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Triton College

For immediate release: **Oct. 27, 2023**

Triton College Celebrated the End of National Hispanic Heritage Month with a Diversity Panel and Discussion



The Hispanic Heritage Month panel included (from left to right) Dr. Gabriel Guzman, Chef Manny Uribe, Hector R. Hernandez, Axia Thalia Vazquez and Maria G. Solorio.

RIVER GROVE, Ill. – Triton College celebrated the end of *National Hispanic Heritage Month with Hispanic Heritage Month: La Diversidad Nos Define (Diversity Defines Us) Panel Discussion*, on Monday, Oct. 16. The panel consisted of a variety of Triton College faculty and staff that are of Hispanic descent.

Moderated by Julia Willis, Triton College’s dean of Students, the panelists were asked an assortment of important questions regarding diversity, colorism and the significance of National Hispanic Heritage Month, as well as their role models and inspirations.

“My mother was a major example of resilience and grit for me,” said Dr. Gabriel Guzman, a microbiology instructor and instructional area coordinator.

Axia Thalia Vazquez, scholarship coordinator, shared a personal story about her persevering, Puerto Rican family. Her family's hardworking values helped her finish her education at Triton College, even if it was a struggle.

"Keep going," she advised the audience. "Do not let your age or anything else try to stop you from getting what you want."

Maria G. Solorio, lead, Custodial/Grounds, inspired attendees with positive statements and advice on how to live a happy life.

"Today is a good day to smell the flowers and blow out the candles," she said. "When we smell the flowers, we're inhaling peace, love and compassion. When we blow out the candles, we exhale our troubles, worries and chaos."

Other panelists included Hector R. Hernandez, retention specialist for Business and Technology, and Chef Manny Uribe, the chairperson for Hospitality Industry Administration. The panel was co-sponsored by Triton College's Heritage Committee and the Professional Development Center.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15. The 30-day period commemorates the many contributions and cultural influences from those with Spanish, Mexican, Caribbean, and Central and South American heritage.

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ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE

Triton College is a two-year college dedicated to helping members of the 25 Western Cook County communities in our district and beyond to achieve educational, professional and personal success. Located in River Grove, Ill., Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs on its 110-acre campus, featuring a comfortable, friendly and diverse atmosphere. Triton also holds classes at satellite locations and offers online learning opportunities. Triton's dedicated faculty and staff work to provide high quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 14,000 students each year. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at <http://www.triton.edu/>.