



St. Olaf College  
TRIO Educational Talent Search



# REPORTER

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## TRIO ETS ADVISORS



Rebekah Pitassi (CPA, NE, ED)



Anna Schmid, (HUM, WA)



David Soto Reyes (ED, NE, WA)



Aye Bra Tha (CPA, HUM)



## ETS Target Schools

[www.cpack12.org](http://www.cpack12.org)  
[www.spps.org/humboldt](http://www.spps.org/humboldt)  
[northeast.mpls.k12.mn.us](http://northeast.mpls.k12.mn.us)  
[washburn.mpls.k12.mn.us](http://washburn.mpls.k12.mn.us)  
[edison.mpls.k12.mn.us](http://edison.mpls.k12.mn.us)



## A Word From Our ETS Director: Heidi O'Hair

### St. Olaf TRIO Educational Talent Search Welcomes You Back!

Welcome to the start of the 2020-2021 school year! We hope that you had a safe, relaxing summer break and that you have accepted the challenge and can see the rewards that will come with starting off the year in distance learning.

This year, St. Olaf TRIO Educational Talent Search is excited to continue partnerships with five schools: Minneapolis Edison High School, Washburn High School and Northeast Middle School and St. Paul Humboldt High School and Community of Peace Academy, also in St. Paul. We plan to serve 700 students in grades 6-12 (2/3 of whom are both low-income and potential first generation college graduates and all of whom are either U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents).

ETS participants will have the opportunity to participate in online classroom and small-group workshops, academic advising, financial aid/financial literacy events as well as virtual college visits, spring mentor program events, online tutoring, and more. We are working with each school to determine which platform works best for them (Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Schoology, etc.). Seniors will work one-on-one with Academic Advisors to virtually make progress on plans for after high school. Keep checking your school email for announcements of upcoming workshops and events!

**Parents:** If you no longer wish for your student to be a part of the program, please call (800-621-7601) or email me ([ohair@stolaf.edu](mailto:ohair@stolaf.edu)) to remove them from our participant list.

**Students:** It is the goal of our program to help prepare you for entrance and completion of postsecondary education. Please email the ETS Advisors at your school to get involved in more activities or if you have questions/need help (<https://wp.stolaf.edu/ets/>)!

Best wishes for a successful 2020-2021 school year! Heidi O'Hair, TRIO ETS Director

## ETS Welcomes New Academic Advisor : Aye Bra Tha

Hi! My name is Aye Bra Tha and this is my first year with TRIO ETS program as an Academic Advisor. I graduated from Humboldt High School in 2016 and went on to attend Saint John's University, where I graduated in May of 2020 with a major in Communication and minor in Arts. Throughout my college career I worked in several jobs within the education field, and I fell in love with the idea that education should be accessible to every student.

As a kid, it was a dream of mine to travel to Europe and watch my favorite soccer team play in person. My dream came true when I got the opportunity to study abroad in Cannes, France for a semester. Being able to travel to different countries within a semester was one of the best lifetime experiences I have had. Studying abroad helped me step outside of my comfort zone and improved me both personally and academically. In addition to traveling, I enjoy playing a variety of sports, including soccer, tennis and swimming. Outside of sports, I also enjoy doing landscape photography, going on nature walks, and playing competitive FIFA games with some of my close friends.

Throughout my middle and high school years, I was part of TRIO ETS and TRIO Upward Bound. As a part of the TRIO community, I fell in love with working and inspiring first generation and low-income students who want to make positive life and academic choices to fulfill their goals and dreams. As an Academic Advisor, I am looking forward to helping students to reach their full potential and being a good role model.

Aye Bra will be working with students at Humboldt and Community of Peace Academy.



# High School Success and Study Tips for Distance Learning

By: Anna Schmid, Academic Advisor

## Limit Your Time on Social Media and Your Cell Phone

Now that we are spending less time in the physical classroom it is really important to take the time before a virtual class or the start of working on an assignment to either turn off your phone completely, turn off your phone's notifications, or keep it in a drawer far from your sight. Consider installing **AppBlock - Stay Focused** (it blocks social media apps when studying). There is no teacher to tell you not to be on your phone so it's up to you. Every time a notification pops up it will only distract you from your schoolwork. Tik Tok and Instagram will still be there after you've finished your studies!

## Find a Peaceful Spot to Study

We are now spending a majority of our time in our homes, so create a study-friendly environment by finding a space inside your home where you can't hear your other family members if possible. **This spot may change** day to day depending on what is going on in your home and with your family, but try to keep these things in mind when picking a study spot for the day: How is the lighting? Is it a comfortable temperature? Are there distracting noises?

## Be Engaged, Take Notes, and Listen During Discussions

It is easy during virtual classes for our minds to wander since we are not physically in a classroom, but a few ways we can **stay engaged and focused** on the material being taught is to ask questions in class discussions and take notes throughout the lesson.

## Create a Routine

Many of us have more time than before and we're spending a majority of it at home. We're not in school 7 plus hours a day and involved in clubs and sports, or working as many hours at our jobs. How do we make use of this extra time wisely? By creating a routine! **For example, waking up the same time every morning.**

## Use a Planner to Track Your Homework & Other Tasks

A great way to stay on top of your assignments is by tracking them. You may buy a physical planner or you can also download a study planner from the app store. Just make sure it is functional for what you are tracking and, **most importantly, that you are actually using it!**

## Take Breaks

Sitting in the same spot at home and staring at a computer or tablet for 5 hours will put a strain on you! **Take a lap** around your space or outside and come back refreshed.

## Think Positive

Distance learning is new and can be challenging, but one of the **best ways you can counteract any negative thoughts you may have is to replace them with positive, actionable ones.** Try to avoid negative thoughts and telling yourself negative things "I'm not good at this" or "I'm going to fail this class". This can lower your confidence and negatively affect your performance on tests and assignments.

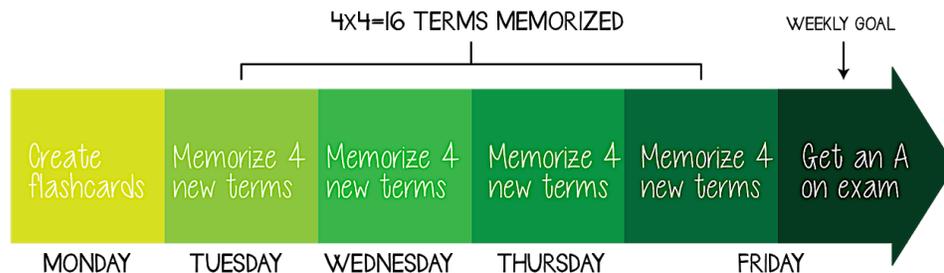
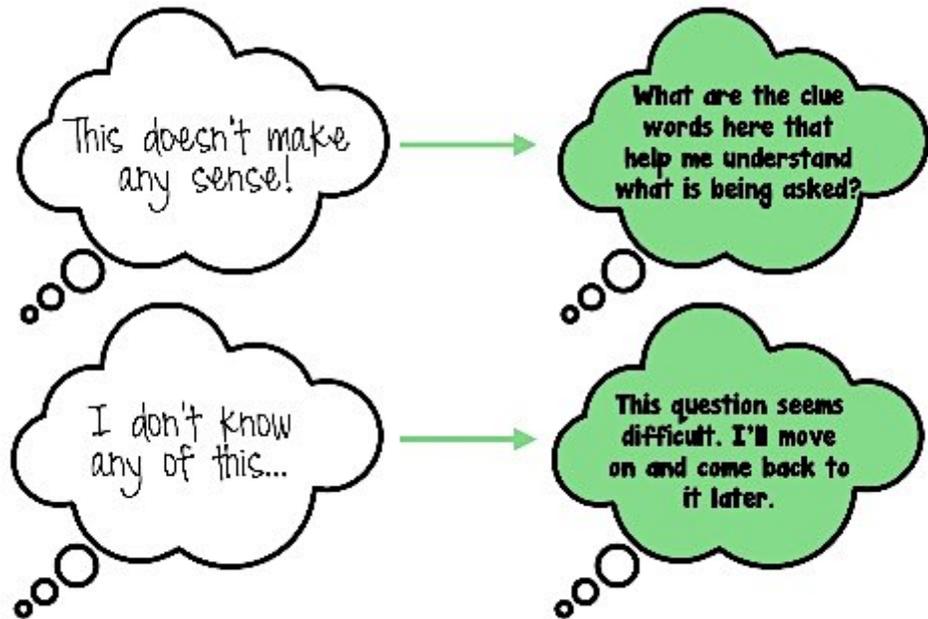
## Take advantage of the Technology Available

There are many apps and websites that can serve as helpful tools for taking notes, homework help, and studying. Use the app that works best for you! Here are just a few:

**Taking notes:** [Zoho Notebook](#), [Google Keep](#), [Apple Notes](#), [Simplen](#), [Evernote](#), [Dropbox Paper](#), [Notion](#), [Boostnote](#), and [Standard Notes](#)

**High school homework help:** [Brainly](#), [Google Drive](#), [Duolingo](#), [Photomath](#), [Socratic by Google](#), [HelpMe](#), [Homework Helper](#), and [iMath](#)

**Studying for a test:** [Quizlet](#), [iFormulas](#), [SimpleMind](#), [Brainscape](#), [Anki](#), [Cram](#), [Tinycards](#), and [GoConqr](#)





# FINANCIAL AID



Paying for college...

## 4 COMMON Myths



### 1. "I won't qualify or get any aid"

**Reality:** Although family income is a factor in receiving financial aid, it's important that all families fill out the FAFSA. Why? Every single student, regardless of their parents' income status, qualifies for at least unsubsidized Stafford and PLUS loans when they fill out the FAFSA.

### 2. "Only students with good grades can get financial aid."

**Reality:** Good grades will help a student get into their desired school and may help with academic scholarships, but a student's grades are not taken into consideration with federal aid.



### 3. "I support myself, so I don't have to include parent info on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)?"

**Reality:** Regardless if you file your own taxes and support yourself, you may still be considered a dependent student for federal student aid purposes. Independent students won't need to include parent information vs. Dependent students who must include parent information. Your dependency status will depend on how you answer a series of questions on the FAFSA. Check out these questions at StudentAid.gov/dependency.

### 4. "I have to apply to a school before I fill out my FAFSA"

**Reality:** Actually, you CAN complete your FAFSA form before all your other applications. You just have to list at least one school on your FAFSA and then you can add or delete schools later!



Source: <https://studentaid.ed.gov>

## Financial Literacy

Match each word listed below to the correct definition by drawing a line to connect them.

### Words

1. FAFSA
2. Savings
3. EFC
4. Verification Form
5. Student Aid Report
6. Pin Number
7. Income Tax Return
8. Grants
9. Loans

### Definitions

- a. Acronym for a phrase that measures your family's financial strength and is calculated according to a formula established by law. (Hint: Expected Family Contribution)
- b. A document stating how much your family income is. You will need this to complete the FAFSA application.
- c. Money borrowed that gains interest and must be paid back when you leave school.
- d. Free money given to students based on family income.
- e. Acronym for the process of applying for financial aid help. (Hint: Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
- f. About 30% of families each year will have to prove their earnings on this form in order to receive financial aid.
- g. This is a term for a four digit number that can act as your signature for the FAFSA.
- h. Summarizes all the information you provided on your FAFSA.
- i. Bank account that is primarily used to save money.

Answer Key: 1-e, 2-i, 3-a, 4-f, 5-h, 6-g, 7-b, 8-d, 9-c

# Hennepin County Library Homework Help



You might not be able to go in to a library to get help or visit after school sessions in person, but there are still many people out there who can help you get multi-lingual tutoring for FREE!

## Live online tutoring through HelpNow

(<https://hclib.org/programs/homework-help>)

With an Internet connection, students have access to HelpNow, an online service staffed by live tutors each day, 1-11 p.m. Students will need a library card to access this service - if they have forgotten their account information or need a new library card, they can [Ask Us](#).

Just select the grade level and subject matter, and get connected to a live tutor through the chat right away! Spanish-speaking tutors are also available.

### **HelpNow Writing Lab**

Students can also submit their essays on HelpNow and get feedback within one to two days. Select "Writing Lab" on the left-hand menu, create a username and password (no email required), and attach the document for feedback.

## Talk to library staff in many languages: Spanish, Hmong, and Somali

Students and families who are more comfortable speaking with library staff in Spanish, Hmong, or Somali can contact staff by texting or calling the following numbers:

Español/Spanish (text or call) - 651-503-8013

Hmoob/Hmong (text or call) - 612-385-0886

Soomaali/Somali (text or call) - 612-235-1339

## Questions? Ask Us

You can [Ask Us](#) your questions via phone, email, text, or live chat with staff. Chat is available Monday-Thursday 9-9, Friday-Saturday 9-5, and Sunday 12-5.

# St Paul Public Library Homework Help

**Brainfuse HelpNow** (<https://sppl.org/resources/homework-help/>)

Live Tutoring - live online help from expert tutors, available **every day, 1-11 p.m.**  
Other services available 24/7. **FREE!**

Available in English and Spanish.

Get help with filling out the **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** --  
Brainfuse offers live online FAFSA tutors – available to help both students and parents  
complete the FAFSA application. Whether you are not sure how to start or have questions  
on specific aspects, Brainfuse tutors are ready to assist!

## Tutorials

[Brainfuse – Tutoring and Helpful Resources](#)

[Brainfuse – Tutoría y Provechoso Recursos](#)

[Brainfuse App- Getting Started](#)

View available apps for Brainfuse HelpNow

(Note: You will need your Library Card Number and Password/PIN to log in. Contact the  
library to get a free card if you do not have one already. Also, you will need to create a  
username and password for the MELSA system to get in to the tutors, write these down!)

## LOCATIONS & HOURS

We are cautiously phasing in open locations. Branches open with Library Express services  
are (click on a link to see a library close to you if you need to apply for a library card):



**SAINT PAUL**  
**PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**Contact Us**  
**Saint Paul Public Library**  
**90 W. 4th St.**  
**Saint Paul, MN**  
**55102**  
**651-266-7000**

Need to Ask a Librarian something? You can Chat, Call, or Email:  
<https://sppl.org/ask-a-librarian/>

[Arlington Hills](#)

[Hayden Heights](#)

[Highland Park Library](#)

[Merriam Park Library](#)

[Saint Anthony Park](#)

[Sun Ray Library](#)

[Rice Street](#)

[Rondo](#)

[Riverview](#)

[West 7th](#)

**Coming Soon:**

[George Latimer Central](#)

# A Parent/Guardian Guide to Senior Year

By David Jesus Soto Reyes

Parents and Guardians— if your student is a senior, this one's for you! It's a big year, and your student is likely juggling schoolwork, extracurricular activities and the college application process. Know that you can play an important role too. Use the following suggestions to help you help your student stay on track.

## Fall

- Encourage your senior to meet with the school counselor. Your student's counselor can be of great assistance while they are completing and submitting college applications.
- Help your child prepare for college admission tests. Many seniors retake the college SAT and ACT in the fall. Dates may be different right now so encourage your child to keep an eye out for emails regarding test dates!
- Go on virtual college tours with your student to explore campus and learn about admissions requirements. (Check the college website or go to: <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/virtual-tours>)
- Check in with your student to confirm they has applied to at least three colleges by November 30

## Winter

- The FAFSA uses your 2019 tax forms and is open beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>. Get tax info in order!
- Fill out the FAFSA to apply for financial aid! Now it's easier than ever to fill out this form because you can automatically transfer your tax information online from the IRS to the FAFSA.

## Spring

- Help your student process college responses. Once they start hearing back from colleges about admission and financial aid, they will need your support throughout the decision-making process.
- Review financial aid offers together. Your student will need your help to read through financial aid award letters and figure out which package works best. Be sure your senior pays attention to and meets any deadlines for acceptance. Need help? Use this tool from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to help weigh your options: <http://consumerfinance.gov/gradpath>
- Help your student complete the paperwork to accept a college's offer of admittance. Once your child has decided which college to attend, they will need to accept a college's offer, mail a tuition deposit and submit other required paperwork. Deposits can be waived or set up on payment plan, just contact the school!

# Creating A Great College Entrance Essay

 **Know Thyself** - Ask yourself these questions: What are my values? What experiences in my life made the biggest impact on me? What positive traits, accomplishments, goals or ideas do I want the college to know MOST about me?

**Keep it Real** - Don't let someone write your essay for you. Make sure it sounds like YOU! Dig deep and stay honest. Put emotion and passion into your essay, and the reader will feel that emotion and passion when they read your essay.



**Brainstorm** - Write for 10 minutes without stopping. Think of any memories, dialogue, feelings, and opinions that come to mind when you read the College Entrance essay topic.



**Do your research** - Have knowledge on the school you are writing to and incorporate that knowledge into explaining why you want to attend that specific college.



**Grab Attention of Audience** - You can start your essay with an interesting story, quotation, or statistic to grab the readers attention, and make them excited to read your entire essay.



**Provide specific examples** - Instead of saying "I demonstrated great leadership throughout high school", give us a specific example of when you were a leader and the impact your leadership made.

**Multiple Edits/Reviews** - Your paper should be free from grammatical errors and misspellings, so make sure to have your essay reviewed by multiple people (ETS advisor, teacher, etc.)



# ETS Senior Spotlights

## Senior Spotlight: Geberelwa (Gabby) Animut

**School: Humboldt Senior High**



Geberelwa (Gabby) Animut is a rising senior at Humboldt High School. She joined the TRIO ETS community during her freshman year of high school. Since joining TRIO ETS, Gabby has attended almost every college visit and volunteering field trip offered. Gabby was also a part of the mentoring program through TRIO ETS where she got to visit our mentors at Saint Olaf College and also volunteered at Feed my Starving Children. One of Gabby's most memorable experiences with TRIO ETS was the overnight trip last fall to visit North Dakota State University and Concordia College, Moorhead. Gabby loved that she was able to spend the night in a hotel with so many of her friends, as well as visit both a private and public four year college. One thing Gabby told us she learned from TRIO ETS is that it is "okay to take your time and figure out what you want to do and try out different things." Gabby also said she learned to "always ask for help when I am in need of it!"

As her senior year starts Gabby is looking forward to applying to and getting accepted into colleges. She is also looking forward to her photography and painting class this semester at Saint Paul College. Gabby plans on applying to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, University of Minnesota Duluth, University of St. Thomas, and St Olaf College, among many others, and she plans to study either Biology or Biochemistry. When it comes to college, Gabby is looking forward to the new friendships, experiences and knowledge she will gain.

Gabby's future goals are to get her Associate of Arts Degree from Saint Paul College, along with her high school diploma, this spring. She plans to get accepted to one of her top colleges with a good scholarship and to attend college and graduate with her Bachelor of Science degree (BS) from a four-year college. Then Gabby hopes to get accepted into Med school or Dentistry school, or maybe Physician Assistant (PA) too. When asked for her advice for her younger classmates, Gabby said "You can do it! Just have to put a little bit of effort into everything you do. Just keep exploring, being yourself and always stay focused on what matters most to you and your future. Stay true to yourself and do what makes you happy. Also, join student groups and clubs at school because it's honestly the way to get your resume looking nice, and it's fun so it's a win win situation!" Please wish Gabby well as she begins her senior year at Humboldt High School!

## Senior Spotlight: Ka Zoua Lee

**School: Community of Peace Academy**

Ka Zoua Lee is a rising senior at Community of Peace Academy. She joined the TRIO ETS community during her freshman year of high school. Since joining the TRIO ETS community Ka Zoua has gone on multiple day field trips with us, including an overnight trip last fall to visit North Dakota State University and Concordia College, Moorhead. Ka Zoua told us that one thing she has learned from TRIO ETS was how to prepare for the ACT. Even though the ACT may look a little different this year she said "it's still a good thing to learn". One thing Ka Zoua finds most memorable about her time with TRIO ETS so far was when we went to Feed My Starving Children. As a senior, Ka Zoua is looking forward to going back to school this fall and to visiting some colleges with TRIO ETS.

Ka Zoua currently plans to apply to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Minnesota State University, and Winona State University. She is still unsure of what she wants to study and is exploring many options but says she wants "to go for something that I'll like to do even in the next 20 years". One thing Ka Zoua is most looking forward to in college is making new friends. Currently, Ka Zoua's goals for the future are to graduate with at least a bachelor's degree and possibly continue on to get a master's degree. Along with continuing her education, Ka Zoua plans to support her family.

Lastly, the advice Ka Zoua would give to her younger classmates is to take advantage of TRIO ETS because it is an opportunity to get to know more about colleges, learn about careers, test preparation, and much more. Ka Zoua wants the underclassman to try not to worry if they don't know what they are going to study in college. "Colleges have a lot of opportunities for you to choose what you like. It may take a while, you won't regret it." Ka Zoua wants to tell her younger classmates who don't plan to go to college, that she "really hopes and wishes that all of you will get to where you want to be in the future."

Please wish Ka Zoua Lee well as she enters her senior year at Community of Peace Academy!



## Graduate Spotlight: Pheng Vang

**School:** Community of Peace Academy, Class of 2020

**Name of College:** Concordia University - St Paul

**Major:** Undecided

**When did you start TRIO ETS?**

I started participating in TRIO ETS in my freshman year.

**How has TRIO ETS helped you?**

TRIO ETS has helped me prepare for college. They helped me prepare by providing me with the information to get started for college and to start looking. My biggest challenge in college so far is just finding where my classes are and just getting used to college. I haven't been in any activities or any organizations as of right now, but I will in the future.

**What are your future goals?**

I'm unsure of my goals for the future right now and am just testing the waters.

**Do you have any advice for current high schoolers?**

My advice for high school students is to keep on top of your work in high school; those small things will help you in college.

**What is your favorite TRIO ETS memory?**

My favorite ETS memory was doing volunteer work at Second Harvest Heartland and then eating at Great Moon buffet afterwards.



### Upcoming Virtual College Visits and Events Fall 2020

Attend a College Visit with ETS this fall and complete an Exit Survey to win a meal gift card!

#### CPA, ED, HUM, and WA High Schools

October 8th, 2020: University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

October 15th, 2020: Bethany Lutheran

October 22nd, 2020: University of Wisconsin, Stout

October 29th, 2020: St. Catherine's University 3pm - 4pm

All-School ACT for seniors

#### Community of Peace Academy

October 5th, 2020: 12th Grade ACT Test Registration

October 6th, 2020: 12th Grade ACT Test (college readiness assessment)

#### Washburn High School

Sept 23, 2020: 5:30 - 7:30: College Night for Seniors and Families

[https://washburn.mpls.k12.mn.us/college\\_night\\_for\\_seniors\\_families\\_\\_9\\_23\\_20\\_5\\_30-7\\_00pm.html](https://washburn.mpls.k12.mn.us/college_night_for_seniors_families__9_23_20_5_30-7_00pm.html)

Oct 20th, 2020: 12th grade ACT test at school



**Seniors:** Stay tuned for October College Knowledge Month/ Applications Workshops! Senior application day is October 15th.



Need food for you and your family?

Check out these links or contact your school counselor:

Hunger Impact Partners <https://hungerimpactpartners.org/>

Food Pantries <https://www.foodpantries.org>

YWCA <http://www.ymcamn.org/food-distribution>



**HUNGER**  
IMPACT PARTNERS





St. Olaf College  
1520 St. Olaf Avenue  
Northfield, MN 55057-1098  
(507) 786-6241 TOLL FREE: (800) 621-7601  
<http://wp.stolaf.edu/ets>

Address Service Requested

Edison Senior High School, and Minneapolis Washburn High School.  
Humboldt High School, Minneapolis Northeast Middle School, Minneapolis  
at the following five schools: St. Paul Community of Peace Academy, St. Paul  
individual counseling sessions. St. Olaf College Educational Talent Search works  
preparatory services through workshops, classroom activities, and group and  
Advisors, in cooperation with school counselors and teachers, provide college  
academic and vocational options and set goals for the future. ETS Academic  
annually assists 700 middle and high school students as they explore their  
and sponsored by St. Olaf College. The ETS program  
program funded by the U.S. Department of Education  
Edison Senior High School, and Minneapolis Washburn High School.



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