INTRODUCTION

University of Pennsylvania ♦ Veterans Upward Bound Program

The University of Pennsylvania is the governing institution of the TRIO Veterans Upward Bound Program. VUB serves 160 low-income, first-generation, academically at risk veterans and reservists with the purpose of developing in program participants the skills and motivation necessary to enter and succeed in a program of postsecondary education. The six-county Greater Philadelphia, PA metropolitan region, consisting of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties and Camden County, New Jersey, situated directly across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, makes up the target area.

This region constitutes the fifth largest metropolitan area in the nation and has many challenges: in 2011 Philadelphia suffered more murders per capita than any other city in the nation; the city of Camden, NJ has poverty levels as high as 36%; and in 2010, sections of Philadelphia ranked as the 4th hungriest in the nation. Over 290,000 veterans and reservists reside in the target area, with 157,229 having served from late Vietnam through the Gulf War II era. Of these, there are 20,418 TRIO low-income veterans and reservists, with 13,679 also first-generation and 10,196 who have less than a baccalaureate degree and need VUB services.

What is valuable in the approach of the UPENN VUB staff toward the veterans we seek to serve is consideration to the student holistically. The VUB staff and the structure of the VUB program will support students' intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being. UPENN VUB participants will be identified and selected by project staff, often after referral by state and federal agencies and community organizations. The academic needs of participants will be assessed through standardized tests and personal interviews. VUB will serve five cohorts of participants over the 2012-2017 project periods by offering four levels of rigorous coursework in the full TRIO Core Curriculum. Extensive services such as academic counseling, tutoring, mentoring, college awareness, and other activities to augment learning and postsecondary success will be consistently provided. Reinforcing to our veteran participants their right to access and their ability to succeed in post-secondary education is our highest priority.

The UPENN VUB commits to the U.S. Department of Education and to the Pennsylvania Veterans Education Office that 75% of participants will improve their academic standardized assessment results annually; that 55% of participants will continue or complete the VUB program annually; that 60% of participants who complete VUB will enroll into postsecondary education (PSE) annually with the goal of 25% completing PSE within 6 years.