Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the co-authored dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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An Examination of Summer Melt for TRIO Talent Search and Upward Bound Alumni

Abstract
College access programs provide middle and high school students with essential skills to prepare them for a successful transition to postsecondary education. TRIO Talent Search (TS) and Upward Bound (UB) are federally funded college access programs established to strengthen the likelihood that students from underserved groups will graduate high school and pursue higher education. Both programs offer support to low-income and first-generation students to ensure equitable access to postsecondary education. While these programs offer a holistic approach to student development, including personal and professional support, some students from underserved groups experience challenges during the summer months that prevent them from enrolling in college during the fall following high school graduation.

Summer melt raises concerns about the impact of TRIO TS and UB programs and their effectiveness in supporting low-income and first-generation students to help mitigate barriers and increase college attendance during the fall following high school graduation. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the barriers that contributed to summer melt for TRIO TS and UB alumni at Midwest University. This study utilized purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to recruit 13 alumni from the TS and UB programs at Midwest University to understand the barriers that may have impacted their decision to attend or postpone college in the fall following high school.

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