Our last community service site was in Hato Rey, one of the poorest communities of Puerto Rico. There, we worked with the organization Cantera to construct a community garden at an elementary school. TRiO students pulled weeds, moved rocks, painted, constructed planter boxes, and installed fencing to keep animals out of the garden. TRiO students were surprised to see pigs, chickens, and enormously large iguanas roaming freely through the streets. Many of the houses were still without roofs nine months following the hurricane's devastation.

In addition to the political, historical, and ethical learning outcomes that our students obtained, students also achieved other intended learning opportunities that included research projects related to their majors of health, political science, chemistry, and art.

Finally, we were also fortunate to experience the amazing culture, art, food, music, environment, people, and history of Puerto Rico. Our cultural excursions were beyond our imagination. From the tour of Old San Juan and its fortress, Castillo San Cristóbal, we also enjoyed swimming in the jungle river El Mango Pond and sunbathing at the beach, both with water so crystal clear you could see all the way to the bottom.
We thank the enormous support of so many that made this experience possible. First to our amazing host, the Institute of Interdisciplinary and Multicultural (INIM) Program at the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras. The INIM director, Ms. Nadja Fuster and our exceptional student guide, Mr. Jacob Morrero made sure we were safe, comfortable, and stayed on tasked throughout our entire study away in Puerto Rico.

The Georgia Southern University community was exceptional in supporting this experience.

- Ms. Kristin Karam, Office of International Programs for a series of trip preparations.
- The generosity of the GS Bookstore, and the Office of Student Affairs provided participants with Georgia Southern University and TRiO shirts.
- Health Services donated book bags that we distributed to a Puerto Rican elementary school.

TRiO Scholars Study Abroad!

June Ford in Argentina

This summer, Tiffany June Ford had the opportunity to study abroad in Argentina. She choose this program in order to complete two upper level classes that satisfy her major degree requirements in art. While in Argentina, June was able to focus her research on the plight of women who experienced sexual assault, as that is the central theme of many of her art works. In addition to this amazing experience, June was also the featured artist on the prestigious Savannah Arts Walk in downtown Savannah. Her works captivated the many attendees and her works sold as collectors' items.

Ileene Diaz in Romania

Ileene Diaz, another TRiO scholar also took advantage of the study abroad opportunities available to Georgia Southern University students. Ileene traveled to Romania to conduct research in physics.

TRiO Scholars Give Back

Georgia Southern University TRiO Scholars Monica Dutson, Pascal Harley, Sam Sanya, Amari McDonald, and Shanelle Dillon presented a workshop to high school students from the Georgetown University Institute for College Preparation. The workshop, “If I Knew Then What I Know Now” gave the students valuable information about the first year of college and the lessons TRiO students have learned since their first year.

Science Scholars

Scholars Kasey-Lee Neal and Demetrius Hurst participated in the prestigious Science Enrichment Preparation Program (SEPP) at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. An intensive eight-week, honors-level academic enrichment program that targets students who seek admission into graduate/health professional programs. Kasey-Lee and Demetrius engaged in more than 150 hours of classroom instruction in physics, organic chemistry, human physiology and quantitative skills/biostatistics.

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This year’s theme is GET M.A.D! I hope that you are M.A.D about the upcoming school year, so M.A.D you seek out and take advantage of all the opportunities TRiO has to offer. I can only hope that you are M.A.D enough to achieve success, make good grades, earn scholarships, apply for internships, and consider study abroad opportunities. The TRiO staff and I are excited about the school year and M.A.D enough to support you in realizing your goal of academic success. By the way, M.A.D. stands for MOTIVATED AND DETERMINED! Get M.A.D and STAY M.A.D!