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UMN Morris Awarded \$1.3M for Summit Scholars Program

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UMN Morris Awarded \$1.3M for Summit Scholars Program

Awarded every five years, the Federal Student Support Services grant helps college students who are low income or first generation, or students with disabilities.

The U.S. Department of Education has announced that the University of Minnesota Morris will receive its second federal Student Support Services (SSS) grant to help more students succeed in and graduate from college. UMN Morris will receive \$1.3 million to support its TRIO SSS program, [Summit Scholars](#)—\$261,888 was awarded in the first of the five-year grant.

“UMN Morris serves as a model of values such as commitment to access, appreciation for diversity in all its forms, and belief in the power of education for societal good,” says Chancellor Michelle Behr. “We are grateful for this opportunity to help more students who have traditionally been underrepresented in higher education persist through graduation and beyond.”

Summit Scholars: TRIO SSS at UMN Morris

Grounded in the civil rights movement and the War on Poverty, TRIO SSS seeks to remove institutional and cultural barriers, foster a climate that values the social and cultural capital of our students, and promote retention to graduation. UMN Morris’s TRIO SSS program, Summit Scholars, provides inclusive and accessible services, including academic support, financial wellness education, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) assistance, career and graduate school exploration, cultural enrichment, and cohort-building programming.

[UMN Morris’s first SSS grant, awarded in 2015, served more than 300 students over the five-year grant cycle.](#) The program also met its objective numbers in each of those five years: 87% of participants maintained good academic standing status, and 85% persisted year to year. Campus leaders are eager to build on this success.

“Addressing barriers to success for first-generation, low-income students, and students with disabilities is a campuswide effort, and there was strong support for the project across campus in the 2015 cycle and even stronger institutional commitment made for the 2020 cycle,” says Kerri Barnstuble, director of Summit Scholars - TRIO Student Support Services. “TRIO SSS students are ambitious, resourceful, and compassionate. UMN Morris recognizes and celebrates the strengths of our diverse student population.”

At UMN Morris, 35% of students are American Indian and students of color, 41% are first-generation, and 96% of incoming students receive financial aid.

Student Success

Benefits for Summit Scholars students include community-building activities, academic coaching, financial wellness opportunities, and graduate school and career preparation. These supports, participants say, are invaluable to their experience at UMN Morris.

“The support and resources provided by TRIO SSS, such as peer mentors, pro staff, and campuswide connections, were vital in my success as an undergraduate student,” says Lexi Dant ’20. “That support and guidance in my undergrad helped me create skills and personal connections that I can use now as a graduate student and down the road in my career. Once a TRIO SSS scholar, always a scholar.”

About TRIO SSS

For more than 50 years, the Student Support Services program has made important contributions to individuals and society as a whole by providing a broad range of services to help students succeed. Learn more at www2.ed.gov

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