Heritage Council’s Health/Wellness Fair on Feb. 6.

Dr. Kennedi Strickland-Dixon, director of Special Education and Student Services for Bellwood School District 88, served as the guest speaker for the closing ceremony on Feb. 27.

Triton College thinks BIG with future renovation plans

Though several major renovation projects are already in place or have begun on Triton College’s campus, the institution is planning more changes to improve and update various areas of the campus to address the needs of its students, as well as its faculty and staff and to sustain Triton College into the next 50 years.

Future renovation plans include:

- updating the Student Center, including the cafeteria and Financial Aid/Admissions Offices;
- expanding the Child Development Center;
- expanding and upgrading the fitness center;
- renovating the Cernan Earth and Space Center, the Cox Auditorium, the Performing Arts Center Auditorium and the Career Services Center;
replacing windows and flooring in certain buildings; and
constructing a demonstration kitchen and mixology lab for Triton’s hospitality students.

The biggest project will be enhancing the various student spaces, such as the classrooms, located around campus. With students as the primary focus, the renovations will provide students with a learning environment conducive to their education that furthers the college’s mission of contributing to student success.

The college is currently undergoing the process of securing an estimated $38 million worth of bonds to fund the multiple projects.

Nuevos Horizontes moves its operations to Triton College’s main campus

Triton College’s community center in Melrose Park will move all of its operations and transition its services to the Triton College campus in River Grove.

Nuevos Horizontes, located on Main Street in Melrose Park, provides classes and life-skills workshops to non-English speaking area residents. The courses and services offered at Nuevos will be absorbed by Triton’s School of Continuing Education and Adult Education departments.

“By relocating the students of Nuevos Horizontes to the Triton College campus, our hope is that students will now have easier access toward completing the advanced level ESL and GED courses, transition to credit-bearing classes and pursue their academic and career goals,” said Luisa Hernandez, director of Nuevos Horizontes.

The college believes this move will strengthen and facilitate a student’s transition from the college’s ESL/GED classes to pursuing a degree or certificate to also furthering one’s education at a four-year university and/or entering the workforce. Students will have access to the comprehensive support services on our main campus which will improve student success and advancement into college courses.

The college will implement a new initiative, called Bridges, which speaks to this streamlined process that will connect students with limited English speaking skills to the appropriate channels to achieve their educational and career goals, from high school to after graduating from Triton.

“A commitment of Triton College is not only ensuring every student learns the English language but also provides opportunities for socioeconomic advancement and higher earning potential,” said Dr. Doug Olson, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. “It is important that we encourage our students to achieve their highest potential, and Bridges will place them on a steady, guided path to completing their goals.”

Triton College is taking action to provide a smooth transition for students currently enrolled in classes at Nuevos Horizontes, including providing transportation from the current Nuevos site to the main campus for those students in the pipeline to ensure uninterrupted access and by offering some courses at the college’s extension sites within the district for easier access.

Nuevos Horizontes opened its doors for the first time on Aug. 18, 1981. Nuevos has taken up residence in two former locations within Melrose Park, before settling into its current home at 1708 Main Street in 2001.

Nuevos’ operations will fully transition to the Triton College campus for the summer 2014 semester.
Tee off summer with the 17th Annual Triton College Foundation Golf Outing on June 18

Usher in summer by networking on the links and supporting student success at the 17th Annual Triton College Foundation Golf Outing on Wednesday, June 18, at White Pines Golf Club, 500 W. Jefferson St., in Bensenville.

The event, open to novice and skilled golfers alike, will kick off at 10 a.m., with an 18-hole round of golf, golf carts, goodie bags and lunch, followed by dinner and prizes.

Golfers may register as individuals for $135 per person or as a foursome for $540.

The Foundation is currently accepting Friend of the Foundation sponsorships, as well as raffle and goodie bag donations. A unique range of sponsorships are available including hole sponsorships ($200) and par sponsorships ($740 – includes a foursome, hole signage, recognition on promotional material and the Foundation’s website) to higher-level opportunities priced from $1000 to $10,000. All sponsorships are tax deductible.

Proceeds from the annual golf outing will benefit Triton College Foundation student scholarships.

To register for the event, become a sponsor or for additional golf outing information, please contact the Triton College Foundation at (708) 456-0300, Ext. 3758, visit www.triton.edu/foundation or send an email to tcfoundation@triton.edu.

Triton College’s 50th Anniversary

Countdown to Triton's 50th Anniversary Celebration

Time is ticking on Triton College’s kick off in celebration of its 50th Anniversary! In fact, you can countdown with us with our ticker on the homepage of the Triton College website to remind you of the excitement to come.

Also, be sure to check out our 50th anniversary webpage at www.triton.edu/50thAnniversary for any updates, and interact with us about the 50th on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/OfficialTritonCollege.

As the 50th year of the college approaches, we will highlight the last segment of the Triton historical series featured in Community Connection

Building on success in the new millennium
Triton College was well-established in the 2000s. The institution boasted top-notch programs taught by experienced faculty on a close-knit campus that students appreciated and often sought out when it came to their higher education endeavors. Popular programs, such as nursing, criminal justice and automotive, were quick to fill, as the college continued to build upon and strengthen its current offerings, while developing new programs, initiatives and resources to benefit students and its surrounding district alike.

It was decided to revamp Triton students’ central location to usher in the new millennium. The Student Center houses much of the campus resources and services the students need to succeed, including the Financial Aid Department, Admissions Services, and the institution’s counselors. It also harbors the Cafeteria, a prime hangout spot for students. In 2002, a bakery was added to the Student Center, providing sweet treats and real-world experience for Triton’s hospitality students.

Five years later, the Student Center’s Welcome Center was redesigned to offer a more inviting entryway to current and prospective students. The Student Center would undergo more changes within the next 10 years: More recently Triton’s hospitality dining room was remodeled and renamed as Café 64. Also, the University Center, which provides students with an associate’s degree the option of pursuing a bachelor’s degree from one of Triton’s four-year university partners without leaving Triton’s campus, moved from the Learning Resource Center to the Student Center to be more accessible to students.

In 2008, Triton wanted to further engage the college’s surrounding communities with what’s going on at the college, so the Community Advisory Committee was established. Community members representing various industries and towns are tasked with the responsibility of advising Triton in different areas of the college.

As another means of community outreach, Triton hosted its first STEM Fair for area middle school students in 2011. Middle schools are invited to bring their students on campus to receive a hands-on lesson in STEM-related (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects as they pertain to the various programs offered at Triton. Since its inception, Triton has been heralded by teachers and students for offering such a fun and educational event.

In 2009, Triton College received the honor of being selected to participate in the Achieving the Dream initiative that encourages and provides connections for colleges nationwide who are and would like to further contribute to student success at their respective institution.

But in 2011, it was the students themselves who spoke out and put forth an internal initiative to encourage more students to complete their studies. The Commit to Complete campaign kicked off with a rally by the Triton College Student Association, or TCSA, to have students make a pledge toward finishing their education. The rally brought out hundreds of students who signed a banner in support of their futures.
Then in 2013, humbled by its continuing growth, Triton College provided a bit of relief to households within the college’s district. The Triton College Board of Trustees approved a $2.4 million tax abatement from funds available from the college’s 2012 Tax Levy reserve – an act practically unheard of for an educational institution, let alone a community college. The Board viewed the abatement as fiscally responsible, recognizing the support of taxpayers to Triton.

“In these tough times, where unemployment is on the rise, we understand the financial difficulties many households may face today, and we wanted to give back,” said former Trustee Thomas Gary, who strongly advocated for the abatement. “Our fellow taxpayers have not only shown their support of Triton College over the years, but also clearly acknowledge the value of having access to an affordable, quality higher education.”

It’s this quality education that Triton College is committed to putting forth over the next 50 years.