

Educational Opportunity Centers Program

Outstanding Alum

Kari
Nilsen, PhD



Kari Nilsen, PhD was involved with Educational Opportunity Centers Program (EOC), Student Support Services (SSS), and worked for GEAR UP. At Wichita State, she obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology with a certificate in community psychology (2012), a master's degree (2014) and a doctorate in community psychology (2015). She previously worked as a psychology assistant professor at Southwestern College, and is currently assistant professor for the Family Medicine Department at University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita.

According to Frances Ervin, EOC Executive Director, "Kari is being recognized for her commitment to not only complete a college degree, but for reaching the highest rung in education." TRIO programs helped her build a plan to fulfill her goals. EOC and SSS provided tutoring resources to pass classes, scholarships, course planning advice, and a place to come talk. Nilsen feels fortunate to have been a part of TRIO programs throughout her academic career.

The advice Nilsen has for staff is "keep doing the great things you are doing for underserved populations. You have touched so many lives through the good work you do every day, and it is so appreciated." For students, she suggests prioritizing school because it pays off in the end. "It may be hard, but if you rely on the people there to help you, it is much easier to accomplish."

Rising Star

Victoria
Nguyen



Victoria applied to EOC for assistance to re-enter college with the goal of becoming a pharmacist. Victoria is a first-generation student in her early twenties. She graduated high school, entered college, and stopped out of college. Undaunted by this first attempt, Victoria turned for help and was referred to the EOC program.

First, EOC gave Victoria assistance to complete an education action plan. Next, program staff assisted her to complete the college application process and with the application for Federal Student Financial Aid (FAFSA). Additionally, Victoria, was given a copy of the book titled *100 Things Every Adult College Student Ought to Know*. Being the determined person she is, Victoria also elected to receive academic mentoring from program staff.

According to Ervin, "We are honoring Victoria because she did not give up on her dream. Also, Victoria has been selected to become an EOC Program Ambassador. She is perfect for this distinction due to her academic progress and her desire to encourage others to pursue their dream." Victoria says that a person must have a plan, a map and a mentor to succeed in college. She is currently a full-time student attending Wichita Area Technical College. Additionally, she is participating in the Shocker Pathway Program which will allow her to transfer academic credits to Wichita State for the awarding of an associate's degree.