The success of the 2015 National TRIO Day celebration can be judged not only with the extraordinary positive energy that it generated, but also through a systematic evaluation of the event. The evaluation committee highlighted the importance of both the organization and the outcomes of the event in the evaluation sheet that each attendee was instructed to complete. A small gift was provided to those who filled out the evaluation. One hundred and seventy five attendees turned in their evaluations.

The attendees stretched all dimensions of the program: 18 percent were middle/high school students and 9 percent were college students. More than 20 parents/guardians and almost 40 community partners graced the event. Wichita State administrators, city and state legislators and community leaders provided an extraordinary presence.

The primary reasons that motivated attendees to come to the event was “past years’ experiences,” “the keynote speaker,” and “pride and awareness of the importance and impact of the TRIO programs.” It was not surprising that the event was well-received by the attendees. Over 94 percent of the respondents found the awards ceremony appropriately highlighted the programs impact. An almost equal number of respondents found the keynote speaker, Virdena Gilkey, both captivating and insightful. Some of the learning points quoted by the respondents were tied to Gilkey’s presentation, especially “making a difference in our and others’ lives,” and “do what it takes to succeed.”

One recurrent learning point for the attendees was the extent and scope of the programs, especially that Wichita State had nine TRIO programs, three GEAR UPs and nine College Access Challenge Grant programs. The program communicated to the audience how the OSP departments were providing a blueprint for a life-time of success.

One way in which the impact of the event is determined is if the attendees found the experience meaningful and useful. An overwhelming 96 percent of the attendees found the experience meaningful and almost 90 percent rated the slide show accompanying the event as entertaining. A strong interest in attending the program again next year was affirmed by 92 percent of the respondents.

Most notable suggested changes to National TRIO Day included more student involvement and more interesting information about the programs. Nevertheless, several respondents found that the event was “well-organized.”