Four McNair Scholars, representing Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, presented at the 19th Annual McNair Scholars Undergraduate National Research Conference held March 15-18 at the University of Maryland, College Park.
Purpose of PASS

Programs for Academic Student Support (PASS) is comprised of eight federally funded United States Department of Education (DOE) academic support programs and one state-funded grant program. The PASS programs serve the needs of low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented high school and college students. The major goal of PASS is to increase student retention and graduation; each grant program provides a pathway to student academic success. PASS provides a myriad of services to serve faculty, staff, students and families to include: skills workshops, faculty development opportunities, undergraduate research, family engagement activities, TSI resources, and college awareness and readiness activities in Coastal Bend high schools.

Since the inception of PASS in May 2013, the grant-funded opportunities for TAMU-CC have grown exponentially. In 2017, TAMU-CC received two new Upward Bound grants and a continuation award for the McNair Scholars Program. Faculty and staff support are critical to the success of these programs and awareness of services offered increases the likelihood that the TAMU-CC campus community will take advantage of the available resources.

We are PASS!
Mark Cantu is a current senior seeking a Bachelor’s of Music degree in the College of Liberal Arts. His concentration is in Instrumental/Music All-Level Teacher Certification. Mr. Cantu can be seen giving great performances in symposiums and with the mariachi performers across the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi campus.
Suzanna Sanchez is a first-generation college student from Houston, Texas. Suzanna received acceptance into the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Nursing program for spring 2018. Suzanna made the Deans List in fall 2016, spring 2017, and fall 2017. She is an active member of TRIO SSS-STEM and was recently recognized at the 2nd Annual TRIO Islanders Awards Banquet for being an Outstanding participant. In her spare time, she is involved in extracurricular activities and community service events such as the Student Nurses Association, READY Program, and has participated in the TAMU-CC Big Event all while working a part-time job. Suzanna plans to graduate in summer of 2019 with her Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing.
Christopher is an employee of Valero Refinery as a Security Officer. He is currently seeking a degree in environmental science with a minor in chemistry and concentration in policy and regulations. Mr. Rezendes is a first-generation student who is committed to his studies and will graduate in May 2018. He will be relocating to the San Antonio area to pursue full-time employment in his prospective field. Mr. Rezendes was recently recognized at the 2nd Annual TRIO Islanders Awards Banquet for his dedication and commitment to the SSS-STEM program.
Both Katherine and Ryan have shown an intense desire to complete their programs and graduate. Over the last few years, we have watched them grow at TAMU-CC and witnessed their transformation from mere students, to dedicated learners. They are both very active in the SSS-Teacher Prep program and can be counted on like clockwork to show up to complete homework or gain instruction from one of the coaches. They both have a drive to succeed that is contagious within the program, and these two can always be counted on to lend a hand.
Clyde Avalos received the Superstar Award during the 2nd Annual TRIO Islanders Awards Banquet on March 24th. He received the “superstar” status based on his accomplishments and involvement with the program and has excelled in his studies. Clyde graduated in the fall of 2017 with a Bachelor’s of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He will be seeking a Master’s degree in Business Administration at Texas A&M University-College Station in the fall of 2018.
Four McNair Scholars, representing Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, presented at the 19th Annual McNair Scholars Undergraduate National Research Conference held March 15-18 at the University of Maryland, College Park. During the conference, the students took the opportunity to explore Washington, D.C. and visit the National Mall as part of a socio-cultural excursion that was available.

Michael Martinez, Megan Woods, Shakira Barnes & Clay Clarkson

**Shakira Barnes (Psychology)** – “Negotiation for Meaning: Views on Sexual Consent in Relationships.” Her faculty mentor is Dr. Olga V. Berkout.

**Clay Clarkson (Biology)** – “Culturing the Unculturable: Using Fluorescence Activated Cell Sorting to Obtain Viable Isolates.” His faculty mentor is Dr. Brandi Reese.

**Michael Martinez (Electrical Engineering)** – “The Effects of Static Magnetic Fields on the Effect in Conductors.” His faculty mentor is Dr. Cosmina Nicula.

**Megan Woods (Marine Biology)** – “Characterization of a Pathobiome Contributing to a Disease Outbreak in Pacific White Shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei)*.” Her faculty mentor is Dr. Jeffrey Turner.
Aissa Garza continues to be a Project GRAD success story. After completing the summer bridge in 2016, she completed the fall 2016 semester with a 4.0 GPA while working a part-time job on campus in the University Center. As a pre-nursing major she continued in the cohort during her second year at TAMU-CC to ensure her academic success. Aissa worked as an Orientation Leader during the summer of 2017. She enjoyed learning about the resources on campus and sharing the knowledge with incoming freshmen. Aissa applied for the nursing program spring 2018 and found out in April that she has been accepted to start the nursing program in fall 2018. She is the first pre-nursing student to go through the Summer Prep Academy and be accepted into the nursing program. She has also been hired to be a Summer Prep Mentor for the upcoming summer bridge and is a member of the Student Nursing Association on campus.
Clarisa Murillo is a first-generation freshman pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences with the pre-professional track. She learned English at eight years old and has been motivated to do well because her parents never had the opportunities she has, and she wants to take advantage of them. Healthcare has been a source of passion in her life since her two-year-old brother has epilepsy. During the bridge, Clarisa displayed drive through active participation in the classroom and time spent in the lab preparing to retake her TSI exam. During the fall semester, she continued that drive and clocked more study time, mentor hours, and academic training than any other student. Clarisa works part-time to help her family financially while maintaining a 3.76 GPA.
Jared Vieyra

School: Foy H. Moody High School
Grade: 9th
Program: Upward Bound Central

Jared was selected to receive the "Rising Star Award" out of all the Upward Bound Central students, as he has been compassionate and an outstanding participant in the program. Jared is a very dedicated student who always lends a helping hand to others.

Cristina Calderon

School: West Oso High School
Grade: 9th
Program: Upward Bound Central

Cristina was selected to receive the "Rising Star Award" for excelling in her classes since she joined Upward Bound her grades have improved dramatically. She was recently switched from regular Biology and World Geography class to Pre-AP. She has been praised by several of her teachers and counselor for her hard work.
Alexis Diaz has overcome many adversities, but she found the strength to pursue educational excellence. She is graduating in the top 10% of her class at Roy Miller High School. She will be the first in her family to graduate high school and will become an Islander in the fall. Alexis has excelled as an Upward Bound student, assisting her fellow participants as a peer mentor and striving to help others.

“Not taking advantage of the resources provided to me was never an option. Education is my stability.” - Alexis Diaz
The purpose of the TRIO Islanders Organization is to encourage and enhance educational opportunities for program participants by using the venue of education to enable these individuals to achieve their personal academic goals. In addition, the TRIO Islanders provide avenues for social engagement, a sense of belonging among peers, leadership development, and student involvement at TAMU-CC.

Notable Accomplishments of TRIO Islanders:

- Completed two awards banquets that recognized student accomplishments and worked with an outside office to further recognize those awards through State of Texas Resolutions and National Congressional Recognitions
- Volunteer yearly at two different backpack and supply giveaway events to provide backpacks and supplies to military and low income families of Corpus Christi
- Volunteer yearly at the Antonio E. Garcia Center with various events such as the Health Fair and wrapping Christmas Presents
- Include students on campus with an open volunteer event to create Valentine’s Day cards for the residents at the Waterford Nursing Home
- Provide social events for team building and promote a sense of belonging
- Collaborate with PASS Department staff on various events to promote leadership