

Ramiro Frausto
Senior Director University of San Diego
Institute of College Initiatives
February 19, 2025

INTRO

5:00 PM – Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Welcome to #EquityChat! Tonight, we're excited to have @RamiroJFrausto, Sen. Dir. at @uofsandiego Institute of College Initiatives. He's here to share his insights on TRIO's impact and a promising new initiative at USD. @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

Thank you for having me, I am excited to be here!

5:06 PM – Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q1 @RamiroJFrausto, what's your walk-up song that best captures the spirit of your work and passion in education? #EquityChat @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

This was a lot harder than I expected but I'll go with Nas' If I Ruled the World because I believe education brings freedom, and free and educated people create a better world. Plus, it's Nas and Lauren Hill, so you know you feel it. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Keith Curry #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @lamkeithcurry · Feb 19](#)

Black Diamonds And Pearls... If I ruled the world, this song allows me to dream of freedom. I don't want to rule the world; I just want to make it better for our people. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

You are, and I love that about you.

[Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

Yes! "If I ruled the world (imagine that) I'd free all my sons, I love 'em, love 'em, baby Black diamonds and pearls (Could it be, if you could be mine, we'd both shine) If I ruled the world (Still livin' for today, in these last days and times)"

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · Feb 19](#)

Almost cried when she walked out on [@nbcsonl](#) ...the voice and the vibe never get old

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

It was a nice surprise when she performed during the SNL50 concert, too!

5:14 PM – Dr. Keith Curry (@iamkeithcurry)

Q2 @RamiroJFrausto, you've dedicated much of your career to the TRIO programs at @uofsandiego. Can you tell us more about these programs and how they've evolved to meet the needs of students from high school through graduate studies? #EquityChat @DrTammeil @DrPamLuster

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(1/3) TRIO refers to federally funded college access programs that serve 1st-generation and low-income students. Most TRIO staff members share the lived experience of our students so I like to describe us as older siblings who are helping the next generation succeed.

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

TRIO Works! I was fortunate in middle school and high school to have TRIO support. I would have never gone to college without the support from the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) @UCBerkeley. After grad, I had the privilege of paying it forward as a MS outreach coord.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

I love to hear it! I always share the 13:1 ROI in TRIO when meeting with our Congressional Representatives, but it goes so much further than that. We turn around and do for others in our families and communities. #EquityChat #TRIOWorks

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(2/3) TRIO programs provide academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary for educational access and retention. Evolving for us means meeting each student where they are at on their academic journey.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(3/3) This can range from convincing parents to let their child travel for college visits to negotiating graduate funding or a job offer, which means we must stay current on trends in society, academia, and industry. #EquityChat #TRIOWorks

[Dr. Keith Curry #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @lamkeithcurry · Feb 19](#)

I keynoted the WESTOP conference last March in San Jose, so it was official.

TRIO is a community of good people doing good work. [#EquityChat #TRIOWorks](#)

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

Shout out to WESTOP, and I am bummed I missed your keynote! Lots of amazing people who have dedicated their lives to the next generation.

5:21 PM – Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q3 @RamiroJFrausto, you mentioned that you are currently involved in the Come to Believe Network design grant process. Could you elaborate on this initiative and its potential to transform how @uofsandiego serves as an anchor institution? #EquityChat @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(1/4) [@ctbnetwork](#) provides funding & guidance to colleges interested in launching their model: <http://ctbnetwork.org/the-ctb-model>. It's a 2-year college embedded within a 4-year institution, which serves students historically excluded from higher-ed including 1st-gen & low-income.

[Dr. Keith Curry #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @lamkeithcurry · Feb 19](#)

[#dope](#), I like this model. Thanks for sharing.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(2/4) It is designed for students without the GPA/test scores required of selective institutions, it provides a rigorous academic experience with holistic wraparound supports to address the barriers to success. The kicker is that it is no to low cost. 90% of students avoid loans.

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

That's amazing!

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(3/4) We know these students face additional responsibilities & challenges. Working with local h.s. advisors and CBOs we would recruit talented students whose h.s. transcripts do not reflect their potential. Students like me, it took me a while to figure out the education thing.

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

And look at you, you did it!

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(4/4) This college would allow us to expand the opportunity of a USD experience to a whole new segment of students, enriching our institution and San Diego in the process. [#EquityChat](#)

5:28 PM – Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q4 @RamiroJFrausto, the Arrupe College model is described as if "TRIO built a college." How does this model integrate the core principles of TRIO, and what unique opportunities does it offer to USD students? [#EquityChat](#) @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(1/7) I am going to try not to sound like a brochure here, but I am really excited about the college model! The word I would use is intentionality. The magic of TRIO is that it capitalizes on the lived experience of its practioners.

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

Hummm...listen to students, who then become practitioners...

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(2/7) We overcame the same boundaries faced by our students so our approach is informed by evidence-based practices but amplified by insight privy only to those who actually lived the experience. This creates a unique intentionality in our work.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(3/7) I am not shy in saying that higher education was not designed with me in mind. It's not indictment, it's a historical truth. Okay, in some cases it is an indictment, but that's for another thread.

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

But you are still trying to make it better. Creating systems that build positive relationships, address students' needs, and repair harm caused by the institution.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(4/7) The [@ctbnetwork](#) model is intentionally designed from the beginning to address the barriers to college, it's not an afterthought. This includes food security, tech access, embedded social workers, fin. aid & career advisors.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(5/7) Faculty and staff are mission-driven practioners with a commitment to culturally sustaining pedagogy and demonstrated experience serving this student population.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(6/7) Intentionality is facilitating paid internships because we know that even when college is no cost, there is an opportunity cost to that student not working b/c of the expectation to financially contribute to the family.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(7/7) Leveraging institutional resources to overcome these barriers is what an anchor institution could and should do. [#EquityChat](#)

5:35 PM – Dr. Keith Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q5 @RamiroJFrausto, in your role, you've seen firsthand the journey of many 1st-gen & low-income students. What are some of the most significant barriers they face, and how do TRIO and other initiatives at @uofsandiego help overcome these challenges? [#EquityChat](#)
@DrTammeil @DrPamLuster

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(1/3) The two greatest barriers our students face are the cost of college and unfamiliarity with the system. From completing the FAFSA to negotiating packages and appeals, we are very well versed on financial aid. Shout out to [@UofSanDiego](#) Financial Aid!

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(2/3) Navigating the higher education system is much more complex because impacts so many different aspects of the college experience. We begin by immersing our Upward Bound students in a college going culture, including a 6-week summer residential program.

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(3/3) We provide peer mentors in Student Support Services and faculty mentors in our McNair Scholars program. The goal is to demystify the process, expose our students to opportunities, and coach them to learn to advocate for themselves. [#EquityChat](#)
[#TRIOWorks](#) [#Changemakers](#)

5:41 PM – Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q6 @RamiroJFrausto, reflecting on your personal journey and the impact you've had, what's your freedom dream for the future of education, especially for 1stgen & low-income students? How close are we to achieving that dream? [#EquityChat](#) @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(1/3) My wife and I are proud TRIO alumni. Our education gifted us with much more than a diploma, it transformed how we experience life. It enriched our relationships and allowed us to break generational cycles of poverty and trauma. It unlocked a world we did not know existed.

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

Thank you for sharing your story, paying it forward, taking the key, and unlocking the door for you and your family and the community.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

It's the only way, others did it for me!

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil · Feb 19](#)

Imagine a world...[#grateful](#)

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(2/3) My freedom dream is that our education system is designed to provide this transformative experience to every student, regardless of socioeconomic background.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(3/3) I know it sounds like a lofty goal but I believe we are closer than we think. If we weren't, we wouldn't be experiencing this intense opposition. [#EquityChat](#)

5:47 PM – Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q7 @RamiroJFrausto, considering your extensive experience and the new initiatives underway, what are some innovative strategies you believe could further enhance college access and success for students? #EquityChat @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry

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(1/2) One of the innovative strategies that we are employing is using emerging technologies to streamline services. To be clear, this is not using AI to replace humans, but using technology to streamline processes that were previously time demanding.

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(2/2) This has allowed us to maintain high-touch services while improving our team's work-life balance. It has freed our team up to spend more time building substantive relationships with students vs. administrative tasks. [#EquityChat](#)

5:53 PM – Dr. Keith Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q8 @RamiroJFrausto, as you continue to influence and mentor the next generation of leaders, what keeps you motivated and how do you sustain yourself in this demanding but rewarding field? #EquityChat @DrTammeil @DrPamLuster

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(1/3) Students. Watching someone grow from an insecure student to confident, capable [#Changemaker](#) working to make this world a better place is a great motivator. I am now honored to call many of my previous students colleagues.

[Ramiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(2/3) Sustaining myself in this demanding line of work is another story. It might not sound sexy but it's caring for myself spiritually, mentally, and physically. I am still PRACTICING these habits, but eating nourishing food and exercise are key to productivity.

[amiro Frausto @RamiroJFrausto · Feb 19](#)

(3/3) Therapy has helped me grow as a person and manage my mental health. But relationships are essential to my well-being. My wife, Tanya, and my two boys sustain me. The power of a peaceful and loving home is truly invaluable. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster · Feb 19](#)

TY [@RamiroJFrausto](#) for sharing your work [@uofsandiego](#) and for the impact of your efforts! We look forward to supporting you along this journey! Stay tuned for next weeks guests [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@equityavengers](#) OUT!