Hello VUB Students, Staff and Instructors –

Welcome to the Fall 2014 Cycle of the TRIO Veterans Upward Bound Program at the University of Pennsylvania.  We are confident that you will find that the VUB Program is a place referred to as “Boot Camp for the Mind” but also a place for “Dream Making” where you will learn, grow and expand your hope for tomorrow!  VUB will give you the opportunity to dream, learn and to think like you have never done before!  As Aaron Watkins, a Flight Instructor for the Tuskegee Airmen stated at the 2014 VUB Commencement Ceremony: “we need to follow the 3 D’s – to Dream, to be Determined, and to be Disciplined”.  He is absolutely correct about each of these points!

DREAM – Those of us at VUB know that over time our dreams can be squelched, the light on the candle can become dim or forgotten over time.  We are here to say DREAM BIG!  Yes, life does have its ups and downs and its curves over and around.  We may think when we’re young that life is a straight path with few to no bumps in the road, but in fact life just does not work that way, the road is winding, not straight.  At times it may be easy to let go of those dreams, but know that they are a part of you and the light on the candle can grow bigger and brighter.  You are veterans, you are amazing human beings, and you have the right to DREAM as BIG as you want and to go for whatever goals you have set for yourself.

DETERMINED – What are our dreams if we do not have determination to meet them?  Our dreams are not going to come to us, they are not just going to appear out of thin air!  We MUST put forth the effort and DETERMINATION to go for the goals we have set for ourselves.  What does that mean at VUB?  It means that you attend ALL of your classes, that you arrive on time, stay for the full duration of your class, arrive prepared, go to tutoring and meet with your VUB Counselors for academic support.  To be DETERMINED means that you do EVERYTHING you possibly can to make your DREAMS come true!  You are the pilot of your destiny!  This does not mean that you accomplish your goals alone as we all need support and guidance along the way.  But it does mean that you consciously and actively direct yourself to what you want and need and seek out the supports to make it all come together.  To be DETERMINED is to “pull yourself up by the bootstraps”, to “get back on the saddle, or the bike, and keep riding” or to “never say never”, “never give in” and “never stop trying”.

“We all have dreams. In order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort.”

Jesse Owens — Olympic Legend
**Director’s Corner**  
Diane Sandefur, VUB Director

**DISCIPLINED** – How can we possibly meet our dreams and stay determined if we don’t have the **DISCIPLINE** to stay on track? One cannot come to one hour of class and then miss three hours, or arrive at class unprepared, or create excuses to avoid the tough situations that can arise in any situation. To be **DISCIPLINED** is to create a plan and stick with it, to be prepared, to dump the excuses and to avoid any and all negative influences. Create your life plan and stick with it – finish what you start – because you and your dreams depend on being **DISCIPLINED**!

Wishing all of you the **BEST** at VUB!  
Diane Sandefur  
Director

---

**An Instructor’s Point of View**

I rated this summer’s Literature 100 class as one of my “Top Ten” favorites in my teaching career. The most important ingredient in the success formula is the “desire to learn,” and my VUB students had that ingredient. This made my teaching approach much easier.

It was rewarding to see my students open the door to the world of reading drama, inspiration, mystery, romance, and poetry. We analyzed psychological suspense when Montresor sealed Fortunato behind that wall in Poe’s “Cask of Amontillado”; we felt the tears of sorrow that melted the stone in Shakespeare’s “Willow,” and laughed at the chased/surprised lover in Wel don’s “Back Door Blues.” Essays from Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X provided inspiration, but different emotions came from Maya Angelou’s “Graduation.”

Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” may not have had a sweet climax; however, an extended class discussion revealed personal experiences after students recounted their own military encounters after reading O’Brien’s “The Things They Carried.”

I can **guarantee** those reading adventures this semester opened another door to learning more. Yes, literature is fun and powerful. Thanks, Lit 100 class for an exciting semester.

Sandra Johnson - Literature Instructor

---

**An Instructor’s Point of View**

I rated this summer’s Literature 100 class as one of my “Top Ten” favorites in my teaching career. The most important ingredient in the success formula is the “desire to learn,” and my VUB students had that ingredient. This made my teaching approach much easier.

It was rewarding to see my students open the door to the world of reading drama, inspiration, mystery, romance, and poetry. We analyzed psychological suspense when Montresor sealed Fortunato behind that wall in Poe’s “Cask of Amontillado”; we felt the tears of sorrow that melted the stone in Shakespeare’s “Willow,” and laughed at the chased/surprised lover in Wel don’s “Back Door Blues.” Essays from Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X provided inspiration, but different emotions came from Maya Angelou’s “Graduation.”

Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” may not have had a sweet climax; however, an extended class discussion revealed personal experiences after students recounted their own military encounters after reading O’Brien’s “The Things They Carried.”

I can **guarantee** those reading adventures this semester opened another door to learning more. Yes, literature is fun and powerful. Thanks, Lit 100 class for an exciting semester.

Sandra Johnson - Literature Instructor

---

**“The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don’t wait for good things to happen. You will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope.”** — Barack Obama  
44th President of the United States of America

**“The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack in will.”** — Vince Lombardi

**“People who lack the clarity, courage, or determination to follow their own dreams will often find ways to discourage yours. When you change for the better, the people around you will be inspired to change also...but only after doing their best to make you stop. Live your truth and don’t EVER stop.”** — Steve Maraboli

**Former Head Coach / Manager of the Green Bay Packers**  
**International Motivational Speaker and Author**

**“Ms. Johnson is one of the most compassionate women I have ever met in my life. She literally takes her time to make sure we have it right. She is a phenomenal teacher! My favorite story was the “Cask of Amontillado” - she really had me thinking all kinds of stuff on that one!”** — Vincent Mapp

**“These classes were great! Ms. Johnson made the class! She has a great sense of humor and is just an amazing teacher!”** — Warren Russell

**“Ms. Johnson is a great teacher—I really liked the classes. She really gets with the class, she understands us. She picks good stories. I really enjoyed working with her.”** — Derwin Matthews

**“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”** — BB King
Good News Around VUB

Diane Sandefur, VUB Director, accepts a generous donation from Santander Bank, which has a new location at 106 South 38th Street, in Philadelphia, on the Campus of the University of Pennsylvania.

Charles Harrington—Scholarship Winner!

University of Pennsylvania’s Veteran’s Upward Bound is proud to announce that 2014 VUB Graduate Charles Harrington is the recipient of the Pennsylvania TRiO Scholarship in the amount of $500 for the 2014-15 academic year. He was also awarded the Pierce College Mayor’s City of Philadelphia Scholarship, which is renewable for up to six years until the bachelor’s degree is completed. The Pierce College Mayor’s Scholarship is highly selective, and the recipient is awarded full tuition and fees for up to ten classes each academic year. Diane remarked that “there is no doubt whatsoever that Charles Harrington will not only benefit from this scholarship, but he will use it toward accomplished and successful academic and professional outcomes.”

“I am more prepared, more organized, and more focused as a result of the preparation from VUB, which is how a successful college student should be.” Charles Harrington

Student Voices

Addiction and Recidivism

by Ralph Guy

Many of us have experienced some form of addiction or know someone who has gone through or is in the process of recovery, or is still battling active addiction. What do we know about the subject of addiction and recidivism, and how they relate to one another?

It has been my experience that most people are not familiar with the term recidivism. Simply stated, recidivism is the act of going to jail, repeatedly. Through scientific, forensic, and personal information you will see that there is a very strong correlation that exists between the dynamics of addiction and recidivism.

“Twenty-three percent of convicted offenders on probation or on parole in Philadelphia are rearrested within a year according to the courts”. (Urbinas, 2014). Due to the violation of some judicial mandate, or some court appointed sanction such as parole and probation, the average convicted offender does not necessarily re-offend in order to be a recidivist. He or she just needs to be rearrested or associated with any criminal activity. “Recidivism is a perennial problem in Philadelphia. Making this problem worse, is a deficit of facts about recidivism. Recidivism is a subset of re-incarceration. Re-incarceration means that someone is suspected to have committed a crime whereas recidivism typically means that someone has been found guilty of a crime.

Re-incarceration in Philadelphia occurs in thirty-five percent of all cases one year after a prisoner is released. “Seven years after release, re-incarceration is about fifty-five percent”. (Heroux, 2011).

Now that recidivism has been explained to some degree, I will show how addiction and recidivism are interrelated. According to Wilson, “over the past several decades, a substantial and growing body of empirical evidence emerged that substantiates the efficacy of correctional interventions” (2012). Discussions with inmates in general population and in therapeutic sessions confirm a link between substance abuse and multiple arrests.

In the various self-help groups that I facilitated and that I participated in with other inmates, I found inmates to be very candid and honest with one another. They were seeking answers and understanding of how to overcome the affliction of substance abuse and the recidivism that went with it.

The prison system of today is not geared towards rehabilitation. Instead, it seems to have adopted a warehouse mentality, if you will. Because of the burgeoning rate of crime, and the epidemic proportion of drug addiction, the seller as much as the user fall victim to both maladies of addiction and recidivism. Today’s prisons cannot and will not be fully invested in the social welfare or the psychological well-being of those that are addicted and incarcerated. Even the so-called “Drug Jails” or Therapeutic Communities implemented by the Department of Corrections at the state level, and the Bureau of Prisons at the federal level are sorely lacking. The socialization process in correctional programming may be well grounded theoretically and may include empirical assessments of programs, program types, or alternative methods. But, they are not a panacea for what ails our overcrowded prisons.
Student Voices continued

It was not until I became fully invested in what I needed to do to fix me that the self-destructive path of addiction and recidivism stopped in my life, thereby giving me the time and the opportunity to explore and research the cause and effect of this dilemma.

I fought long and hard not to change. But, I lost. So I fought longer and harder to effectuate the changes in my life that were so necessary for my well being, growth, and maturity. Unfortunately, I have done twenty years on the installment plan. My cavalier attitude about committing crime and the desensitization of serving time, mixed with substance abuse, equaled recidivism for me time and time again.

Rigorous honesty has caused me to examine myself and the self-destructive behaviors that kept me continually stuck in this vicious cycle. But I refused to just let them lock me up and throw away the key. I knew that there was a much better me to be revealed and that I was the only one who could make my life a life of quality.

When I started this essay I did not have any statistical information to go with the experiences I have encountered through this arduous journey of addiction and recidivism. But I discovered that the numbers are staggering. If I had not actually experienced the addiction of substance abuse and the resulting experience of being incarcerated time and again I could not begin to understand how someone could allow themselves to be overwhelmed to this point.

As I look back and reflect from this particular position, which is a first for me, I realize that a lot of people believed in me all along. It took a great deal of time, hard work, effort and passion to assist me in getting to be the man that I am today.

I had often wondered if I would get the opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences, to impart to others what I felt, what I learned, and what it took to overcome the obstacles that were in my life that were fueled by drugs and crime. I hope maybe to help someone who struggles with the same affliction as I, or any affliction, especially when it is self-inflicted.

In conclusion, this essay was not completely about me or for me, but it is for anyone that may benefit from this research. I have been in and through every level of custody there is, from house-arrest to the penitentiary, every self-help program that was available to me. The point is that I never gave in completely. I always fought to be better. “We all carry within us our places of exile, our crimes, and our ravages. But our task is not to unleash them on the world, it is to fight them within ourselves and others” (Albert Camus, 2004). The point is that I never surrendered to the need to change. If I can do it, anyone can.

“Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”
Malcom X
One Man’s Thoughts

Just Imagine
By Randolph T. Cuthbert

The sun is shining bright. High up in the sky, this seems to be a very lovely day. I look out of my window just in time to see two squirrels playing what looks like a game of tag. I climb back into my bed. I am sick today, and to make matters worse, I’m locked down because of the events of the day before. I have no choice but to work out my imagination.

I am walking on a beach, sand beneath my feet, and the smell of salt in the air from the ocean. The beach seems to go on for miles. I continue to walk, not thinking about anything or having a care in the world, just soaking up the sun and looking out to sea.

As I get to a certain area of this beach, there is a rock cliff off to my left. I decide to climb up to the top of the cliff so I can see as far as I can out to the ocean. When I reach the top, I sit and look out to where the sea meets the sky for hours. Before long the sun begins to set, giving me the most spectacular view I have ever seen in my life. In addition to the beautiful colors in the sky, there is a school of dolphins playing in the water. At this moment, there is nowhere in the world that I would rather be.

Where can your imagination take you? Free your mind.

“If I can open one mind, free one thought, or stimulate growth in the smallest way possible, then my job has been done.”
Randolph Cuthbert, Veteran’s Upward Bound
What course do you teach at VUB? I have been teaching Computer 100 since Fall 2012.

What is your favorite thing about teaching? I enjoy interacting with the students veterans. They teach me something new every week.

What is your educational background and how did you get there? I have a Master of Education degree. I returned to school at age 40 to earn that degree, so I know how hard it is to go back to college after being away from my studies for a long time.

What branch of service were you in? Army

What is one thing you learned while in the military that also is a helpful skill for school? I learned that I will be great at some things, and I’ll do OK in other things. I’m not going to be perfect at everything. The only thing I can ask of myself is to do my personal best at everything. That’s how personal improvement happens.

What do you like to do while you’re not at VUB? I love to read, spend time with my family, and go hiking in the mountains.

What was the last book you read? *The Path to Power*, A book about the years of Lyndon B. Johnson, by Robert Caro.

What is your life philosophy? Don’t let fear stop you. Stop fearing and start living.