



PRESS RELEASE

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\$2M grant to help low-income and first-generation college students succeed in higher education

Low-income middle and high school students in Guam and those who would be first-generation college students will continue to have support in pursuing and completing higher education following a renewed grant award for the Talent Search program. The program, one of three Federal TRIO Programs for Guam students operated by the University of Guam, will receive \$409,407 from the U.S. Department of Education every year for five years starting on Sept. 1.

“The program recognizes that students whose parents do not have a college degree have more difficulties navigating the complexity of college,” said Lawrence Camacho, dean of Enrollment Management and Student Success at the university. “The program reaches out to students who will be first-generation college students or are otherwise underserved and gets them excited and prepared to pursue higher education.”

As a “talent search,” the program identifies middle and high school students who have the potential to succeed in higher education and mentors them in study skills, financial literacy, and career exploration. Participants also have access to in-school counselors to help them with college admission requirements, scholarships, and financial aid.

Guam’s program helps more than 700 students per year – at least two-thirds of which are from low-income backgrounds and families in which neither parent has a completed a bachelor’s degree.

“Talent Search helped me tremendously in achieving my goals, in navigating my college transition, and earning my college degree,” said Erickson Aquino, a Talent Search alumnus who is now a senior academic assistant for the program.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 80% of Talent Search participants enroll in postsecondary institutions immediately following high school graduation.

Past participants in Guam’s program have gone on to enroll at institutions including the University of Guam, Georgetown University, the University of Portland, the University of Southern California, and many others.

Program alumni have been accepted into prestigious undergraduate opportunities, like University of Guam biology-chemistry major Darlene Ferrer, who was accepted into multiple competitive programs, including the Stanford Cardiovascular Institute’s Undergraduate Summer Research Program, and UOG biology major Kyle Dahilig, who was selected for the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Another program alumna, Norma Elizaga, recently earned her Doctor of Medicine from the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Talent Search is one of eight Federal TRIO Programs authorized by the Higher Education Act to help college students succeed in higher education. It has operated in Guam through the University of Guam since 1992 assisting more than 15,000 students.

Middle and high school students interested in college preparatory guidance and mentorship through the TRIO Talent Search program may call (671) 735-2246, email trioets@triton.uog.edu, or visit the TRIO office in the Calvo Field House at the University of Guam. More information can also be found at www.uog.edu/trio-program.

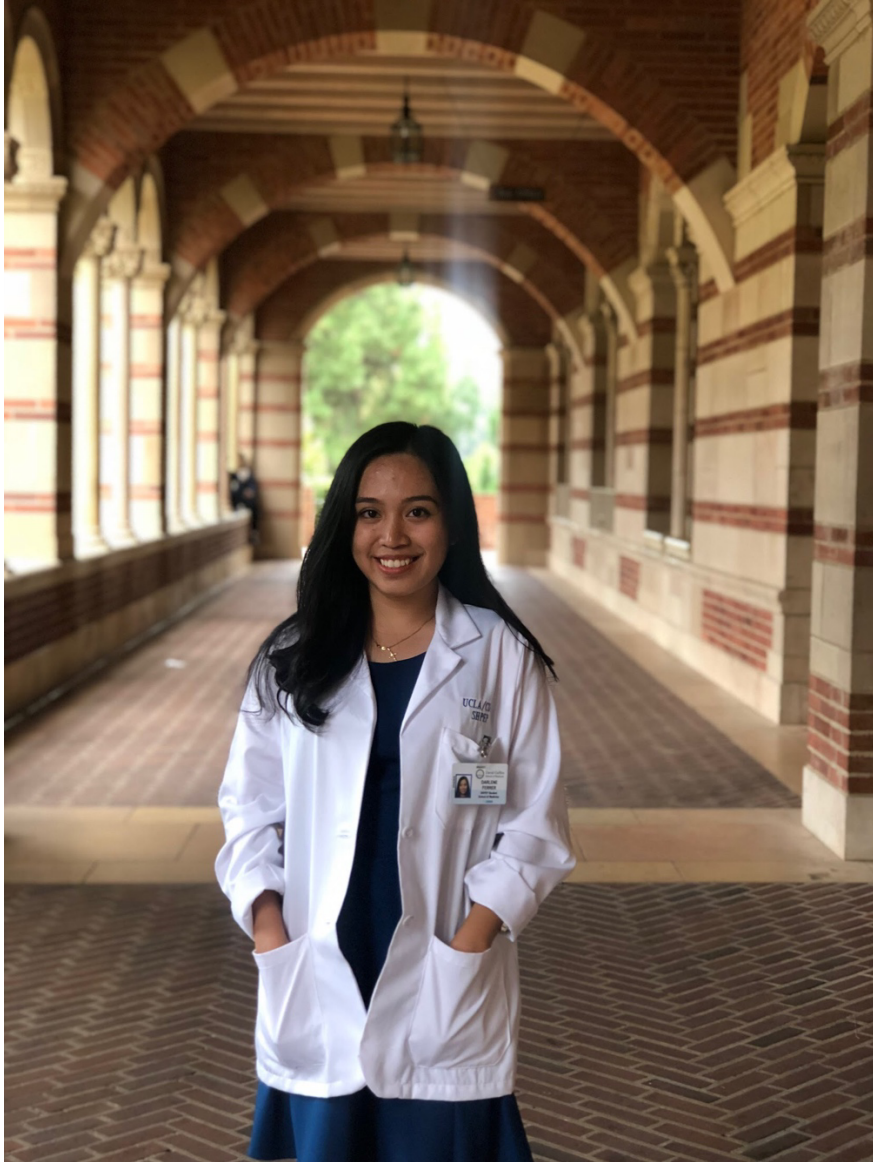
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Photo captions:



2019-uog-ts-workshop

Middle and high school students enrolled in the TRIO Talent Search program listen to a guest speaker during a workshop over Christmas break in 2019. The program mentors students with potential to succeed in higher education, the majority of whom are low-income or will be first-generation college students.



uog-ts-darlene-ferrer-at-ucla

Darlene Ferrer, a TRIO Talent Search participant from 2013-2018, on the University of California Los Angeles campus during a summer undergraduate program for future health professionals that she was selected for while majoring in biology and chemistry at the University of Guam.



2019-uog-ts-summer-enrichment-program

Talent Search participants during a summer enrichment program in 2019. (Standing, from left) Danishia Joab, Denzyl Ngiralmu, Julie Laxamana, Reavan Nallano, Chasity Butler, Mia Aguilar, Gerylee Bueno, Cory Quintanilla, Larry Rosario, guest speakers Criskha Caballero and Eries Moreno, Heaven Belleno, Jaden Rose Belga, Mel Joy Baldoz, Ha'ani Peredo, Bethany Morh, Bethany Betito, (seated, from left) Jean Bactad, Daniela Ferrer, Roe Manalac, Louise Pascua, Kieurstyn Camacho, and Maria Reyes.

Photos courtesy of University of Guam